Book Review

The Theory and Practice of the Dewey Decimal Classification System / M.P. Satija .-Oxford : Chandos Publishing, 2007. xix, 206p.ISBN-13:9781843342342

Professor M. P. Satija's latest contribution to DDC literature is "The theory and practice of the Dewey Decimal Classification System".

There is no doubt that DDC is the most popular library classification in the world. Among the many factors that have contributed to its popularity, support given by the writers on DDC is paramount. However, the importance of this factor does not seem to be discussed sufficiently. Wide usage of a classification system is not possible without the assistance of writers who expose, clarify, evaluate and prepare guide- books, etc. on it.

Prof. Satija's book is to be evaluated within this context. His contribution to DDC literature is unique. Especially, for the popularity of DDC in South Asian countries the contribution made by his publications are enormous. He is one of the few Asian experts to work with famous DDC editors such as John P. Comaromi. It is not an exaggeration to recognize him as the DDC guru in the region.

His present work is a comprehensive guide to the DDC 22nd edition. However, in elucidating the concepts the author does not confine only to DDC 22. He briefly covers entire history and development of the DDC system into its faceted stage as at present.

The book contains 14 chapters, 4 appendices, glossary of terms, references and further reading and an index.

Chapter one illustrates the history and development of DDC through its various editions in a nutshell. To make the setting

he traces the classification history prior to 1876. Not a single milepost in the history of DDC has been dropped out in this brief description.

Governance and the revision of the DDC, the theme in the second chapter, show how DDC is "lengthening shadow" of its creator. It is to be noted here that this theme is not generally dealt with in most of the DDC guide- books. Complete understanding of the DDC demands an understanding of its formal and organized revision policy.

Chapter three introduces the four volumes of the text of DDC. Especially, volumes 2 and 3, the schedules of classes have been introduced with all necessary details in this chapter.

Basic plan and structure of the DDC is described in chapter four. This chapter sets the DDC in the general context of classification theory. Expertise of the author is reflected through lucid clarifications of notation, main classes, chain and array structures and, hospitality.

Chapter five makes DDC users familiar with the subject analysis and locating class numbers. Common problems faced by classifiers in determining subjects and assigning numbers are addressed here.

When a document covers a number of facets classifiers find it problematic to assign a class number. In such occasions there should be a method to decide which aspect to be represented and which to be ignored. Addressing this problem chapter six deals with tables and rules for precedence of classes in DDC. It covers all basic components of the issue in a pragmatic way.

Chapters 7-12 deal with number building techniques of DDC. Basic devices and the use of Tables are discussed with suitable examples in these chapters. These, as a whole, show the author's dexterity in the presentation of complex devices in clear terms.

Dealing with multi-topical subjects has been discussed in detail in chapter thirteen. Examples and clarifications given here are sufficient enough to understand the zigzag process of multiple synthesis.

Relative index of DDC is one of its unique features. All terms used in the schedules and tables are arranged in it general to the specific order and it is an alphabetical key to the content of the DDC. Chapter fourteen gives a comprehensive and analytical description of the relative index of DDC. It is a manual to operate it

The appendices are a valuable addition to the book. These contain a broad chronology of the DDC, table of DDC editors, revision tutorial and answers to the questions in the revision tutorial. Students themselves are able to test their understanding on virtually every aspect of the DDC through the revision tutorial.

Glossary at the end of the book defines and describes the important terms used in the DDC in simple and clear terms. The author has given a list of references and further reading; It is indeed a valuable collection of latest publications on DDC. The index provides quick and easy access to the major terms and concepts contained in the book.

Physically the book is a handy publication printed on quality paper. The publisher is famous for books in the field of library science, information and knowledge management.

Satija's work is more than a guide- book. It is a thoughtfully prepared reference work on DDC as well. Therefore, it is highly useful to students of DDC, librarians and library teachers.

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