

SATIJA (MP) and JHAND (Sukhdev Singh) (2023). Colon Classification: Origin, Development, and Future Prospects; Assisted by Amit Tiwari and Amit Dubey. ESS ESS Publications, New Delhi, xxviii, 283p.; Ill.; 22cm. (SRFLIS Series in Library Science, edited by Dr. K. P. Singh; No. 19). ISBN: 978-93-92594-66-3 (Hb). Rs. 1275.

Colon Classification (CC) first published in 1933 came bit late when all the present-day library classifications were well entrenched. Even the DDC had been introduced in India in 1915 by Asa Don Dickinson. Indeed, it is difficult to switch over to a new classification system for a library howsoever meritorious it may be. Therefore, in terms of its use the CC is not in the club of three big classification systems namely, DDC, UDC and the LCC. But by all accounts, it is technically superior to all the library classifications. With its publications and subsequently its theory enshrined in his magnum opus the Prolegomena (1937) it ushered a revolution in classification theory and practice. It brought a paradigm change not only in shelf arrangement of books, in what is called APUPA pattern, but in all indexing languages and information retrieval. All the classification designed post-CC such as the BBK, BSO and BC-2 are faceted in nature. Old system such as the UDC, BC and DDC have adopted faceting to the extent possible to make their system work with micro subjects. Special depth subject classifications for micro literature designed on the methods of facet analysis are numerous. Present age is the age of faceted classification ushered in by the CC.

Dr. M. P. Satija, who has authored textbooks, numerous articles in research journals and encyclopaedias on the CC, is well known for his expertise in this area. Therefore, this book dwelling on the history of the CC co-authored with his research student Dr Sukhdev Singh Jhand is a unique one. A full-length history of the CC fills a gap in our literature.

Based on the exegesis of the seven editions the whole work has been divided into seven chapters besides three important and informative appendices. The first is a comprehensive list of principles and canons, the second a chronology of the CC from 1924 to 2024, and the third is the list of people associated with the CC. The preface sets the tone and reflects on its present neglect and bleak future. First chapter traces the influence of people and pre-existing classification on S R Ranganathan which inspired the creation of a new system to overcome the problems of the existing systems. The second chapter traces the genesis and identifies the forces leading to its birth—meaning that its time had come. Its development and refinements have been described through its seven editions (1933/1987). The third chapter studies the developments of its various features and components such as the main classes, notation, terminology, canons, devices and fundamental categories. It is a two-pronged history chronological as well as conceptual the fourth chapter illustrates with examples the impact of the CC on classification methods and various classification systems and the theory of classification in general. Chapter fifth is exclusively devoted to the last 7th edition (1987) fully explaining its features and its consistencies. The next chapter describes some post-CC7 trends and attempts to align it to the e-databases and online systems including automatic synthesis of the CC class numbers. The most important chapter, considering the CC and Ranganathan works as national heritage, advocates the formation of “National Mission for the Revival of Ranganathan Legacy (NMRRL) and pleads for the award of Bharat Ratana posthumously to the great son of India who brought glory to the country with his highly innovative work. The CC is a world heritage which must be conserved, preserved, and sustained. Do not make it a museum piece. The book in lucid language and attractive get up presents the history of a great system in a simplified way and suggests plans for its revival. This book, the first full history of the CC, is highly recommended for scholars of classification, indexing and information retrieval.

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