

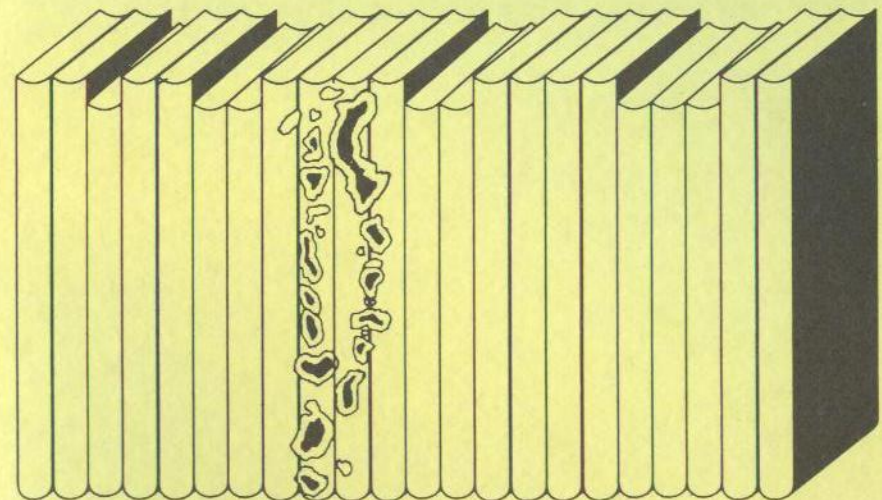
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Editorial

It is not unusual to have happiness with a black lining underneath, or a dark cloud with a sliver lining. Today we at the National Library are experiencing this type of mixed feelings. We say goodbye to the year 1996, with nostalgia, remembrance, of some library activities, some activities which end with this year, some continues with us for the forth coming year 1997. We welcome 1997, with new hopes, new prospects and with new ideas.

National Library is growing and as knowledge and information's bombardment is on us, the library, the center, to extend and distribute the knowledge. Hence, 1997 needs to be a year of new prospects, new administrations.

Nevertheless, our library magazine will be with us, with you, bringing all the news of National Library and other libraries at your doorstep. So, we at the National Library say goodbye to 1996 and welcome 1997 through this media of library development.

We wish all our professionals of librarys, members and readers, a very happy New Year.

MALDIVES

TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000: VISION AND REALITY

Habeeba Hussain Habeeb

The truth though its bitter sometimes, remain THE TRUTH. So I have found out from my seventeen year experience on working in the National Library of Maldives. There could be very clear visions, but similar to many third world countries, Maldives is still going through a struggle, in up grading libraries. It is indeed frustrating and discouraging, but we at the National Library are trying our best to cope with all this negative feelings and though it is dishearting to realise that it gives the feeling that it takes a century to reach the goal-- But we do not give up. We so not surrender to failures. We go on hoping and for coordination.

I would like to present a broad area, where the vision and reality contradict.

Networking : Vision

Strong national network with National Library at peak which through legal deposit can produce a national bibliography and co-ordinate whole library system of Maldives. Access to other libraries' bookstock based on uniform classification system, union catalogue and structures fascilating interlending reality.

Reality

Everything depends on willingness of institutions to co-operate, promote, importance of libraries, leadership of National Library.

Access Services

Increased access and specialised databases for researches and professional planners.

Vision

On databases in field of medicine, technology, education, economics, leisure, fisheries and other activities etc.

Reality

Expences and ability to use databases (staff training, problems of space, housing equipment and also condition of their keeping and maintenance.

Library as a "natural part of peoples' line"

Vision

High membership and borrowing figures, good quality book stocks and also access to 'self help' is very attractive and desirable vision in present. National Library information in the form of books and leaflets, and also continuity of membership. Learn from 'cradle to grave' hence continuity of membership without interruptions. Wide variety of facilities and learning materials available, spread of libraries to whole country.

Reality

This vision could only become a reality on funds. It will depend on funds, motivation, and recognition of libraries by our government as source of information, education.

Atoll libraries existence as libraries in its concept

Vision

When we visualise atoll reading centres, we want to picture ideally libraries not reading rooms. Therefore a collections of organised books on everyone of the hundred

and one inhabited islands becomes a vision.

Perhaps a larger, better stocked libraries in atoll capitale acting as focal point for the smaller inland libraries would help atoll. Every atoll become a library "system: akin to the public library systems run by local authorities or school library run by educational authorities.

Transport system between Male' and atolls and between atoll, enabling quicker and equal distribution of books sharing of resources and inter loan system could be organised. This organization (a transport system would allow one library to use books another library has exhausted) will help one library to borrow books from another library on temporary basis to meet a request of a member or members.

Reality

The reality to this vision looks bleak at the moment of transport system due to weather difficulties (Maldives is an island nation) and also at present these are few domestic air service. (We are hoping a bright future for this problem)

Vision in training

There should at least be one qualified librarian in each atoll library.

Reality

Training depends on government sources, such as Ministry of Education under which school libraries are registered at present these are reading rooms and resources centres which is seen by Ministry of Education. Also funding from external resources. These apply also to school libraries of Male', as well as atolls. Vision is quality and staff, and reality depends on salaries status and importance attached to libraries, as these are educational libraries, only Ministry of

Education and the National Library could do this.

I am very happy to state that at present National Library is doing its best to make this and other visions to bring to reality. No doubt there are many obstacles and hurdle we have to cross. and I would like institutes concern and no doubt they will help us to solve these problems, to bring these visions into reality.

World Book Fair held at New Delhi 1996

Habeeba Hussain Habeeb

The twelfth World Book Fair organized by the National Book Trust India, was held at New Delhi from February 3-11 this year. It was inaugurated by a well known Pakistani writer and poet Dr. Ahmed Faraaz. It was interesting to hear him say "If the people were to make books instead of bombs, the world would be a much better place to live in." Certainly this discovery of printing by moveable types in the fifteenth century, and that of gun powder came about almost at the same time! However each had very different consequences.

Looking back at the history of previous World Book Fairs conducted by Indian authorities (Book Trust) the last one, the twelfth Book stand out as beeing very different. This Book Fair was focused on South Asia. It was certainly interesting to hear the publisher's comments as one walks by them, such comments as " We are begining to look at this fair not only as a selling event but also as a direction, a path to find out most about the books of our own interests, published by local publishers, within India and out side. This event also provides a way to look for those who maybe interested in

buying right from us".

At this Book Fair while sales remained the main interest, people also were eager to find out various aspects of publishing. A first timer to this type of Fair, the academy of children's literature, produced a pack of cassettes with songs and song books, which were in the English and Hindi languages. This perticular person was looking for a publisher. A German publisher who happens to be the editor of a multi-language magazine was heard saying " In Germany we see mainly English books in translations. There is hardly anything from this part of the world. So I thought I should look around and see what is available here in the way of fiction. Maybe I can convince people to do some translations from this part of the world".

While, I from Maldives was there as a participant of library seminars and of various literary symposiums, I was also attached to a private book seller's book shop in this Book Fair. Hence, in my free time, when I was not visiting the endless book stalls I strolled to this perticular stall. The Maldivian Book stall which was organized by the owner of Ashrafee Book Shop of Male'. I sat there for few hours listening to the interesting conversation of passers by and buyers. I understood by this conversation and comments that the visitors, writers, and book sellers of India and other countries were quite optimistic about their sales and of the chances finding other publishers to buy their writings. They anticipated what this fantastic Book Fair would offer them.

Visitors who were seriously interested in books, brought despite the general impression of high prices. Penguin Books, of which India reported bussiness of Rs. 25 to 73 lakha an Oxford University Press that of close to Sixteen lakhes. Publishers of technical books also did well. During my free time, as I sat in the Maldivian Book Shop, happy to share Mr. Adam Ibrahim's hospitality I heard a vistor say " we are really very happy with this move towards closer cooperation

in South Asia--its the right time, high time we started working much closer together". When I heard this comment I too joined with them adding "we too share the same sentiment".

Beside the sales of books and general festivities of a "Fair" a number of intra-active programmes were brought into focus in this Fair. Some of these could be defined as 'Interaction between Indian publishers, "building bridges with other countries". Seminars, workshops on various intellectual topics.

During the night the "Pragathi Maidaan" (the huge area's name) looked like a gigantic carnival. Dinners were held and all the participants were invited by organizers and publishers.

This Twelfth Book Fair was a Jambooree with all the fun frolic, full of bright lights, high music and sweet and sour dishes. People walked clutching their numerous plastic bags full of books, brochures. Children ran around playing 'tag' through book stalls through canteens and to the tents of musicians. I realized that this Book Fair was a show focused on

South Asia, a trade centre and a multilink hosted for South Asia, so I felt that as a Maldivian

I was not a stranger in this remarkable Book Fair.

The call of the National Library

Welcome all those who can read
Our library has the treasure you need
Fiction, science, detective or romance
Spare sometime to have a glance
Spend your leasure in this quite place
All those who have at home no space
Read and read whatever you can
For "reading make a full man"

People look for treasure in the sea -
but never in a wonderful library as we
Gems and gold will easily part
but the knowledge you gain will never depart
Science found computers for bulky store
human brain's store more and more
So, store your knowledge in your brain
and enjoy the wisdom without strain

by: Zulfa Mohamed

Practical Librarianship

Zulfa Mohamed

Classification

Many people stand in awe of classification, believing it is a skill completely beyond their capabilities. The truth is that everyone of us is involved in the proces of classification as part of our day-to-day lives, often it is a subconscious activity.

The proces begins when we are toddlers acquring a vocabulary. Try to imagin yourself as a 2 1/2 year old, walking in the garden with your mum and seeing a little creature. You note that it has four legs and a tail. Your mother informs you, "it's a rat". Some days later you were again out with your mum in the garden. Seeing a little creature, you proudly say "rat", but mother says "No, dear! That's a mouse". At that point your brain has to wrestle with a problem, "what is it that distinguishes a mouse from the rat?"

Children very quickly learn to differentiate and categorise so that they can correctly name what they see. The noting of similarities and differences become almost automatic so that there is instantaneous recognition, and it is not long before the child identifies which is a rat and which is a mouse. This is what classification is all about. It is the identification of similarities and differences, enabling one to group together things which are similar, and separate them from things which are dissimilar.

As has been said, all of us are involved in categorization or classification as part of our daily lives and it is automatic. However, some people are involved in classification as part of their daily work and it is for them a conscious and precise activity.

Consider, for example the work of the shoe shop manager. Take a few minutes to think about the way he or she arranges the stock of shoes. The first thing the shoe shop manager will do is to separate the stock into men's shoes, women's shoes and children's shoes. Indeed a large shop will have a separate department or area for each category. He or she will then arrange the shoes by style, size and colour.

Why does the shoe shop manager go to the trouble of classifying the stock in this way? Because customers ask for shoes in that manner. "I'd like a pair of men's slip-on shoes, black leather, size 10, please." On hearing that request the assistant's aim will be to get the shoes to the customer in the quickest possible time.

Imagine what would happen if the stock were not classified. The shop assistant would take ages to find the right shoes. The customer would become irate and would eventually walk out in disgust. For the shop manager that would be very bad business.

Classification in libraries

The principle is much the same in libraries. The object of classifying the stock is to get the book to the reader, or the reader to the book, in the quickest possible time. The librarian has to consider the needs of the library users and the way they frame their requests. The latter usually depends on whether the reader wants fiction or non-fiction. When a library member asks for a work of fiction, the request is usually framed in this way: "I have just read a book by Danni Robbins. Have you another by the same author, please?" Therefore the best way to arrange the fiction stock is alphabetically by author's surnames. However some readers frame their fiction requests differently and may say, "I would like to read detective novels. Can you show me where to find them, please?" In libraries where many readers frame their fiction requests in this way, the librarian may categorise their fiction and group novels of a certain type together, eg. all the love stories, all the detective stories, all the historical novels; but there is always a residue of fiction which cannot be categorised in this way. Other librarians solve the problem by arranging all the fiction alphabetically by author but put easily identifiable symbols on the spine to indicate the type of novel.

Classification of non-fiction stock

When readers request non-fiction books, they usually frame their question in this way: "Have you any books on photography?" In other words, they ask for non-fiction books by subject. So the most convenient way to arrange the non-fiction stock is by subject. Books on the same subject are shelved together, and books on related subjects are alongside.

When a factual book is added to the library's stock, the librarian has to look through it in order to discover

What is needed is a logical arrangement of subjects accompanied by a system of symbols which represent the subjects. Librarians call these symbols a notation. Many people have devised such classification systems-Bliss, Brown, and Ranganathan to name only three. The one who is most widely known is Melvil Dewey (1851-1931) Whose system we use in Maldives.

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