Review

Union List of Social Science Periodicals Currently Received in Delhi Libraries. Social Science Documentation Centre, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, 1971. XXX1, 251p. Non-priced. (Union catalogue series, no. 1) [Reviewed by B. Guha]

The ICSSR, soon after its inception in 1969, had taken up a project to compile a union catalogue of social science serials in important libraries in India. As a first step of this project the present volume has been published which covers 107 libraries in Delhi and lists 4074 titles. At the outset it must be mentioned that the catalogue is a simple alphabetical listing of titles with the symbols of the participating libraries which receive them without any indication of actual holdings in any library. As a consequence, the utility of the catalogue is restricted in the sense that a scholar or a librarian in Delhi only can use it. This is because some follow up action is needed to find out whether a particular volume or an issue is available even when a title has been located in a nearby library through this catalogue. The compilers seems to be aware of this limitation. Hence, in the list of Parti-' cipating Libraries, complete address and telephone number of each library have been given which will considerably facilitate the follow up action.

Defining the exact scope of a union catalogue of periodicals or a directory of periodicals has certain problems. The present catalogue has in its introduction defined the scope on two levels — it has named 15 subjects which are included and categorised 5 types of periodicals which are excluded. Even after this clearcut demarcation there are a few suspects in the catalogue. There are titles like Science, Science and Culture, etc. which are suspects according to the first level of demarcation. Again, there are titles like Coronet, Imprint, etc. which are suspects according to the second level of demarcation.

The bare title of a periodical without mentioning the name of its sponsor or publisher as is given in this catalogue, makes it difficult at times to identify a periodical correctly. The compilers may argue that when a person is looking for a specific title, he knows already something about the periodical. Hence proper identification should not be difficult. If this argument is accepted then one would immediately doubt the utility of the language symbols against the titles. The same argument can now be advanced against their inclusion. In the matter of language symbols some obvious mistakes have been made. A few glaring examples are Cocoa Statistics (Italy) which according to the convention used in the catalogue is in English but the supplement of the same title is said to be in English, French and Spanish. Similarly, Journal of Bihar Research Society is said to be in English, Hindi, and Spanish. There are quite a few similar cases. If they are just printing errors one can bear with them. But if the cause for such errors is further deep rooted one is likely to suspect the very method of determining the language of a periodical by the compilers.

However, it is no use multiplying this list of minor errors. Considering the grand edifice which has been promised ultimately in the shape of a complete union catalogue of social science serials in the country, the present volume is just a brick in that grand edifice. Scholars and librarians will be eagerly waiting for the final catalogue. In the meantime, the present volume will be serving a useful purpose.

Sengupta B, Ohdedar A K: Library classification. Calcutta, the World Press Private Ltd., 1971. 207p. Rs. 16.00. [Reviewed by T N Rajan]

Library classification is one of those areas in library science on which a number of excellent standard works have been written. However the authors of the book under review, have found from their long experience of teaching the subject, a justification for "a reasonably comprehensive textbook on the subject, presenting the modern concepts of bibliothecal classification integrating them with the significant feature of older concepts". In the process, they have produced a reasonably good digest of the published material on the subject, in about 200 pages.

After dealing with the usual preliminaries relating to the need and purpose of classification in the first chapter, the historical developments of the principle of classification are traced in the second chapter, followed by a discussion of knowledge and bibliothecal classification in the third. The construction of classification schemes is then described, giving full attention to the methodologies developed in recent years, taken largely from the works of Needham, Vickery and Ranganathan, with illustrations. The aspects of notation are dealt with in the chapter on 'Auxiliaries to library classification', along with the concepts of Generalia class, form class, form division, index to schedules, etc. Before dwelling on individual schemes, a division on the analysis of the structure of recorded knowledge and the modes of formation of specific subjects is made, bringing in most of the ideas of Dr. Ranganathan.

Among the individual schemes, the authors have rightly chosen to give full treatments only to a few schemes such as DC, UDC and Colon. The other schemes are briefly described in the subsequent chapter, bringing out their salient features. The book ends up with a final chapter giving a historical perspective of classification schemes, beginning from the ancient system used in Assyrian and Babylonian libraries to the latest theories propounded by Dr. Ranganathan. An interesting resume to an indigenous scheme developed by Satish Chandra Guha who was sometime the librarian of the private collection of a maharaja is described at the end of this chapter. This scheme known as "Prachya Vargikarana Paddhati was developed on the age-old Indian concepts of "Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha" and was published in 1932 in a lean volume of 172 pages. It is stated that the author of this scheme was influenced by UDC although a much simpler notation was employed.

Most books on library classification, usually include a chapter on "classification as an indexing technique" which also forms part of the syllabi of this subject in many library schools. In recent years, ideas on this area have been developed to a great extent and many interesting indexing system have also been designed. But in the book under review, this area has not been touched at all. In fact, a chapter on this would have greatly enhanced the value of the book.

In a few places, particularly in the Chapter on "Colon Classification", while dealing with 'Zone-analysis', the authors have not incorporated the latest ideas, the table (page 141) referring to the ideas expounded in the second edition of Dr. Ranganathan's Prolegomena. The connecting symbol for Phase relations has also been changed from 'O' to & (ampersand) now but illustrations in the book are using only 'zero'. This change is significant because 'zero' now has a much greater function. A double colon has been introduced in UDC as a connecting symbol for irreversible compounds which is an important idea. These are some of the deficiencies of the book under review, which certainly could be rectified in the second edition.

On the whole, the authors have succeeded in producing a quick summary of the recent developments in library classification clubbing some of the useful older concepts. References to a number of good works are cited at the end of each chapter. The book is well produced and reasonably priced.