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Documentation and Its Facets: Being a Symposium of Seventy Papers by
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Part N

FUTURE OF DOCUMENTATION

CHAPTER N1

FUTURE OF DOCUMENTATION IN INDIA

S R Ranganathan and S Parthasarathy

0 Introduction

Development of documentation is a function varying parallel with the development of research and particularly of research-in-series by a team of workers including many at different removes from a self-helping genius. Such a team research is itself a function varying parallel with the development of industrialisation. Industrialisation in its turn is in the last analysis a function of population pressure and wakefulness of a community. India has now entered the ascending phase of her current cultural cycle after recovery from her rest period of a few centuries. The wakefulness of the community is therefore on the increase. Also, India's population pressure has crossed the line of balance between itself and the natural and near-natural commodities, and the form and the quantity of means of transport available today. The 1961 census has revealed a 20% increase in population. Therefore, intensification of industrialisation is inevitable in the future. To make it give the best results, intensification of research in pure, applied, and social sciences, including management science, is inevitable. Consequently concerted research in different subject complexes is inevitable in the future. The research team should draw heavily hereafter from the intellectual strata more and more removed from the thin stratum of men of genius. To prevent dissipation of research potential in such a team, documentation should be intensified. It should be extended over several subjects now neglected. It should also be intensified in the subjects already being covered. This will increase the dimensions of documentation in every one of its facets. And the factor increasing its dimension is the almost exponential rate of growth in the realm of micro documents in thousands of specialised depth classes. This will call for a gradual change in the organisational set up for documentation in India. To make the change gradual and to prevent wastage due to the burning of the boat in order to start afresh at frequent intervals,

we should take a peep into the future of documentation beyond the Third Plan Period described in part M. We should take such a peep in the following sequence:

- 1 Social Sciences;
- 2 New fields in applied sciences;
- 3 Organisation of documentation work;
- 4 Physical production of documentation lists;
- 5 Documentation service;
- 6 Translation service;
- 7 Documentation standards; and
- 8 The unpredictable emergent evolution characterising society and its needs.

1 Social Sciences

Research in social sciences is just taking shape. Our vast industrial undertakings, baffling monetary problems, political activities, international relations, demographic and other sociological problems, and colossal educational development can no longer be met by the sheer flair and commonsense in a few leaders, nor by our looking back and tying oneself down to precedents in a traditional bureaucratic way. The factors involved are far too many for control by flair. The scale of operations is far too vast for guidance by puny precedents. New thought should be created. Its creation will have to be fed by new thought produced in social sciences in every part of the world. The learned periodicals in the different branches of social sciences should be documented promptly and served to political leaders and administrators to help them in making decisions and to those engaged in social science research.

11 GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

The field of social sciences is now being flooded by government documents. They are not yet properly organised and put to best use. Nothing whatever has yet been done in the documentation of these source materials. A tremendous pioneering work remains to be done in this field.

12 PRELIMINARY WORK

To survey this field, a Library Seminar on Research in Social Sciences was held in New Delhi from 2 to 4 Jan 1959. Based on

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