

DOCUMENTATION CENTRES' MEET 2

GOA, September 26,27,28,1987
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

This is the report of the second annual Documentation Centres' Meet - DCM 2 - that was held at the Baga Retreat House, Goa on September 26, 27, and 28, 1987.

DCM 2 was a natural consequence of, and a follow up to, DCM 1 that was held in Bombay in December 1986. It would not be out of place here to recapitulate the original motivation that led us to hold DCM 1, the first meeting of its kind of documentation centres from all over India. (Prior to this there had been another meeting in New Delhi, called by the Delhi Forum and BUILD, in July 1984 - Consultation of Documentation Centres. While this meeting too had objectives that all the participants identified with, viz. collaborative efforts, enough clarity did not emerge at the discussions for any kind of concrete follow up to take place. In retrospect all of us realised that the main reason for this setback was perhaps our own lack of clarity about our role as documentation centres in the social movements we had set out to work with.)

The Centre for Education and Documentation (CED) took on documentation as its main and primary activity in about 1978. As our documentation material, and with it our experience, grew so did the acutely felt need to share it with other centres and to learn from their experience. Also, we realised that the true efficacy of centres like ours rested definitely in establishing and nurturing close contact with one another, so that we could share our skills and our efforts with one another. This would also go a long way in avoiding duplication, which we were sure was happening on a widespread scale. With this intention in mind we got in touch with the BUILD Documentation Centre and outlined our views to them. The first confirmation of our need is itself the fact that despite being in the same city for more than six years BDC and CED had hardly met as centres, far less entered into any joint programmes. And the first reassurance that our idea was over-determined came from BDC's immediate and enthusiastic agreement with it.

Having agreed to the plan that a documentation centres' meet was long overdue, we sat down to work out a detailed agenda. Patently obvious to both of us was the question that if any kind of sharing of documentation efforts and material was to be initiated we would need a vehicle - a language - which would serve to link different centres with their different sources of information, techniques, aims, and audiences with one another. There emerged the first step - a standardised index card. This would be that vehicle which would serve to join all of us whenever we chose to, on any project we wanted. A rough outline was painstakingly worked out and kept ready for all the other participants of DCM 1. This exercise was also an experiment to test our faith in our work ie if we truly believed that t*a, up and *tifying information but also maintaining it in a form that was easily accessible to lay inquirers, or in other words to the non-elites, then we should be able to work out an indexing format that would only enhance this objective. With this as our first platform we looked into several other areas of joint efforts.

By now all of the participants of DCMs 1&2 are aware of not only the index card, but all the other joint projects, like Journal 12, special bibliographies, joint list of sources, thesaurus of classification systems and keywords, training in computerised systems of documentation, etc. that all of us undertook at these two meets. There have, of course been delays and some hitches, too in implementing these efforts. But then, these are always expected. Teething problems will always be there. And, also we must not forget that what we are trying to achieve is quite a novel goal; and with entirely self-created methods, too.

On this optimistic note we look forward to DCM 3, due to be held at Asha Kendra, Puntamba in September 1988.

Note: This report has been prepared in a dual format. The "technical" sessions in which most of the decisions were taken regarding the finalisation of the index card format and its various conventions, have been reported in a much more structured fashion. The other sessions - presentation-and-discussion-of-problems-sessions and the evaluation sessions - have been reported more or less as they took place, with the name of each participant given in parentheses.

REPORT OF DCM 2 GOA, SEPTEMBER 26,27,28,1988

Introduction

The first session opened with John positing this second meeting of Documentation Centres against the background of the expectations and (probable) apprehensions of the individual participants present regarding the question of "networking" among documentation centres. It was made clear that this forum did not intend to form a network aimed at getting different organisation under the patronage of one organisation, thereby leading to a subtle subordination of the "junior" partners by the senior, bigger or moneyed organisations. While this may certainly be happening in a lot of networks we do not expect to form such relationships here. This network should be one that allows for interfacing between various kinds of documentation centres with each one retaining its individuality and independence. The effort at this and other such meets should be to evolve a physical structure that is conducive to the possibility of cooperation and inter-exchange. The index card can be the crucible or vehicle for such a cooperative effort, an interfacing medium. (John). But wouldn't interfacing mean that different centres have to stick to the same format? And won't this reduce individual freedom?(Krishna) We should standardise certain fields only. For example, we should standardise our classification system.(Babu). Yes we can try.(Saumen). But this is not possible, as the classification system represents each centre's thrust and framework.(Lakshmi). Suggestion dropped! We should only try to standardise indexing

styles. Interfacing

First let us try and see what level of cooperation or interfacing is required. It may be that we do not necessarily have to standardise everything or most parts of our systems. The attempt and the belief here is to standardise styles of entry and not the content, such as the classification system or anything that marks the distinctness of any group. Each centre has its own classification system for its local needs; but when a joint index is planned we may need a special division of issues within that particular subject for the purpose of the index and this may be standardised. For joint indexes or projects, it is sufficient if we can physically separate the material pertaining to the various subjects being tackled in the index. (John)

What are the problems that various centres may have with regard to standardising the index card? One big obstacle may be that many of the Centres do not have any indexing system at all! (Anjum) For smaller Centres, no index cards are necessary at the moment.(Babu) While every centre need not/have index cards or index lists, all those who want to participate in joint ventures will have to make cards or lists of at least their contribution to the joint indexes or bibliographies. We cannot have people sending the details of their documentation in an incomplete manner or simply xerox copies of all the materials or of the front pages of publications, or of their acquisition registers if these do not contain all the data required for the index, as this will entail a great extra burden for the compiling organisation.(John) All agreed. But then there are practical problems in indexing, mainly one of womanpower(Ammu). Also we cant be expected to index everything, including all newspaper clippings.(Abha). Of course not! That would be impractical. But the minimum that all centres would expect would be an index of all the books, documents and important articles from periodicals and journals. (Anjum).

There seems to be some confusion about the words we are using. Usually, indexing means making a listing of documents on a particular subject and cataloguing means making separate cards for each document.(Manish). Since we have been using the word indexing, let us continue to do so. Besides the whole process that we are referring to does not only constitute making cards but also making a listing from them for bibliographies.(Lakshmi). All agreed.

Then some centres brought up some of the practical problems that ^ they face regarding accessibility to their material. One question was "Will these index cards help in enhancing our own retrievability of newspaper clippings?" Well it certainly will, except that it would be a monumental task to index each clipping - and there are intermediate systems that may be used. For example labeling each clipping-file with the period that it covers helps. Then "Does participating in joint indexing programmes mean we have to maintain index cards of all good material for all subjects?" Well no; not unless you want to. Within the centre the extent of indexing activity will depend upon the needs and limitations of that centre. For joint indexing the only commitment would be for that particular subject which would be chosen collectively. "Not everyone may be in a position to respond fully to joint indexing projects, as not everyone has achieved a sufficient level of efficiency in their work." Fine. Each one will respond according to his or her capabilities. "For centres that have material in more than one language is it essential to have separate classification systems for each language?" Certainly not. At most if the centre feels better it may maintain the material separately according to language; but the classification need not be separate.

Then the discussion moved to the indexing format. Index card format

The first and the main area of compatibility between centres that needs to be taken up now is the format for indexing. While it is not essential for all centres to have indexes or catalogues of documentation, it is necessary to have some conventions or norms for doing so. Here again it should be remembered that all centres need not have identical index cards. It is sufficient to have compatibility - in the sense that all the fields agreed upon should be present in the card so that information could easily be transferred from one type of card/record to another.

FORMAT FOR STANDARDISED INDEX-CARD

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*****TOCHECK***** (other class nos) (or
subjects/SAC/author Type Class no Filer code multiple cards) fZOJ Title..... fUsa maximum of 65
characters including* spaces ^Author..... Use maximum^ of 40 Characters^ Publication/publisher
..... Maximum of 30 Characters^ Place of Publication ..... f2 Characters J Issue.. f6 Characters
Date.././.. Pages... characters Publication Code ...fj cnaracj Kind..f3 cAJ Remarks.. fLO cnaj
Usability Code . fone cnaracterj keywords-----fMajfijnujn of 6J characters
including* spaces. J Abstract be used for joint indexes & MbiogrrapniesJ ;other centres' Type
Classno Filer code centre code
*****/TOCHECK*****
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EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DIFFERENT CODES AND FIELDS

Accessibility Code: The accessibility code (not to be confused with the term accession code used in libraries) is a set of three fields that together uniquely identify a particular document and indicate its location. It consists of (1) Type Code (code indicating type of material) (2) Classification Number (3) Filer code (location indicating code).

Accessibility code is usually to be written in the right-hand-top corner of the index card. But for centres who already have cards and are using this spot for some other details, another place can be given to the entire accessibility code.

However, all the three parts of this code must necessarily be written together, in one line.)

Type: (One space). This is a one letter code which indicates the form in which the document exists. (More accurately, it is the physically distinct sections of a centre, distinguished from each other by the form of the document and not subject.) This comes first since in all centres, books, journals and box-files are stored separately and hence type code has to form the first indicator of location.

The following are the codes for different types of material, agreed upon at the meet:

Newspaper clippings kept in files, folders or box files Other material in the file besides, or instead of, newspaper clippings; eg. other loose sheets that cannot stand on their own, like pamphlets, small articles, circulars, etc. (A separate C section for newspaper cuttings could exist) B - Books, and all other material accorded the status of books and kept with books in the library cupboard. R - Reports, including documents, studies, research papers, government documents, other data material which is neither kept in the library of books nor in the box files . (These may also include some special issues of journals which are given document status.) N - Newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, if kept separately and have a distinct identity (Please note that if the newsletter is kept in a box file alongwith the clippings it will be F)

G - Government reports, inquiry reports, Census, gazetteers, etc. only if kept separately. (If these are kept alongwith other reports in the reports section they will be R, or if they are in the Jbooks library they will be B and so on.)

W - Workshop, conference, or seminar papers, if they are kept separately (like they are in VHAI, CERC and RCWS)

Annual reports of corporations, NGOs, foundations, institutes, etc. if kept separately J Journals, including those magazines which are preserved in full and bound or tied together. Access to these is normally through indexes.

M - Magazines, which are neither cut and kept alongwith the clippings nor are they preserved for many years and nor are they indexed. Very often these are just kept for a year and at the end of the year perhaps a few articles may be cut and kept elsewhere. (Most people felt that this was a redundant code but nonetheless it was decided to retain it in case someone did need it.) D - Mainly data-sheets, statistical material E - Encyclopedias, directories, dictionaries, if not kept as R or B I - Indices, bibliographies, catalogues K - Book reviews V - Video or film material. S - Slide shows A - Audio material like cassettes. P - Posters, photographs, flip charts, individual slides etc. T - Maps, cartographic material X - Micro film, micro fiche, epidiascopic material

Classification number: (10 spaces for this field.) This is the classification number or code given to the material by the centre according to the subject. It was emphasised that this code is particular to each centre; it cannot be standardised. Each centre has to have its own code, and if it doesn't already have a classification system but needs one, it could easily be created with the help of some experienced centre.

Note 1: In many centres that do not have a proper classification system, while there is a serial number for the file, it is usually referred to only by the subject. The best coding system for access in such cases is the Subject Abbreviated Code f&ACj. The first three letters of the first word as represented in the list of root-keywords for that subject will be used. Break-up if any will be indicated by the optional 4th & 5th letter in Lower case. Eg. Housing-Alternatives will be HOUAl

Women (General) WOM Women-Health WOMhe

Women's Movement WOMmo

This is particularly useful for those who have only a few categories and do not need codes, or for those who keep their files alphabetically ordered.)

Note 2: Those who do not have any classification code or number and do not wish to evolve one can leave this blank.

Filer code: (10 spaces for this code.) This is the third part of the accessibility code. This indicates the precise physical location of the material, within the broad location allotted to that subject. Since location is specific for different centres this aspect has been left entirely upto the individual centre. Here again it was stressed that this code is peculiar to each centre and cannot be standardised.)

Note: Just to give you an example we give below the convention followed by CED. For books the first letter indicates the surname of the author (or the lead author in case of multiple authors). The next 3 spaces are for number indicating the serial order of their acquisition within this particular class no & author letter. For reports, the filer code is a serial number within the first letter of our classification which indicates the broad area under which the document falls. For magazines & clippings, we do not yet have a system but plan to utilise the first six spaces for the date of the publication. Following this the next three spaces will show the publication code. Likewise other centres must be having their own retrieval logic which they can use in creating a filer code, if they do not already have one, that is. Title: (68 spaces for this field.) If the title begins with an article (a, an, the) then this should be put at the end of the rest of the title after a comma eg. Wealtn of Fome Nations, TAE.

When it is a chapter of a book, the title of the chapter is written in inverted commas followed by In in curved brackets, and then the title of the book.

For example: "Struggle of the Warlis, The " Peasant Movements in India(NEED TO CHECK-vk)

If the material is in a language other than English the title is written using the Indian National Bibliographic transliteration system, followed by the English translation in brackets and indication of what language. For example: -Samajvad ("Socialism, RindiJ Vi^ras Pan Xbna Satni ^Development, but for tvnom ?, MaratniJ(NEED TO CHECK-vk)

For a series, the convention should be as follows: "Lav is an ass, Tne" - J5J Legral Aid Series T"Women Workers in tne

F^ee 2Tade Zone of Sri LanJra" - Voice of Women Publication Series Wo 1.(NEED TO CHECK-vk)

For conference, seminar or workshop papers the convention will be "Wording* Women's Problems" - A paper presented at tAe National Conference on Women, Cnandigrarn, November 1936.

Author: (40 spaces for this field.) If the author is the editor of the collection then "Ed" will be written in bracket eg. Rajabali, Anjum ^EdJ(NEED TO CHECK-vk)

Surname will be entered first followed by comma and then name or initials. eg. RajaJbali, Anjum

If there are multiple authors, the following format will be used: Surname, Name & Surname, Name and others, eg. Rajabali, Anjum , Menon, Lakshmi and others.

Publication/publisher: (30 spaces for this field.) If the document concerned is ait, book, the name of the publisher will be entered in this field. If it is a journal or newspaper, the title of the publication will be entered. If it is a study or report or thesis, the name of the institution publishing such a report will be entered. If this is too long to fit, abbreviations should be used. Service Centre is making a list of standardised abbreviated forms which will be sent to everyone by December 87.

Note: For conference papers the name of the conference should be put in the publication/publisher field.

Publication code: (Three spaces for this field.) For magazines, newspapers and other periodicals a standard list of codes has been made, and all centres should use that code for this field.

Place: (12 spaces for this field.) While place of publication has a separate field, on the card this will appear immediately after the publication field preceded by a comma. For example, the publication and place fields together will read - The Hindu, Delhi.

Issue: (Six spaces for this field.) The volume number and issue number, if relevant, would occupy this field. For example: Volume -gr 122 Number 11 would be written as 122/11. For magazines and journals that don't have vol. no. indicated, and for books and non-periodicals, this field would of course be left blank.

Date: (Eight spaces for this field.) The date of the document will always be written in the form of dd/mm/yy i.e. September 26, 1987 will be denoted by 26/09/87. For documents which do not boast of a date but have seasonal/festival-based periodicity the following standard conventions were adopted:

Spring 1987 - 01/03/87

Summer 1987 - 01/06/87

Autumn 1987 - 01/09/87

Winter 1987 - 01/12/87

Easter 1987 - 01/04/87

Holi 1987 - 01/03/87

Dussehra/Pooja 1987 - 01/10/87

Diwali 1987 - 01/11/87

Usually for periodicals the issue is identified by the first date given on it. e.g. September 1987 issue will be dated 01/09/87. Likewise September 15-30, 1987 issue will be dated as 15/09/87. For books which only carry the copyright year the first of January of that year will be its date for us.

Note: The above convention will be followed for all publications except for annual reports wherein the last date of the period covered by the report will be the date entered on the card. e.g. BUILD Annual Report 1987 will have its date on our card as 31/12/87.

In case of books which have had multiple editions, without revision or updating, the date of the first edition will hold good for us. If the document has absolutely no indication of its date of publication, then it is better to write "Received on dd/mm/yy" on the document before putting it in the file or the cupboard, and in the card leave the index field blank.

Pages: (10 spaces for this field.) If the publication is a book and the particular index card refers to the entire book or report, this field will carry the total no. of pages in the publication. If it is part of a book or journal, or is a magazine article then the page numbering will be written as under: xxxx-xxx or xxx-xxx or xx-xxxxx (this means that the maximum number of characters including the hyphen should be ten.)

Kind of Publication: (Three spaces for this field.) This code is being used to describe the material being documented. Three spaces have been provided to give three attributes to a particular document. a) Common codes - The following codes have been accepted as codes that will have a common meaning for all documentation centres and will be only used to denote that: B - Bibliography, index, listing of material C - Creative writing, paintings, artistic work, etc. D - Directory, address lists, funding resources G - Government reports, policy statements, white papers H - Historical accounts I - In-depth and comprehensive coverage of the issue J - Journalistic account K - Case studies, interviews M - Manual, instructional text, guide book N - Descriptive account S - Statistical material, data monitors, updates, T - Theoretical, ideological, analytical or conceptual writings V - Visuals included W - Introduction, preface, etc. as in Seminar's "The Problem" X - Book review Z - Current comments, edits etc. F - Fiction b) Reserved codes - The following letters have been kept in reserve for use as common codes in the future. E,L,O,R,U. c) Free codes - The

following letters are left free for centres who wish to have special descriptors/kind codes. A,P,Q,Y,Z. Usability code: (One space for this field.) This one letter code indicates what the users' relationship with the document will be. This field is also optional. The following characters have been reserved for the following expressions: R - Reference only B - Borrowable S - For sale as well as borrowable = For free distribution; and borrowable when out of stock X - For restricted reference only Y - For restricted sale Z - For restricted borrowing only. L - Not physically present at the centre; located elsewhere P - For sale only N - For reference, but non-reproducible

Remarks: (10 spaces for this field). This is a remarks field wherein you can enter any specially required information like Price Rs:--, or odd size therefore kept separately, or out of print (if for sale) or any particular characteristic which needs to be mentioned but is not covered by any other code, etc.

Keywords: (63 spaces for this field.)

Keywords are basically any words by which a user may seek access to any material. (A) In the computerised system, keywords provide good access points. (In fact keywords are also considered sufficient access points.) (B) In manual systems, where catalogues are arranged subjectwise separate cards will have to be made for each keyword. (1) Where catalogues are kept alphabetically, the keyword will have to be written on the top left corner. (2) where catalogues are kept according to classification numbers, the classification number corresponding to each keyword should be written in the top left corner.

It must be remembered that the accessibility code will have to be written on the top right hand corner or in some other easily spottable place in each of the cards. For convenience of arrangement of the cards itself each classification number can carry a filer code after the decimal place, provided a separate register is kept to keep track of the last number utilised. Centres may also want to write just below the keyword for that card, all the other keywords or classification numbers being used for that document.

Abstract: (Usually a maximum 5000 spaces for this field. However if need be this field need not have any limit; may depend upon the actual physical space available on the card or form.) Lakshmi's paper was referred to in this session, and the different types of abstracts that she had outlined were discussed. It was realised that for documentation centres it was usually the descriptive type of abstract that was more relevant. Everyone agreed that in the abstract it was better to not let the indexer's views enter the card; preferable to be objective. Abstracts would then usually be a summary of the document of variable length (approximately 100 words). (No field for source of abstract was considered necessary.)

Codes for different centres:

ADS for Academy of Development Sciences, Karjat

AIC for AICUF, Madras

AK for Asha Kendra, Puntamba

ASH for ASHIRWAD, Bangalore

BDC for Build Documentation Centre, Bombay

BCI for Bhopal Group for Information and Action

CDS for Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum

CEC for Centre for Education and Communication, New Delhi

CED for Centre for Education and Documentation, Bombay

CEN for CENDIT, New Delhi

CHD for Centre for Human Development and Social Change, Madras

CIE for Centre for Informal Education and Development Studies

(CIEDS), Bangalore

CLC for Christian Centre for Labour Concerns, Bangalore CNE for CINEMART Foundation, New Delhi

CPS for Centre for the Promotion of Social Concerns, Dindigul, CRC for Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad CSA for Centre for Social Analysis, Madurai CSE for Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi CSR for CISRS, Bangalore

CSS for Centre for Social Studies, Surat

CWD for Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi DEF for Delhi Forum, New Delhi DRC for Development Resource Centre, Madras EKL for Eklavya, Bhopal EQU for Equations, Bangalore

FRC for Foundation for Research in Community Health, Bombay GRD for GRID, Goa ICR for ICRA, Bangalore

ICS for Indian Council for Social Science Research, New Delhi IED for IEDRC, Bombay IK for Ishvani Kendra, Poona

ISS for Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi JAG for Jagori,
New Delhi

JWB for Joint Women's Programme, Bangalore

JWC for Joint Women 's Programme, Calcutta

JWP for Joint Women's Programme, New Delhi

KB for Kishore Bharati, Bhopal

KSP for Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad

LOC for LOCOST, Baroda

LOK for Lokayan, New Delhi

MAI for Maitreyi, Bombay

ME for Mass Education, Calcutta

MES for MESCA, Bangalore

MID for Madras Institute of Development Studies

MPS for Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal, Bombay

MVP for Mahila Vikas Prakaalp, Satara

NIP for National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child
Development, New Delhi

PRI for Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi

RPD for RCPED, Madurai

RWS for Research Centre on Women's Studies, SNDT Bombay

SC for Service Centre, Calcutta

SET for SETU (Centre for Social Knowledge and Action), Ahmedabad

SKV for Sagan Kshetra Vikas Samiti, Sevapuri

SVK for Samajika Vikas Kendra, Srikakulam

TDC for Tribal Development Centre, Chaibasa

URG for Union Research Group, Bombay

UYN for Unnayan, Calcutta

VAK for Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, Bombay

VHI for VHAI, New Delhi

WCB for Women's Centre, Bombay

WCS for William Carey Study and Research Centre, Calcutta

Card Index for Audio-visuals

Card Indexes for visuals are always difficult. Most of us have separate and special systems for each of the different types of visual material. Yet these along with documentation on audio-tapes can be a useful source which people would like to know about. Besides, when we do searches for bibliographies and in our joint indexes, it would be good if we could include all the visual material available on the subject.

With this in mind, we suggest the following rules for Visuals: In the title field, we shall write the title of the programme in capitals, followed by a semicolon and then (in the same line) the format (ie VHS or 16mm or 35mm or slide-tape) followed by another semicolon; Color or Black & White; Language. (All in one line) For example .. HAMARA SHARER; 16mm; Color;

In the place of author, we can enter the Director's name. If it is a photograph or single slide, the photographer's name will be used. Where the publisher is, there will be the Producer. In the pages field, we will put in the duration in Minutes viz. 60 min. Price can be included in Rem field etc.

Discussion on format

Once the decisions had been made about the format of the index card, the participants went into some of the peculiarities of indexing and the various problems connected with the different fields of the card.

In the title field one problem was that of space. While 68 characters seem sufficient space for titles of most books, there are always articles and reports which have very descriptive titles which may not fit. Here the obvious suggestion was that short forms of various words be used. But the problem here could be that there may be a misunderstanding in the short forms, so could one centre undertake to compile a list of the abbreviated forms of at least the most common terms used in development parlance, so that this possibility could be avoided? Service Centre undertook this responsibility and agreed to compile 'such a list and circulate it to everyone by December 1,; 1987.

Then came up the question of the classification systems. While most centres have evolved their own classifications quite comfortably there were some who had not and felt they needed help on that count. One suggestion was of course that such centres could consult some other more developed centre individually and get help in forming their own system. The other suggestion, given by John, was that since a thesaurus of keywords (which would virtually include all the terms used by all the centres in their classification systems) was in any case being compiled the newer centres would do well to also consult that as that would give a very comprehensive idea of what the possibilities of division of issues there can be. In fact even for keywords, too, this thesaurus would be useful as it would give a standard list of all the keywords that could possibly be used for different issues. John then proceeded to explain the dynamics of this thesaurus and circulated distributed a chart to each centre. Participants were asked to fill in the various columns of the thesaurus and send it to CED by December 1, 1987.

Sources

The participants then went over the list of sources in the chart prepared and circulated by CED. One of the tasks of the meet was to add on all those newspapers and periodicals received by various centres which were not on the chart. It was realised that the best method for that would be for the all centres to fill in the various columns in the chart (like the column for periodicity and whether the centre cut it or kept it as a journal) and add on names if necessary, and then send the completed chart to CED. This was to be done by November 1, 1987. Herein some smaller centres who were on the lookout for better and more sources of information for their documentation, mentioned the difficulty that they were not aware of the nature of many periodicals mentioned in the list. This problem was echoed by many. So it was decided that one centre should undertake the responsibility of preparing a short description of each periodical on the list. Babu Daniel undertook the responsibility of doing that. However it was suggested that each centre would have to contribute to the effort as Babu's centre did not receive all the periodicals on the list. So Babu suggested that he circulate a format to each participant with a list of periodicals, the details of which should be filled in by the centre and the forms returned to Babu for him to make a comprehensive list of. Babu would send the format to everyone by December 1, 1987. All centres were to return the completed forms and return them to Babu by February 1, 1988. This was accepted by everyone.

Once all these peculiar problems of the index card format were successfully dealt with and everyone had assured everyone else that not only were the dynamics of the card clear to them but that they were now in full agreement with all the conventions that had been adopted at this forum, the discussion could freely move on to the other problems experienced by centres.

Common problems

One of the first problems to be raised was that of scarcity of people/time available to the centre who were involved with many other important activities apart from documentation. This necessarily meant that whenever the members of the centre devoted time to other activities, documentation suffered? and the ignored

material seems to avenge its neglect by forming itself into daunting backlogs. This upset

the balance of activities at the centre leading to frustration. (Abha). Connected with this is the fact that some centres like ours started with a backlog and so even though we put in documentation work daily, we seem to be having a perpetual backlog. (Snehalata). Isn't there some way to strike a permanent balance to avert backlogs? Well most centres who had been struggling with the problem of backlogs, asserted that there seemed to be no other way of avoiding backlogs except by preventing them. However, John's suggestion to such centres was that they should not create current backlogs in trying to finish the previous backlog; rather they should continue to mark current newspapers/documents regularly and put in just a little bit of extra work to gradually clear off the previous backlog

Another problem was that of retrieval, of course. i) When there is a clash between 2-3 classification numbers for the same clipping a lot of time is wasted in trying to figure out the precise classification number which should go on the clipping. Moreover, retrieval is then inaccurate because it is difficult to remember where one has put it. ii) Then, files get so fat that to trace one bit of information, users have to go through masses of clippings, and most people seem to resent that thereby placing the onus on the workers at the centre to retrieve the information for them. Any ideas for an effective solution? (Abha, Varsha, Nasreen). Well, herein again there seem to be no formulae. For i), either one makes index cards for all clippings (which of course would be foolhardy), or one xeroxes the clipping and inserts a copy into each of the files that demand it (advisable only for very important clippings), or one puts the clipping into the most appropriate file and insert a note in the other files indicating this. Also, in most cases it is usually the memory and reasonably consistent (!) logic of the documentation person that helps in appropriately marking the clipping as well as retrieving it accurately. For ii), files are bound to get obese if timely weeding out is not done. Weeding is essential (even if it be of a pathological conservative nature) not only in the interests of space but also for effective retrieval for all documentation centres. Secondly, some users do consider it a favour to the centre when they visit it for reference; it is left to the Centre to dissuade such attitudes by taking pride in documentation work and not spoon-feeding the users by doing their searching for them. (John and Anjum).

Primary documentation

The discussion then soon shifted to grass-root documentation work. One of the main problems expressed in this area was of course that of translation. Most centres dealing with rural and primarily regional language communities as their audience felt that the monopoly of the English language created disheartening gaps in communication between them and their audiences. There seems to be a general paucity of translators among voluntary groups. Not only did some groups say they needed material translated from English to regional languages and vice-versa, but also from regional languages to other regional languages. Herein, it was John's suggestion that firstly we should aim at getting regional language material translated into English and then see about getting that translated into another regional language. This interim measure would also ensure adapting the material into a more simple and perhaps contextually relevant form. One suggestion is that documentation centres present should try to compile a list of translators available for various languages, which can then be used by all the centres that need them. (Munni).

Since most of us are documentation centres who are also engaged in agitations, movements and other such activities, we are periodically faced with the urgent need for information on particular issues that may be facing us at the moment. One recent example is that of the sati incident. Jagori was instantly keen on mobilising support to oppose such a practice, and it was imperative to move quickly to minimise the effect of the pro-sati campaign launched by the traditional Rajput community. Immediately, there was a need for lots of information on this issue. In the absence of a "network" or a coordinated arrangement it was very difficult to mobilise enough information. Likewise there were other examples too of groups urgently needing information on a particular issue and not being able to get it. (Abha, Munni, and others.) So* can't this forum decide on a responding-to-crises commitment? But no group was in a position to give a sweeping commitment on this count; however all present agreed that this was a mutual need and therefore everyone should try to respond to such demands as quickly and as effectively as possible.

Experiences

By then participants had noticed that there were some participants who had barely said anything at all. This realisation automatically made the more vocal ones uncomfortable; the silent ones were then implored to share their experiences as well as their views with the others. Thereupon some like Chandu of Asha Kendra, Akram from Bangladesh, Leslie from BUILD Documentation Centre, Ravi from Delhi Forum, Varsha from SETU, Munni from Un-nayan, Viji from ICRA, Abha from Jagori, and Suri from RCPED -^ spoke about their work, their problems,

particularly with grass-root documentation using non-formal methods and sources.

The participants got to hear of Jagori's "documentation experience" using film as a medium, when they made a full-length film on the Nipani Tobacco workers. They had approached their subjects without any preconceived techniques in their minds and had all along proceeded with the making of the film on the basis of what the workers felt, and what they wanted the film to be. Needless to say it turned out to be a marvelous experience from which the documentalists learned immensely not only about their subjects but about documentation as such, too. Abha also spoke of Jagori's experience with audio documentation, when they used to record the music of various communities and then hand the recorded version back to the communities; when they tried to get the community women to do their own documentation by asking them to bring out their own newsletter.

Munni too spoke of Unnayan's attempts to document activities of communities, and then circulated these to other communities.

This generated tremendous interest within other communities and the demand for such material keeps increasing. Chandu narrated Asha Kendra's efforts at documenting the problems of the peasants in their district, mainly one of pollution from the effluents of the sugar factories, and the scarcity of water created by large water consumption of sugarcane farms and factories. Asha Kendra has also made a film on the Employment Guarantee Act; and done a study, with an analysis of the pollution in the fields. The others too gave hints of their work and some significant experiences. Not to be outdone, Leslie too, spoke at great length about the formation of BUILD Documentation Centre and the buildup of its activities.

Viji from ICRA spoke of their first attempt at evolving a different format for social issues' material: a comic book form. Two such issues were brought out - child labour and construction workers. However the project ran into a lot of trouble and they haven't since been able to bring out anything else. Akram from ARBAN (Bangladesh) narrated his experience about how when he worked with Community Development Library they went about translating good books into Bangla for local communities. But this was objected to by the governing body of the library so they had to curtail that. The issues of interest to them in their documentation were left politics, students, health, and others. Ravi from Delhi Forum told everyone about their efforts at trying to bring out a systematic and comprehensive compilation on material on the fisherpeople's struggle in Kerala so that people would come to know about the issues involved in the campaign.

The discussion then spontaneously kept moving to subjects and issues of importance to various documentation centres present. Munni of Unnayan had a question for CED: Since CED has attained a certain degree of success in maintaining an efficient documentation system going for more than a decade now, why isn't it moving into grass-root areas and grass-root related issues? She felt that all present would benefit from CED's experience, if any at this level. John explained that CED's definition of the objective of its documentation activities is not restricted to enhancing the work of activists alone. At CED people believe that they are interested in establishing alternative information structures and flows in society; we hope to popularise alternative organisations outside the traditional fortresses of information viz newspapers, universities, government information, etc. CED is not exclusively used by activists though they do form a major part of our audience; we cater to a large segment of society including students, journalists, health workers, trade unionists, feminists, concerned professionals, and anyone who is seriously inquiring into social issues with a progressive perspective. CED did not start as an activist organisation unlike most other centres; it began as that part of an activist group which was exclusively doing documentation work. Therefore CED considers itself to be a documentation-activist organisation doing documentation-activism.

Regarding the problems of enhancing exchange amongst documentation centres to broaden the vistas of each one's dissemination goals, translation again proved to be a major stumbling block. Since this had already been taken up earlier, the discussion moved to other techniques to do this. John suggested that the simplest way to at least initiate this process would be to keep alive the exchange of indices, bibliographies and lists on whichever topics that each centre prepares such indexes. This would lead to a continuous as the receiving centre would have a lot of questions about the easy usability or otherwise, about the completeness of such lists, and therefore would communicate its views to the sending centre thereby maintaining a live link between the centres.

Joint programmes

Then the topic of discussion veered round to the important issue of joint projects. (In fact, one of the main objectives of initiating these meetings of documentation centres was to collaborate in documentation projects so that we could not only enhance our efficacy but also

share our efforts in doing so.) After a lot of discussion the following programmes were agreed upon:

1. Regular compilation of indexes of Journals (Journal-14 of DCM)
2. Joint indexes
3. Documentation News (A regular bulletin?)
4. Training in documentation techniques (including automation)
5. Comprehensive Quarterly Index of publications for distribution
6. List of material with indexes for grass root level workers
7. Listing of good material in regional languages
8. Timely response to requests for information from other centres

1. Journal indexes:

[It will be remembered by those who attended the first Documentation Centres' Meet at Bombay in December 1986, and those who read the report, that this programme was suggested there first. The idea was very simple: Since there are many important journals (serious periodicals which are preserved in full, and not magazines which are cut up and its articles filed under separate issues), received by many documentation centres who of course find it very difficult to index articles of all of them, it would be a good idea to allot a journal each to the centres; these centres would regularly prepare indexes of 'their' journal and send them to CED. CED would then do a compilation of all the indexes received by them and send copies of the compilation to all the participating centres. In this way each centre would effectively receive the indexes of many journals while having worked for the index of a single one. While this idea had appealed to all the participants of DCM 1, the results were dismal. GRID from Goa was the only centre which sent any indexes to CED.]

John and Anjum related the experience of the previous programme of joint indexing of journals called Journal-14, as 14 journals were taken up for indexing. This programme had not succeeded; perhaps there are reasons for that should be discussed. It was rather difficult to arrive at any firm conclusions as to why the centres concerned did not follow up with the plan. It is quite obvious that like all voluntary organisations we tend to be over ambitious with undertaking commitments in the anxiety perhaps of missing out on important activities. Each of the centres had some reason for not having met the commitment of Journal-14; but the general feeling was that that was the very first time that a joint project had been undertaken and the lack of follow up was more like a teething problem for the joint scheme.

However with a serious view to implementing the scheme henceforth a short list of journals was prepared. The following journals were taken up for indexing by the following centres:

Sr. No.	Name of the Journal	No. of Centres receiving it	Index Cent
1.	Economic & Political	16	
2.	Mainstream Weekly (EPW)	15	
3.	Seminar	9	
4.	Manushi	15	
5.	Feminist Review	8	
6.	SIGNS	6	

7.	Radical Journal of Health	9
8.	The Lawyers	13
9.	ISIS	12
10.	Lokayan Bulletin	14
11.	Health for the Millions	9
12.	Development Dialogue	11

Indexing it centre

GRID

CWDS

Asha Kendra

ISST

Jagori

CWDS

LOCOST

Women's Centre

Service Centre

Unnayan

FRCH

DRC

So that now constituted Journal-12. It was decided that the responsible centres would send in indexes of the journals undertaken by them to CED in the index format decided earlier on a quarterly basis.

2. Joint indexes

This programme too was suggested and accepted at DCM 1. The idea was that at the DCM we would choose a few topics of contemporary relevance and which were of importance to most centres. On these topics then each centre would index all the important material that it had in its documentation - be it from clippings' files, journals, reports or books - and send a comprehensive index to a central centre. This centre would then put all the indexes that it received on the topic together and bring out a joint index. For this too the format was supposed to be the one that has been discussed earlier. Topics chosen at the first DCM were women, housing, occupational health and labour. Tentatively, it was decided that perhaps three to four joint indexes should be brought out each year. So to begin with CED and Unnayan took up the responsibility of bringing out a joint index on the housing issue. While this did materialise, thereby bearing testimony not only to the acceptability of the index format evolved at DCM 1 but also to the increased efficacy of documentation centres when they worked jointly, only three centres contributed to the index. Unnayan, GRID and CED. None of the other issues worked as the centres who had undertaken the job did not follow up on it.

When asked as to what the specific problems were in the indexing, if any, for the last joint indexes, Anjum explained that participants at the nrM 1 -^^ --^ certain fields viz. type field, kind field. Also conventions for title were not followed often; and the abstracts were creating a severe bottleneck during indexing, thereby leading to the compiling centre spending inordinately long amounts of time on editing them.

However, this idea of joint indexes received wide enthusiasm at DCM 2, too. All the new

participants unanimously thought that it was a very good and worthy idea. After some discussions the following topics were chosen by the following centres:

Index on Tourism - GRID and EQUATIONS

Index on Ageing - DRC

Index on Communalism - SETU

An update on the index on Housing - CED and UNNAYAN

The process decided was as follows: The centre/s responsible for the index would send out a brief outline of what the issue was all about and what kind of material they expected to be indexed and announce a reasonable deadline. Then all centres would index whatever good material they had on the issue in their various sections and send it across to the centre responsible who would then compile it and publish it as a joint index. The format for the index would of course be the same as decided above. For the index on housing there would be no need to circulate an outline as there was already a precedent on the issue in the form of the original index on housing and it was merely to be updated. Participants were requested to send in their contributions by November 15, 1988.

Others

It was decided that these two were the only joint programmes that we would take up; these would also serve as some kind of a litmus test as to whether joint efforts could succeed, and if not what the problems were likely to be with such programmes. Moreover, Babu drew attention to the compilation of sources with their descriptions that he had undertaken to do and insisted that that too could be called a joint programme as it would involve everyone's participation and everyone would benefit.

As regards training newer centres in documentation techniques and interested ones in automated systems, it was first suggested by some participants that a single programme be held at Asha Kendra, Puntamba. However, this did not seem like a good idea to most people and finally it was decided that centres should fix up amongst themselves to visit one another and see the other centre's work and learn from it. For example, CED offered that anyone centre could arrange to send its documentalists to CED for training in their manual as well as computerised systems. The visitors could stay for any length of time and work with CED people as that was the best method of learning. Likewise other centres too could be approached for such arrangements. It should be noted here that only for primary documentation techniques a special programme might be required. Since the next DCM will focus on primary documentation techniques and systems we can discuss then as to when such a training programme could be held.

Also some of the suggestions for joint projects included ongoing programmes like exchange of information, timely responses to requests for information from other centres, which are to be conducted on a more or less informal basis. These can be initiated and maintained without a resolution being passed at DCMs.

Thesaurus (no proper notes were made for this topic, and summary here is made from memory) The idea of the thesaurus was mooted at the DCM1. The main idea is to make a list of keywords, which would be organised such that for each of the keywords, we could know at a glance the classification number used for that topic for different centres. It thus will also serve as a classification-seeker for each individual centre. Besides it would serve as a list of subjects for those who do not have a formal classification system or those who catalog material subject-wise, if the keywords are made in such a way that they coincide with the usage.

Since the list of keywords would be very large, it was decided to categorise the keywords. The categorisation would be done in such a way such that the list of rootkeywords would contain words which would correctly and completely describe at least one file in any of the documentation centres; or the word is such any other centre would easily be able to tell in which file they would have that particular topic. For example let's say an inquirer is seeking information on, say Poland. Now, each centre may not have a separate file for this topic. But through the thesaurus the inquirer will come to know where each centre keeps material on Poland. Some may have a larger file for it called Eastern Europe; some an even larger file called Communist Countries; and some, perhaps, in a very general file called Foreign countries.

Moreover, this same example will illustrate the use of the broader term which is one of the categories of keywords. If a centre does not have a Poland file, next to its classification the letter B will indicate that it has this material in a broader or more general file, which would be any of the terms mentioned under the heading broader term in the entry of the rootkeyword Poland, which in this case would be Eastern Europe, Communist Countries. However if a Centre does not have any foreign countries files but has important material relating to Poland under say Movement in socialist countries, then next to that Centre's classification number, the letter R would indicate that that

Centre has material relating to Poland in a related file and under the heading Related term in the same entry of the root-keyword Poland you will find the term Movement-in-socialist-countries.

Thus in the thesaurus the relevant entries under Poland will be: In Part A of the thesaurus

Eastern Europe: Broader terms: Europe; Narrower term: Movement-in-communist-countries; Related term: Communist Countries

Movements in communist countries see Eastern Europe, Poland. CED:X40; AK:138; AIC:613(R); XYZ:123(N)

Poland: Broader terms: Eastern Europe, Communist countries; narrower terms: Solidarity; Related terms: Movement-in-socialist-countries. CED:X44; AK:138(B); AIC:613; XYZ:123(R)

In part B

Eastern Europe: Broader terms: Europe; Narrower term: Movement-in-communist-countries; Related term: Communist Countries

Movements in communist countries see Eastern Europe, Poland

Poland: Broader terms Eastern Europe, Communist countries,

Europe; Narrower terms: Solidarity; Related terms: Movement-in-socialist-countries.

Solidarity: see Poland

Thus from the above thesaurus you can immediately locate for any keyword, the classification for different centres as well as the status of the particular topic in the files of a particular centre.

A draft of the Thesaurus was prepared for DCM2. Many more words have to be added and details have to come from different centres. Only then will the thesaurus be complete. All centres are to send the thesaurus duly filled up to CED within two months. They should also send a copy of the classification so that in case of doubt, CED can refer to it and make the necessary changes. Evaluation of DCM 2:

This was the last but one session, and expectedly was quite lively. The following short criticisms were made by the forum about the general behaviour of all the participants.

- Proper timings were not observed for meals; and this led to the Baga Retreat House workers being inconvenienced
- Taps were left open many a time leading to an unnecessary loss of water, when in any case there was a scarcity
- Lights were left on many a time without need
- The retreat house property was left around
- Participants would drink publicly
- On some nights there was a lot of commotion, causing disturbance to others

So then, should public drinking be prohibited? (John) Well, not exactly; but we must keep in mind that drinking in public alienates a lot of non-drinkers, we should keep that in mind. (Abha) Regarding inconveniencing the workers of the retreat house I don't know how valid the criticism is. We did try to help out in a lot of ways; even in jobs which we were not expected to do. For example, I always offered to wash my plates myself; but they did not permit me to do so. (Ammu) Some participants did not allow swimming to be included in our routine as that seem to be considered a frivolous. If we have come to Goa for a meeting, surely we can enjoy the place too. One criticism that I do have is that non-drinkers should be tolerant of other people's method of enjoyment. (Ammu) But they were tolerant. (Abha) I feel that the forum was not sensitive enough to the needs of the participants. I was never asked by anyone as to why I was not attending some sessions. (Jyotsna) Well, why weren't you? (All) When I came here I expected that we would be talking and addressing basic issues. But to my disappointment I discovered that we were only talking about documentation techniques. (Jyotsna) But why didn't you or anyone else who felt this way say so on the first day when the agenda was being decided and everyone's views were being incorporated? Moreover, I do not consider your criticism justified as the whole decision to take up grass roots documentation was taken up on Ajoy's request; but when the time came to actually discuss it he did not turn up at all. That is dishonesty, I feel. I personally feel cheated! I feel I received nowhere near as much as I put into this meeting. (John) I agree. I think Jyotsna's comment is unjustified and her statement is incorrect. There was enough scope to put in anyone's suggestions

and points of view. Moreover, there was also enough time to discuss any issue or basic questions during the late night or early morning sessions. But not many people seemed to take advantage of that. (Abha) Also, because of the non-participation of various people concerned with primary documentation we also lost out. And I do feel, reacting to Jyotsna's criticism, that there was ample scope to even change the agenda later after it had been decided, if someone felt strongly enough about it. Well, no one did. (Munni)

The technical sessions were well structured and we gained a lot because of that; but the problem-addressing sessions weren't. They just rambled on sometimes. This should be avoided. (Ammu) The level of problems faced is different for more research-oriented centres and smaller centres like ours. Can't we divide the forum into smaller groups so that each one's problems get adequate attention? (Snehalata) Then let only those who are strictly documentation centres attend the technical sessions; while action groups can conduct other sessions. (Sharmila) Yes. (Ammu) But isn't that a false division? Documentation and research centres too are interested in action oriented discussions. (John) Actually, as regards documentation techniques we in any case know enough already. The reason for us attending such meets is to get to know the action groups' and grass roots workers' points of view and problems. I too find this division between research and documentation centres and action groups false. (Manish) Perhaps the preparation and circulation of background papers would've helped to put the various discussions in perspective. (Leslie) But even otherwise, the points covered in the previous meets should be gone over when that particular topic is being discussed. (Munni) I feel, that some people felt inhibited at asking "silly" questions as they felt that these were very elementary. Maybe that is why we did not get enough of a response or reactions from some participants. (Manish) But this is bound to happen. This is group dynamics; some speak, some don't. However, I am in agreement with the afternoon being given off; my biological time-table seems to agree with that suggestion whole-heartedly. (Babu)

The meet was immensely useful; there is no doubt about that at all. However, since so many different groups gathered here, it may have been a good idea to have separate sessions for separate groups. Also, silence is not non-participation. JWP, for example, were silent; but they learnt a lot. Me, too. (Ravi) I did not have much to say; but I did learn a lot. (Annette) The meet was very useful. I established contact with and learnt about so many centres; got useful lists of material; met so many activists. I personally think it is a good idea to have activists and researchers together in a meeting. (Bas) But a large group is too difficult to discuss important issues in? Interest tends to get diffused. (Julie) But, I thought everyone had agreed that a heterogeneous group was more healthy, more lively and the discussion more fruitful. Moreover, for groups having common special interests, smaller group meetings can be held during the course of the three to four days that DCMs are held. (Anjum)

Followup:

It was generally agreed that this meet's usefulness had decided that henceforth we must have DCMs every year, regularly. So, what would be the topic for the next meet? Where would it be held? When? Anjum strongly suggested that it would not be very healthy to always have CED take the initiative for DCMs and the topics to be covered within them. It then tended to become CED's baby and moreover later this was likely to lead to some bad vibes. Everyone agreed with Anjum's feelings and decided that after two DCMs being held fruitfully, it was time that other centres too took the initiative.

The focus of the next DCM was decided to be "Primary Documentation: Systems; Techniques; New Frontiers, and linkages with Action Groups". It was suggested that Service Centre take up the programme for the next meet. They should circulate some kind of a background paper on the topic and outline the broad issues to be covered at the next DCM. After receiving feedback they should finalise an agenda and lead the discussions at the DCM. Service Centre agreed with the suggestion.

The venue would be Asha Kendra, Puntamba. Charges would come to Rs.20/= per person, per day. The dates fixed tentatively were September 23, 24, 25, 26, 1988. However, Chandu of AK would check out group's convenience and inform Service Centre of the final dates. ^

A question that came up was that should South Asian groups be included? Most people felt negatively about this as they felt that in any case the group was diverse enough, and the addition of foreigners would complicate the dynamics of the group. Amu wondered aloud whether next time only strictly documentation-based centres should participate. Everyone disagreed vehemently with this suggestion.