

BOOK REVIEW

Handbook of libraries, archives & information centres in India. V-1 – Libraries and archives/ editors – B M Gupta and others. New Delhi: Information Industry Publications, 1984/85. [Reviewed by B K Sen].

The Information Industry Publications, a newcomer in the field, has embarked upon an ambitious venture of bringing out a bulky publication in 5 volumes, encompassing a wide area of library and information science, viz. libraries and archives, information systems, services and programmes; and professional organisations in India.

The present volume deals with national level libraries; academic libraries; special libraries; and education, research and manpower, in 24 articles. Some of the articles are from the pen of the eminent librarians of the country.

Of the national level libraries, the National Library, National Medical Library, and IARI Library figure in this volume. It is surprising that the article on the National Library is by someone (Mr V K Jain), who has least connection with that library. But, Mr Jain has tried his best to do justice to the task entrusted upon him, gleaning material from secondary sources. The other two articles are by Mr M K Bhatt & Mr Chhotey Lal respectively. Apart from the history, objectives/functions, collection, service, etc., all the three articles provide a list of old publications available in the three libraries, enhancing the reference value of the articles. The omission of an article on the National Science Library is difficult to explain, especially when three of the editors are very much closely associated with the library.

Section two of the book, dealing with the Academic Libraries, comprises three articles. The article on university libraries in India by Mr C P Vashishth is an updated version of the article appeared earlier in the *Library Herald*. The article touches upon almost all the facets of the subject and can be considered one of the most important contributions in the book, and is also accompanied with a comprehensive bibliography on the subject. The articles on the college and school libraries in India are only

general, to be precise, theoretical, bereft of any statistics or figures. An article on the agricultural university libraries would have been welcome.

The Section, Special Libraries, contains ten articles which are devoted to agricultural, medical, government, social science, museum, film, USIS, law, oriental and islamic studies libraries. The articles on agricultural libraries by S R Banerjee & S Moitra and government libraries by Inder Deo & S C Biswas dealt with history, objectives, types, and services rendered by the libraries. The former article also provides brief description of six important agricultural libraries and the latter, book collection, staff, library cooperation etc. The article on the social science research libraries and documentation centres is of good reference value, inasmuch as it has enumerated all the important libraries with their collection, described various services provided by them and listed documentation lists brought out by the organisations. In the article on museum libraries in India by Kishan, 18 museum libraries of the country have been enumerated and briefly described, besides budget, manpower needs etc. The article on law libraries by Satish Chander and H C Jain, is a lengthy one and provides information on various types of law libraries (e.g. State law libraries, high court law libraries, bar association libraries, etc.), and also brief description of several important law libraries. The article suffers from a great deal of redundancy which could have been pruned with benefit.

On Islamic studies libraries in India, Gulab Khan in his article has also enumerated and briefly described 14 libraries. As such, the article is of good reference value.

The last section (i.e. Section 4) deals with education, research and manpower. Articles in this Section have been contributed by quite a few stalwarts such as P B Mangla, T N Rajan, Krishan Kumar and others.

Two articles deal with research activities in the field. Prof. Krishan Kumar highlighted the classification research activities of Ram Nath and the school established by him, and P S G

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Kumar provided a resume of doctoral research activities in this field going on in the country.

Three articles in this Section deal with educational aspects. Prof Mangla in his lengthy article (28 pp) dwelt on various aspects of library and information science education in India. The reference value of the article would have been greatly enhanced had a list of all the institutions imparting library and information science education in India been appended to the article. Other two articles on the topic cover continuing education (by V K Jain) and user education (by Krishan Kumar and P K Jayaswal).

Three articles, i.e., Professional Manpower from Library Schools in India: a Study of Enrolment and Out-turn by Shalini Rewadikar, Manpower Needs for Information Work in India by Prof T N Rajan, and, Demand for Information Scientists in India – an Analysis of Advertised Agencies by B M Gupta and others, are devoted to manpower. It would have been really worthwhile had all the three articles been consolidated into one.

The projected 5-volume handbook is supposed to perform the reference function more than anything else.

Any encyclopaedic publication requires a good deal of planning, sagacity in the selection of appropriate topics as well as capable writers for a balanced content of the publication. In this publication, deficiency is evident in all the three areas, which is obviously due to the inexperience and newness of the publisher. Being new in the field, most probably the publisher could not extract the writings from more capable writers, or get the best from some of the capable writers, who have contributed in this book.

It is also evident from the articles that the authors were not provided with specific guidelines, as a result each went in his own way.

Several shortcomings notwithstanding the usefulness of the publication as a reference tool cannot be overemphasised. Some of the articles will also be useful for B Lib/M Lib students.

It can be reasonably hoped that the type of shortcomings present in the book, will be greatly reduced or not be seen in the successive volumes.

