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## UNIT 2 NEED AND PURPOSE OF LIBRARY CLASSIFICATION

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### Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Documents
  - 2.2.1 Nature of Documents
  - 2.2.2 Collection and Storage of Documents
  - 2.2.3 Factors Determining Arrangement of Documents
  - 2.2.4 Arrangement of Documents in Libraries
  - 2.2.5 Approach of Readers for Documents
- 2.3 Classification
  - 2.3.1 Meaning of Classification
  - 2.3.2 Definition of Library Classification
  - 2.3.3 Call Number
  - 2.3.4 Purpose and Function
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Answers to Self Check Exercises
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 References and Further Reading

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- list various types of documents acquired by libraries, and describe their nature and arrangement;
- identify the factors determining the arrangement of different collections in libraries;
- distinguish different approaches of readers for documents;
- state the meaning of library classification; and
- identify and describe the need, purpose and function of library classification.

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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As a participant in this course you are either a library worker or wish to be one. You are aware that libraries keep various types of documents. At the outset, it is necessary to know that libraries hold several types of collections like printed books, journals, manuscripts, maps, charts, micro-documents, CD-ROMs, video and audio cassettes, etc. All these collections should necessarily be arranged systematically.

There are three possible ways in which a reader may demand library material. He may ask by the name of the author whose works he wishes to read, or by the title of the book. The third situation is that he may need book(s) on a particular subject. This last one is known as subject approach. In short, subject approach is the means of securing unknown items from the collection, and classification is the means of facilitating it. Library classification yields subject-wise arrangement of library materials in which documents are arranged by subject and each subject is followed by another subject related to it, e.g., physics following mathematics. This is known as systematic arrangement.

The other important activities in a library such as book selection, circulation and reference services are somewhat indirectly dependent upon library classification. It is thus no wonder that classification is widely regarded as the foundation of librarianship. Classification can ensure



full exploitation of library material and strengthen other services in a library. The need for classification is all the greater in modern libraries, as they store different types of documents requiring diverse storage media. In other words, documents on the same subject(s) get scattered throughout the collection because of their diverse physical forms. Classification, however, is the means of bringing books on the shelves and their entries in a catalogue or index at one place. Let us, therefore, acquaint ourselves with these different types of documents that modern libraries acquire and store.

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## 2.2 DOCUMENTS

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We find in libraries various types of documents, viz., manuscripts, printed books, periodicals, pamphlets, reports, photo reproductions, sound records, films, musical scores, microfilms, maps, atlases, charts, illustrations and electronic media items, such as CD-ROMs, through which human thought is communicated and preserved. Proper collection, storage and maximum use of these documents is the prime concern of present day libraries.

### 2.2.1 Nature of Documents

The problem of collection, storage and retrieval of documents has been complicated by the following factors:

- The steady growth in the output of various types of documents popularly known as the "knowledge explosion" or "information explosion" or "information flood" or "information boom or bloom".
- The publication of documents in various languages of the world. The production of documents in diverse physical forms. '
- The nature and complexity of the thought content of the subject matter presented in various forms of documents.
- The complexity of readers' approach to documents and libraries.

Each document, like an individual, is not only unique but also exhibits relations of considerable complexity with other documents. Extrinsic features like size, colour, volume, binding, year of publication and intrinsic features like thought content and their arrangement inside the document, or the nature of information, i.e., textual, numeric, bibliographic or graphic, also add to the complexity of the problem of libraries for achieving the objective of maximum utilisation of their collections.

The complexity of thought content and the nature of relationships between various types of documents must be known and clearly established for their maximum use. The maximum use of documents can be ensured by:

- i) personal assistance to readers,
- ii) systematic arrangement, and
- iii) proper display of materials in the library.

If the collection of a library is arranged in a systematic way documents can be located and retrieved easily. A classification scheme is the map or device for the arrangement of books in the library.

### 2.2.2 Collection and Storage of Documents

From the dawn of civilisation man has recognised the need for collecting and preserving the records of human thought. Books and other graphic material are the records of human thoughts, action and achievement and can serve as the basis for future achievement. Their value to society, thus, cannot be exaggerated. These records are collected and preserved in libraries for the benefit of present and future generations. These records, diverse in form and content, are referred to by the generic term documents.

### 2.2.3 Factors Determining Arrangement of Documents

Documents can be arranged in various ways in a library, e.g., by author, or by title, or by,



subject or by basis such as size, language, colour of binding or any other such criterion. The needs of the readers may be the criterion one can consider for arrangement of documents in a library. Mills, in his book *Modern Outline of Library Classification*, lists the following possible characteristics determining the arrangements of documents:

- i) **Age of reader:** Children's books are distinguished from adult's books.
- ii) **Conditions attached to the use of the material:** Books for lending are distinguished from those to be consulted within the library. Generally "Reference Books" come under this category.
- iii) **Documents of unusual size:** Documents of an abnormal size, oversize or undersize, are shelved separately. This is done to conserve space in the stack area.
- iv) **Documents of unusual gross body:** Micro cards, gramophone records, tapes, slides and other audio-visual material and electronic documents are shelved separately.
- v) **Thought content of the document (subject matter):** Factual literature is arranged by subject, imaginative literature by language or author.
- vi) **Language of the document:** Documents in foreign languages are separately arranged in their original languages.
- vii) **Value of the document:** Manuscripts and rare and costly documents are shelved separately.
- viii) **Peculiarities of form of presentation:** Files of bound periodicals are separately shelved.
- ix) **Date of printing:** Incunabula - early printed books - are shelved separately.
- x) **Local history collection:** Documents dealing with various aspects of a place, locality or region are shelved separately.
- xi) **Gift collection:** A large number of books may be gifted with the condition to shelve them separately.

The above factors influence the arrangement of documents in libraries. But thought content or subject arrangement (fifth in Mill's list) is still the dominant and important factor for deciding the sequence of documents. All other factors in the above list are functional. Though a collection can be divided into several sections on the basis of any of the above functional factors, it would still be helpful to arrange documents in each section on the basis of subject matter. This leads to parallel sequences in the various collections in libraries. In any library, the total collection gets divided into some separate collections of general books and reference books, textbooks, journals, etc. There are, thus, many sequences of books on one and the same subject in the library. These sequences are known as "parallel sequences".

#### 2.2.4 Arrangement of Documents in Libraries

Until the end of the 19th century library collections were small in size. Not as many subject fields had developed as one notices now, and publishing was not as wide spread. The readership was not as large as we notice in the present times. Libraries of yesteryear attempted to arrange their collections on the basis of fixed locations. This method was employed to allocate each and every document a particular and permanent place on a particular shelf of the library. Each new document, irrespective of its thought content, was assigned to the place immediately next to the one previously added to the collection.

The fixed location failed to bring together documents embodying the same subject. Fixed location implied chronological order of accession under broad subject categories.

In some of the older libraries, attempts were made to arrange the collection on the basis of extrinsic characteristics such as colour, size, year of publication and type of binding of documents. All these arrangements or sequences are not as helpful as the subject arrangement.

#### Activities

- 1) Go to a public library, a university library and a special library, and make a list of various types of documents available in these libraries.
- 2) Visit a few libraries in your area, observe how documents are arranged on their shelves, and prepare a brief note.
- 3) Go to a library and find out how many parallel sequences of documents are there.



## 2.2.5 Approach of Readers for Documents

As stated earlier, documents can be arranged in libraries on the basis of the colour of the binding, the size, the language, the year of publication, the accession number and so on. But these methods are outdated and unhelpful, as they cannot bring to the notice of the reader the author, the title or the subject matter of a document. There is little or no chance of your finding today a library, which arranges its collection on the basis of colour, size, year of publication or even the name of the publisher. It was possible to use these characteristics for arranging books when the collections were very small in size.

There are a few libraries where the collections are arranged on the basis of accession number or serial number. The other methods by which documents are usually arranged are by title, author or subject. This is because in present-day libraries, the reader's approach for a specific document is by title or author or subject. It is common practice that fiction is arranged by author, periodicals by title and scientific factual literature by subject. In some libraries, you can find that even imaginative literature (belles lettres) is arranged first by language, and within each language by form followed by author and, if necessary, by work number.

It has already been explained in Section 2.1 that a reader may demand a document by a particular author or of a particular title or on a particular subject. There are, thus, mainly three approaches to a collection, viz., author, title and subject. To what extent each of these is helpful is explained below.

**Author approach:** Generally readers go to a library to find:

- i) a particular document whose author is known or
- ii) what documents by a particular author are in the library.

But the arrangement of documents on the basis of the author is not always helpful. If you want a particular document, or documents on a particular subject, the author arrangement fails to bring documents having the same specific subject and related subjects at one place. Here is an example:

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|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Marsten, R.B.      | :Communication Technology    |
| Marston, A.N.      | :Encyclopaedia of Angling    |
| Marston, E.H.      | : Dynamic Environment        |
| Marston, Elizabeth | : Rain Forest                |
| Marston, John      | : Dutch Courtesan            |
| Marston, J.E.      | : Nature of Public Relations |
| Marston, Phillip   | :Breeder of Democracy        |
| Marston, P.B.      | :Collected Poems             |
| Marst, R.M.        | : Electronic Projects        |
| Martell, P.        | : World Military Leaders     |

**Title approach:** Sometimes you may go to a library to get a document whose title you know. If the books in the library are arranged by title, it will meet your requirement. But the method of arranging documents on the basis of title is also not very helpful. There is always a chance of a title being misquoted. Titles sometimes change from one edition to another. The title of the same document would differ when translated from one language to another. Sometimes the same document is published in different countries under different titles, though the language may remain the same.

Title arrangement, like author arrangement, fails to bring together documents having the same specific subject at one place. Because of these limitations; the arrangement of documents on the basis of title is not very helpful. Here is an example:

Instant Astrology by Jack London  
 Instant Beauty Tricks by P. Brooks  
 Instant Book Keeping by D.C. Conaway  
 Instant Chicago by J. Graham



Instant College by R.W. Graham Classification

Instant Divorce by S. Rosen

Instant English Handbook by M. Semmelmeier

Instant Medical Advisor by J. Smith

Instant Paintings by N. Koni

Instant Quotation Dictionary by B.O. Bolander

**Subject approach:** In academic, special, technical and research libraries, and to a large extent even in public libraries, you will find that the majority of readers approach documents on the basis of the subject. This subject approach by readers has increased due to the growth in science and technology and also to a large extent in social sciences where the author and the title of a document are important but not adequate. Due to the enormous output of documents in these fields, it is often difficult to recall a specific title or author correctly except in the case of classics.

Therefore, one finds that in well organised libraries documents are arranged on the basis of subject matter. This arrangement helps to bring documents embodying the same specific subject together and those on related subjects in their close proximity on the shelves. This would result, as Ranganathan puts it, into an APUPA arrangement that will give reader the greatest satisfaction at the moment in full conformity to all the Five Laws of Library Science. In this arrangement, the focal point of one's main interest is the UMBRAL REGION. This is followed on, either side by the PENUMBRAL REGION represented by subjects on either side of the UMBRAL region having successfully a decreasing bearing on the umbral region. The penumbral region will ultimately thin into ALIEN REGIONS. This is helpful and convenient especially on open access libraries. Readers can directly go to the shelves and browse through the library collection. Generally, the objective of libraries is to have an APUPA ARRANGEMENT EVERYWHERE.

Subject arrangement, hence, helps bring together on the shelves documents on one and the same subject followed by those of related subjects. Suppose you are looking for a specific document on say, physics, you can find, where subject arrangement exists, documents not only on physics, but also those related to it in close proximity, i.e., chemistry. It may so happen that if a specific title wanted by you is not available, you can find another title on the subject that may very well meet your requirement. Some scholars may need everything available on their topic. You will notice that near the books on chemistry, you will also find books on related subjects like mathematics and astronomy on one side and chemistry and biology on the other.

Subject arrangement of documents enables you to know:

- i) what documents the library has on a specific subject; and
- ii) what is the quality of collection on that subject, and what are the gaps in the collection?

This kind of arrangement is known as 'filiatory sequence'. In large and special libraries, having several sections such as:

- i) Text books
- ii) Reference books
- iii) Theses and dissertations
- iv) Pamphlets
- v) Bound volumes of periodicals

You will find that all these different collections are arranged by subject using a scheme of library classification:

It has been the considered opinion of experts that the arrangement of documents on a basis other than subject may not meet the requirements of the majority of readers in modern libraries. Nowadays the subject approach to books is predominant. Eminent classificationists like Melvil Dewey, J.D. Brown, C.A. Cutter, W.C.B. Sayers, S.R. Ranganathan, H. E. Bliss and others advocate the subject arrangement of documents. Subject arrangement, however, does not mean that there is no scope for the author and title approaches. These approaches are taken care of through the author and title catalogues. Subject arrangement, then, is paramount and the basis for it is the subject content of documents. Library classification is the technique used in libraries for mechanising of this subject content documents: It is a technique for making libraries more helpful.



### Self Check Exercise

1) Write a brief note on the different approaches of readers to finding documents in libraries.

**Note** : i) Write your answer in the space given below,

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this

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## 2.3 CLASSIFICATION

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### 2.3.1 Meaning of Classification

Systematic grouping of entities (both abstract and concrete) to meet one's requirement is known as classification. Classification lies at the root of all human activities. Our daily life is very much dependent on the process of classification, however, elementary this process may appear. You can surely recall a number of activities around you where classification plays its part. Take, for example, the arrangement of contents in a railway time table, the display of goods in a grocery shop, the arrangement of modules in a departmental store to facilitate the selection of goods by customers, the seating arrangement in a theatre or stadium, the assignment of registration numbers to various motor vehicles by a state transport authority, or the sorting of letters by postmen first by the city, then by the street and lastly by the house numbers for quick delivery of post. These are simple examples of how we use classification in our activities.

The word classification was derived from the Latin word classes which meant order or rank of mobility in Roman society based upon birth and wealth. Classification is a mental process by which we group or separate things on the basis of common characteristics. For example, things grouped together on the basis of a common characteristic like writing material. In other words, classification is an attempt to identify a class for like things. We succeed in our attempt by applying a characteristic and isolating all like things on that basis from unlike things. Classification in essence means dividing into groups, grouping, sorting, arranging, ordering, ranking and relating one entity to the others.

S.R. Ranganathan, in his Prolegomena to Library Classification (1967), elaborately discusses the meaning of classification. In the case of physical objects, division and assortment are the two results of classification, According to Ranganathan, while division implies sorting objects into two or more groups, assortment additionally denotes arrangement of these groups in a predetermined sequence. Further, in library classification, the sequence of objects, i.e., documents, is so mechanised by the use of notation that it is reflected in the notation when a document is withdrawn or added.

Thus, one can see that the term 'classification' is a homonym. Ranganathan, therefore, tried to resolve the homonym by examining the various ways in which the term has been used:

Classification in Sense 1 is DIVISION.

Classification in Sense 2 is ASSORTMENT.

Classification in Sense 3 is CLASSIFICATION IN SENSE 2 plus representing each entity by an ordinal number taken out of a system of ordinal numbers, designed to mechanise the maintenance of the sequence,



Classification in Sense 4 is CLASSIFICATION IN SENSE 3 when complete assortment is made of an amplified universe - that is when the entities and the pseudo-entities arising in the process of successive assortment stand arranged in one filiationary sequence.

Classification in Sense 5 is CLASSIFICATION IN SENSE 4 with all the entities removed but only the pseudo-entities or classes retained.

It is classification in Sense 5 that is used:

- i) either when the universe classified is infinite,
- ii) when some of the entities are unknown and unknowable at any moment, even though the universe classified is finite.

It is classification in Sense 5 that is practised by the library profession.

The primary concern of libraries is to establish the most helpful arrangement of documents. Library classification, therefore, presupposes the use of notation, i.e., a brief symbol for the names of subjects. It is in this sense that the word classification is used in this and other units.

### 2.3.2 Definition of Library Classification

Having understood the meaning of classification in library science, let us now go through a few well-known definitions of library classification.

Library classification has been defined by both the classificationists and the critics, all necessarily underlying its utilitarian aspect. According to Margaret Mann, classification is "the arranging of things according to likeness and unlikeness. It is the sorting and grouping of things, but in addition, classification of books is a knowledge classification with adjustments made necessary by the physical form of books". W.C. Berwick Sayers defines it as the arrangement of books on shelves or description of them in the manner which is most helpful to those who read". Arthur Maltby revises Sayers definition as "the systematic arrangement of books and other material on shelves or of catalogue and index entries in the manner which is most useful to those who read or who seek a definite piece of information". Ranganathan is more elaborate in his definition. We will study his definition, therefore, in detail.

According to Ranganathan, "it is the translation of the name of the subject of a book into the preferred artificial language of ordinal numbers, and the individualisation of several books dealing with the same specific subject by means of a further set of ordinal numbers which represent some features of the book other than their thought content". In this definition, we find three important phrases, viz.,

- i) artificial language,
- ii) ordinal numbers, and
- iii) specific subject.

These three phrases need some explanation.

**Artificial Language:** In library classification we use symbols to denote subjects. The names of subjects are in ordinary language understandable to an ordinary person. Therefore, we call it the natural language which comes naturally to the human being living in a society. On the other hand, the symbols that we may use to denote a subject, say B, or 510, or QA for mathematics, are artificial in the sense that the common man will not ordinarily understand the meaning of these symbols. Hence these are artificial and intelligible to a specifically trained class of professionals. Their value is only ordinal, which means that these symbols have no quantitative or qualitative value; they only determine the sequence/order of documents on the shelves. These symbols also maintain/preserve the chosen sequence as the books will be replaced at their proper place after taking them out for reading or lending. These symbols do not indicate anything except the order/sequence of these documents on the shelves.

**Ordinal Numbers:** These are used not for the purpose of counting but ordering and mechanising the arrangement of things. For example, participants in a conference can be listed in a desired sequence on the basis of some suitable principle and then this sequence can be mechanised with the help of ordinal numbers.

Melvil Dewey (1851-1931), the father of modern library classification, was the first classificationist to use simple Indo-Arabic numerals (0-9) as ordinal numbers for the systematic listing of subjects both broader and narrower, in his Decimal Classification first published in



1876 (see Unit 4, Unit 10 and Unit 11 of this Course and Blocks I and 2 of BLJ&03P to know more about Dewey Decimal Classification). Since then the system of ordinal numbers-notation as it is called in library classification-has been the principal element in the design and use of library classification schemes.

**Specific Subject :** The contents of a document may deal with some field of knowledge. It is a prerequisite for a classifier to know what subject matter the document exactly contains. After ascertaining the exact subject, or specific subject, the classifier translates that specific subject into the artificial language or ordinal numbers of the classification scheme used. In order to know the specific subject of the document the classifier has to examine its title, contents page, preface and introduction, and to scan through some chapters, and, if necessary to go through the entire book. There may be certain occasions where a classifier has to consult an expert to ascertain the specific subject of a document.

Ranganathan defines the specific subject of a document as "that division of knowledge whose extension and intension are equal to those of its thought content". Extension means the scope (if the subject treatment and intension means the depth of the subject treatment in a given document.

Palmer and Wells define it as "that division of knowledge which exactly comprehends all the major factors that go in its making". Let us take an example and perform an analysis to ascertain the specific subject.

A.L. Srivastava : A Short History of Akbar the Great (1542-1605). Agra, Shivlal Aggarwal, 1957.

It is possible to interpret the contents of this book as 'Mstory' or 'History of India' or 'History of India during the Mughal Period'. All these possible subjects are not specific enough and are too broad to convey the actual thought content of the book. It is, therefore, necessary to add one more phrase to the above analysis to make it complete, and that phrase is 'Reign of Akbar'. Al<sup>l</sup> these aspects should now be brought into the class number. If you omit any of these aspects, the extension and intension will not be equal to the thought content of the book.

The specific subject of the book can be arrived at as follows History

Indian History

Mughal Period

Akbar

Reign

When you analyse the thought content of the document on the above lines, the extension (scope) decreases and the intension (depth) increases with every successive division, as seen above. This sort of subject ordering is called "general to specific".

Ranganathan's definition of classification, quoted above, refers to two objectives: Translation of the subject into an ordinal number and individualisation of a given document in the total order of documents in a library. The subject of the document is translated into a class number with the help of a notation. But, several documents are likely to bear the same class number and the problem of individualisation arises. The class number is, therefore, not enough. It has to be supplemented by one, or if necessary, by two, additional elements. These additional elements are (i) book number and - (ii) collection number. Class number, book number and collection number constitute the call number of a document. It is only the call number that individualises a given document in a library. Let us, therefore, see what constitutes a call number.

### 2.3.3 Call Number'

The call number<sup>s</sup> for a document consists of three elements, viz., class number, book number and collection number. The following example will show the presence of these three elements in a call number.

Jawaharlal Nehru: An Autobiography with Musings on Recent Events in India, Bombay, Allied. 1962.

The call number for this book by Dewey Decimal classification is:





We are witness to the information revolution. Documents are published in various languages in various disciplines in diverse forms. Libraries have always been acquiring books and adding them to their collections. Therefore, the collection of an active library continues to grow year after year. Ranganathan compares active and effective libraries with growing organisms, In an unclassified library, when the collection grows steadily into thousands and lakhs of volumes, it would be difficult for the library staff to lay hands on a particular document required by a reader. To meet the subject approach of readers the collection must necessarily be classified by subject.

In libraries where the collection is arranged by accession number, or author or title, and not by subject, books on the same subject will be scattered throughout the collection. Even if the books are arranged alphabetically -by subject, the resultant sequence will not be helpful, as unrelated material will come together. See the following example:

Adult education  
Agriculture  
Algebra  
Alloys  
American history  
Anthropology  
Applied mechanics  
Arithmetic  
Astronomy  
Atomic energy  
Australian history

This type of sequence of subjects surely is far less useful and will fail to meet the requirements of readers. Alphabetical sequence leads to alphabetical scattering of logically related subjects; as shown in the above example. It is through systematic arrangement that a filiatory sequence or collection of closely related subjects can be achieved. For this we require a scheme of library classification. Here is an example of arranging documents on the basis of Dewey Decimal Classification which brings documents dealing with different aspects of economics systematically one after another at one place in a collection.

|     |   |                   |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 330 | Economics explained                         | by R.L. Heibroner |
| 331 | The economics of work and pay               | by Albert Reas    |
| 332 | Essentials of finance                       | by R.G. Jones     |
| 333 | The economics of natural resources          | by R. Leconber    |
| 334 | Cooperative housing                         | by M. Digby       |
| 335 | Socialism without the state                 | by E.Lurd         |
| 336 | The fiscal system of HongKong               | by H.C.Y. Ho      |
| 337 | Building Europe : Britain's parterns in EEC | by K.J. Twitchett |
| 338 | Production economics                        | by M. Fuss        |
| 339 | Macroeconomics                              | by J.B. Beare     |

Within each class the arrangement is carried out finally and minutely, e.g.,

300 Social sciences  
330 Economics  
332 Financial economics  
332.1 Banks and banking  
332.11 Central banks  
331.110 954 Reserve Bank of India

Libraries stock various types of documents for different purposes. Classification helps achieve a systematic arrangement of different types of documents.

In big libraries, the collection is segregated in different sections or departments. This is done for the efficient and effective use of library collections and for the convenience of different



types of readers. In each department, the collection requires a classified arrangement. An unclassified collection, even though equipped with necessary guides, would be of no use as the readers feel lost in the ocean of books wasting their valuable time to find documents. It has rightly been said that to locate a book in an unclassified library is as difficult as to locate a needle in a haystack. On the other hand, a systematic arrangement helps readers to get documents without loss of time. Thus the time saved by the library staff can be utilised for rendering personalized reference service for the benefit of readers. A systematic arrangement of documents creates order out of chaos. It provides a panoramic view of documents available in a library on a given subject along with those on closely related subjects. This filiated sequence of subjects facilitates readers not only in getting his/her documents, but also helps them know the strength and weakness of the collection. The second, third and fourth Laws of Library Science, viz., Every reader his/her document, Every document its reader and Save the time of the reader, as expounded by Ranganathan, can be practised by libraries through the systematic arrangement of documents. The First and Fifth Laws, i.e., Books are for use and A library is a growing organism also advocate a systematic classification of books in libraries. The arrangement of documents on the shelves is in a progressive order of complexity, i.e., from the general to the specific. Colon Classification is able to arrange documents in an APUPA pattern. Such an arrangement is in pedagogical order, i.e., it is self-educative and reflects the progress of that subject in an evolutionary order. In the light of the discussion in this subsection, the functions of library classification can be summarised as follows:

- i) Library classification helps to arrange documents in a systematic order, which is most convenient to the reader and the library staff. It brings related subjects in close proximity, called collocation by Henry Bliss.
- ii) It helps the identification and location of a document on a given subject wanted by a reader whatever may be the size of the library collection. Documents can be quickly retrieved from and replaced to their original positions. The location, lending and replacement of documents are completed mechanically in libraries.
- iii) It helps to arrange documents into organised groups, like pigeonholes; and when a new document is added to the collection, classification finds an appropriate place for the newly added documents among the other documents on the same subject.
- iv) The universe of knowledge is dynamic, continuous, infinite and ever growing. New areas or subjects are being continuously added to the sum total of human knowledge. When the first document on a new subject is added to the library collection, it finds itself at the appropriate place among the already existing related subjects, i.e., among its kith and kin and according to the level of its relationship to them. The functions stated in (ii), (iii), and (iv) are also known as mechanisation of the arrangement.
- v) It helps to organise book displays and exhibitions. It facilitates withdrawal of certain documents from the main collection for special purposes and occasions such as book talks, seminars, symposia, conferences and special exhibitions, on a given topic.
- vi) It helps in recording the daily issue and return of documents on various subjects at the circulation counter of a library. This facilitates the compilation of statistics on issues, which reflect the pattern of use and demand of documents on different subjects. The feedback helps in the allocation of funds to various subjects and guides the book selection policy of the library. The statistics so collected can be included in the annual report of the library.
- vii) Stock verification is a very important aspect of library administration. Library classification, through the medium of shelflists, facilitates an efficient and thorough stock verification of the library's holdings.
- viii) It helps in the compilation of reading lists. This facilitates facet analysis of the reference queries on various aspects and 'indirectly helps in an efficient reference service.
- ix) It helps in the compilation of subject union catalogues and bibliographies of books and other reading material. The union catalogues are very important tools for resource 'sharing and cooperation among libraries.
- x) Classified catalogues are only possible with a classification scheme. In a research library classified catalogues are preferred over dictionary catalogues.



- xi) It assists in systematically deriving subject entries. It also aids the cataloguer to use the alphabetical list of subject headings for deriving specific subject headings through class numbers, i.e., by the chain procedure.
- xii) Classificatory principles are used in subject headings and thesaurus construction.
- xiii) It helps the library staff, especially the classifiers, to be aware of and comprehend the complexities in the development of the universe of knowledge, which is the basis for a systematic arrangement of documents in libraries.
- xiv) Nowadays classification finds immense uses in OPACs (i.e., online public access catalogues). In a computerised catalogue, the class number field can be used in combination with other fields such as language, date or even subject heading and can be used with logical operators such as AND/OR/NOT or the Boolean logical operators. Class numbers can be used to broaden or narrow the searches. Class number searches in combination with other fields increase the efficiency (recall and precision ratios) of the information retrieval system, of which classification is a tool.
- xv) It is the basis for the organisation of knowledge embodied in documents for maximum use. It is the basis for efficient bibliographic control and retrieval of documents. It is a great time saving device for the reader and the library staff. As Hulme puts it, "it is a mechanical time saving device for the discovery of knowledge in books".

### Self Check Exercise

- 3) Make a list of library services/operations where classification proves to be all important facility.

**Note.** i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

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## 2.4 SUMMARY

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It is very essential that various types of collections in a library should be classified and arranged in a helpful sequence so as to maximise their use. In this Unit, we have discussed various types of collections and the factors determining their arrangement. We have also discussed the different approaches of readers to documents in a library, viz., author, title and subject and the importance of the subject approach in the present day libraries. The subject approach of readers can be fully met by classifying the documents on the basis of their thought contents. Library classification is the tool for achieving subject arrangement of documents and their catalogue, entries in a library.

The different connotations in which the term classification is used and the meaning of library classification are dealt with at length on the basis of a few important definitions existing in the library science literature with an extended discussion on Ranganathan's definition and its implications. The purpose and function of library classification are also briefly presented in this Unit. The Unit, thus, helps to understand the vital role library classification plays in all library work and has been aptly described as the Foundation Study for Library -and Information Science.



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## 2.5 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

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- 1) The reader comes to the library for documents. There are three ways in which he may demand these documents. He may know the author's name and use it for demanding the documents. This is known as the author approach. He may not know the author's name in all cases. He may instead know the title of the document and ask for it accordingly. This one is, therefore, known as the title approach. Both these approaches are for the documents that are already known to the reader who has either perhaps once used them, or seen their record somewhere, in a bibliography for example. These two approaches do not pose problems, as they are for known items in a known order. The author and title catalogues are arranged alphabetically and, therefore, their order is a known order. The third situation is where the reader knows neither the author's name nor the title of the document. But he knows the subject on which reading material is wanted. It is known as the subject approach. This last approach is for unknown items and only classification can meet his demand for them.
- 2) The class number of a document is constructed according to the scheme of classification used in a library. This number represents the subject matter of the document and forms the first component of a call number. Since several documents may deal with the same subject, they are all likely to bear the same class number. Therefore to distinguish one document from other documents on the same subject and bearing the same class number, two additional components are required. One of them is the book number, which may represent features like author, publication date, form of presentation, etc. Several methods for forming a book number exist and any of them may be used for the purpose. The book number is, thus, the second component of a call number. For the convenience of readers and also for managing library services more efficiently, libraries establish different collections and different purposes like reference, lending, rare books, microforms, fiction, etc. The collection number (e.g., R for Reference and F for Fiction) represents the collection where the document belongs. This facilitates the recall and replacement of documents. The collection number is, then, the third component of a call number. A call number, thus, consists of the class number, the book number and the collection number prepared with the help of a classification scheme, a book numbering method and a local system of forming separate collections, respectively.
- 3) Library classification facilitates a number of library services and operations, the most important being the reader services. Let us first list these services.
  - Browsing facility because of collocation and systematic arrangement
  - Identification and location of documents in response to demands
  - Bibliographic assistance
  - Reference assistance

Library classification also help in technical services like preparation of-

- Classified catalogues
- Alphabetical subject indexes and thesauri
- Bibliographies
- Union catalogues
- OPACs

Lastly, it helps in the following management operations.

- Collection of statistics
- Stock verification
- Assessment of use and strength of the collection
- Facet analysis of reference enquiries of library users
- Book selection

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## 2.6 KEY WORDS

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**Accession Number** : A stockentry number given to a book in a register called accession register. This number is given serially in the order of receipt.



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|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Artificial Languages</b> | Symbols used in library classification for arrangement of documents on the basis of subject treatment in them.  |
| <b>Boob Number</b>          | The ordinal number which fixes the place of a document in a library relative to other documents having the same class number.   |
| <b>Call Number</b>          | The ordinal number which determines the place of a document on the shelves in a library. The call number consists of the class number, the book number and the collection number. This number is unique for every document. |
| <b>Characteristics</b>      | An attribute by which things are assembled or isolated' in a classification; a basis for division.  |
| <b>Classic</b>              | A work of lasting significance.   |
| <b>Classificationist</b>    | A person who designs a scheme of library classification.  |
| <b>Classifier</b>           | A person who classifies documents in a library using a classification scheme.   |
| <b>Class Number</b>         | An ordinal number , which fixes the place of a subject relative to other subjects in a scheme of classification.  |
| <b>Collection Number</b>    | A symbol denoting the collection, other than the general, where the document belongs.   |
| <b>Collocation</b>          | Placing closely related subjects in close proximity in a scheme of classification. Bringing together in an arrangement all documents pertaining to one and the same subject.  |
| <b>Document</b>             | Any graphic record for communicating thought. It can be preserved through time and communicated through space.  |
| <b>Extension</b>            | Scope of the subject.   |
| <b>Filiatory Sequence</b>   | Sequence of documents on the basis of relationship of subjects.   |
| <b>Fixed Location</b>       | A method of arrangement by marking a book with shelf and other location marks so that its position on a particular shelf would always be the same.  |
| <b>Intension</b>            | Depth of the subject.   |
| <b>Notation</b>             | A system of ordinal numbers representing the classes in a scheme of library classification. It files its: position relative' to other documents in a collection.  |
| <b>Parallel Sequence</b>    | Two or more collections classified according to one and the same scheme and displaying a uniform sequence of classes.   |
| <b>Shelf List</b>           | A list of books in a library, the entries being brief and usually in card form arranged in the same classified sequence as the books on the shelves.  |

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## 2.7 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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