DIRECTORY OF INDIAN SCIENTIFIC PERIODICALS 1964*

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The Directory of Indian Scientific Periodicals just published by INSDOC is an important addition to the Indian reference books. It contains a list of seven hundred and twenty five scientific periodicals current upto the end of 1963, including annual reports of scientific and technical institutions. This gives a measure of the scientific activity in the country.

Development of Scientific Research

It may not be out of place here to outline in brief the evolution of scientific periodicals in India. The origin and growth of the publication of scientific periodicals in India almost synchronise with the establishment and development of scientific institutions and societies. Modern scientific research in India begins with the founding of the great Asiatic Society in 1784. The research findings of the Asiatic Society were recorded in the Asiatick Researches, the first Indian periodical published in 1788. In 1832, when James Prinsep was the secretary of the Asiatic Society, the title of the periodical was changed to the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, amalgamating Gleanings in Science which appeared in 1829 as a venture of James Dowland Herbert, Deputy Surveyor General.

The Madras Literary Society was founded in 1818 and was incorporated with the Madras Auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society. The organ of the Society, Journal of Literature and Science ran into seventeen volumes between 1833 and 1894.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a good deal of scientific work was being done in the surveys and departments of Government, and in some private societies. Medical research was organised in 1896. The Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta was formed in 1823 and its Transactions which began publication in the same year, was the first professional medical periodical published in India. A number of other medical journals were started during the century.

The Agricultural Society of India was established in 1820. In 1823, its name was changed to the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India and it published its Transactions and a monthly journal.

The Bombay Natural History, Society, founded in 1863, publishes a journal since 1866.

The establishment of the great Trigonometrical Survey in 1818 (which in 60 years became the Survey of India), the Geological Survey of India in 1851, the Botanical Survey of India in 1899 and a few other such organisations contributed a great deal to the growth of scientific work in India, publishing their own periodicals.

Five universities were established during the nineteenth century; but these were only affiliating universities mainly concerned with the conduct of examinations and awarding degrees and not much research activity was there until the beginning of the twentieth century.

But with the reorientation of university education resulting in the increased facilities for postgraduate teaching and research, the tempo of scientific research was increased considerably in the twentieth century. As a natural consequence, publication activity also showed a corresponding increase and many universities started publishing their periodicals. There are more than fifty universities to-day and most of them have their own periodicals.

Another important and significant development during the period was the emergence of specialised institutes established both on private initiative and by government. Medicine and agriculture received special

* *Directory of Indian scientific periodicals, 1964. New Delhi, Insdoc, 1964. Pp 133.*

attention. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 1911, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 1929 were established to take care of medicine and agriculture respectively.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, scientific societies and associations of general and specialised types began to be formed, mainly for meetings and conferences. The Indian Mathematical Society (1907), the Institution of Engineers (1908), the Indian Psychoanalytical Society (1922), Bio-chemical Society (1934) are a few among the specialised types of societies. The publication of journals was one of the important activities of most of these learned bodies.

Among the associations of a general type, the Indian Science Congress Association, established in 1914, has been organising annual sessions ever since. The Proceedings are in three parts, the last one covering the abstracts of papers submitted at the Conference. The United Provinces Academy of Sciences was started in 1930 which was renamed the National Academy of Sciences (Allahabad) in 1936. The Indian Academy of Sciences (Bangalore) was established in 1934 and the National Institute of Sciences (New Delhi) in 1935. All these have their own periodicals.

With all these development, it became imperative to have an organisation to coordinate scientific work in the country. There was also the urgent need for rapid industrial production to meet the requirements of the Second World War. In response to these, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research was brought into existence in 1942 and it soon established a number of National Laboratories. With the advent of independence, scientific research in the country received a tremendous boost and today there are as many as thirty-four National Laboratories and Institutes, each one devoting itself to a specialised field. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research brings out six research journals and most of the National Laboratories and Institutes publish their own periodicals.

The Defence Science Organisation, established in 1949, has a chain of laboratories in the field of defence science and publishes its journals.

The Atomic Energy Commission was established in 1948. The Atomic Energy Establishment, Trombay, established in 1957, has been the national centre for research and development in the field of atomic energy. It publishes a documentation periodical and a few others which are primarily for internal use.

So, it is only the fitness of things that the Directory of Indian Scientific Periodicals is published now, as the"first step towards the consolidation and servicing of scientific communication in this country". It is also stated in the "Introduction" that the Indian Current Science Abstracts will be the logical consequence of such a step".

Although, nothing has been said regarding what exactly will come under the scope of "scientific periodicals", it can be seen from the directory that it includes not only periodicals of the traditional discipline of sciences but also subjects like Psychology, Metrology, Architecture and Industries, etc. But this only extends the value and use of the Directory.

No criteria has been mentioned for the selection of periodicals, but "periodicals of merely news interest and 'popular' in the newspaper sense of the term have been omitted." The inclusion of about one hundred and twenty annual reports of research institutions in the country enhances the use of the Directory, as reports from one of the important source material for research.

The majority of periodicals listed in the Directory are obviously in the English language, but a select list about sixty periodicals in the regional languages of India, one in French and half a dozen bilingual ones are also included. Hindi tops the list in the number of Indian language periodicals and the other languages are Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Bengali, Kannada, Tamil and Urdu. It is stated that "a scrutiny of the Indian language periodicals show that the main attempt on the part of the editor was to popularise science". However, mention must be made of the Hindi periodical "Vijnan Parishad Anusandhan Patrika" which publishes research papers of high quality.

The entries have been arranged by the UDC and also serially numbered.

The Directory has been compiled in accordance with the recommendations made by UNESCO (Unesco Bulletin for Libraries 1961, 15(2), 91-94) for the preparation of such directories. Each entry contains infor-

mation in the order given below:

1 Title. Its standard abbreviations for which the World List of Scientific Periodicals published in the year 1900-1950 has been followed.

2 Language symbols of non-English and multilingual periodicals

3 Year of first publication wherever available.

4 Address of the publishing body and/or sponsoring or editorial organisations.

5 Contents and nature of articles. Following particulars are listed here: Abstracts or index of articles, Author's summary (or synopsis), Book reviews, Informative articles, Notes & News, Original articles, Popular articles, Patent information, Research reports, Statistical data, Short communications, and Standard specifications.

6 Frequency of publication

7 Rate of subscription in Indian and foreign currency wherever available.

8 Information as to where the periodical is indexed and abstracted.

Information regarding "contents and nature of articles" in periodicals is particularly noteworthy. This will facilitate considerably the international abstracting and indexing agencies in giving a more adequate coverage to worthwhile Indian periodicals. This will also be very useful in building up Indian periodical collection in Indian as well as foreign libraries.

The indication of the inclusion of "Book Reviews" in periodicals will help the process of book selection in libraries. The novel way of indicating the frequency of publication by a fraction, the numerator of which denoting the number of issues per volume, and the denominator indicating the number of months for which a volume runs, is interesting. This takes care of the problem of mentioning the periodicity of a publication whose frequencies are somewhat odd.

A fairly representative list of documentation periodicals are given wherein the Indian scientific periodicals are indexed or abstracted. The importance of giving this information needs no elaboration.

There is a title index given at the end which refers to the serial number of the periodical in the classified part of the directory. Under "Reports" all the annual reports of research institutions are collected together for easy reference. There is no subject index. Perhaps, the utility of the directory would have increased if a subject index had also been given.

There are a few errors, but in a directory of this kind which involves assembling a number of details, such errors are probably inevitable.

The get up of the publication is excellent.

The directory is not a priced publication.