BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA*

By
DAHILIA ZAINAL**

ABSTRAK
Aktiviti kawalan bibliografi di Asia Tenggara telah bermula sejak awal kurun ke 17 di Indonesia dan kurun ke 19 di Thailand, walaupun di negara-negara lain hanya bermula selepas tarih tersebut. Peperangan dan fasa perkembangan negara yang berbeza adalah punca terjadinya jurang perbezaan dalam perkembangan perpustakaan di negara-negara Asia Tenggara.

NATIONAL LIBRARIES

ESTABLISHMENT

By 1964, only six out of the twelve countries of Southeast Asia had formally established their national libraries. These countries were Burma, Khmer Republic, Thailand, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and Singapore. The other remaining countries had libraries designated to function partially as national libraries. By 1974, national libraries had been established in all sovereign Southeast Asian states except Indonesia. To date, Brunei still does not have a national library though Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka is currently acting as a National Library and carrying out a few of its functions. The National Library of the Philippines, National Library of Singapore and the National Library of Laos function both as a national and a public library.

In many Southeast Asian countries, national library activities are regulated by a specific law or a governmental decree which state the objectives and functions of the national library. As for Malaysia, its national library was established through the National Library Act 1973 (Act 80) which was later amended in 1987 (A667) to enhance its objectives and functions. The Presidential Decree No. 11 was passed in 1989 for the establishment of the National Library of Indonesia. The National Library incorporated four libraries within the Ministry of Education and Culture, one of which, the Central Museum Library. Such a form of legislative regulation of national library activities is also used in cases where the national library is part of another institutions as the National Library of the Philippines, National Library of Singapore and the National Library of Laos function both as a national and a public library.

According to the data from the Database on Legislation Relating to National Libraries throughout the World, undertaken by the Lenin State Library for IFLA there were six Asian countries without relevant legislation. They are Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (then Burma) and Nepal. All the Southeast Asian countries except Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, had their national libraries established through their respective legislation. The functions of these national libraries are similar to those functions set out by IFLA except for national libraries of Laos and Singapore.

** Librarian, Technical Services Division, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia.

Library of Cambodia which functions within the Ministry of Culture, Cambodia. As for Singapore, the establishment of Singapore National Library Board which is a part of the National Library Services was through the National Library Board Act 1995.

DEVELOPMENT

The national library situation in Southeast Asia varies from country to country. The more developed countries have their national libraries better equipped and financially capable to carry out their development. The National Library of Vietnam which was started in 1917, known then as the Bibliotheque Centrale of Indochina suffered because of the war and the 18 years of total trade embargo imposed by the United States. The US Trading with the Enemy Act empowered the president to ban “buying, selling, trading to otherwise conducting business with the enemy or any ally of the enemy”. This made programmes of book and information exchanges especially from the United States difficult and expensive as these materials had to be channeled through a third party which often took more than a year before arriving in Vietnam.

The National Library of Cambodia also suffered badly under the Khmer regime and a complete trade embargo imposed by the United States. Much of its national heritage was lost and destroyed during the war. Major libraries and archives were closed; their holdings partially destroyed with the other part of their collections held in institutions outside the country. The National Library of Laos also received insufficient budget from the government and has to depend on donations from foreign governments and international organisations. Apart from the national libraries mentioned above the national libraries of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand are better developed with well organised library programmes.

LEGAL DEPOSIT ACT

The national libraries of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines act as legal depository centers of all library materials published in their own respective countries, with the passing of their own legal deposit act. Only Cambodia has not passed any legal deposit act depriving its own National Library of a comprehensive national collection.

Malaysia seemed to be more fortunate than some of its neighbours excluding Singapore and Indonesia, in terms of the legal provisions for the depository of library materials to the national library. The Preservation of Books Act which was passed in 1966 but was later repealed by the Deposit of Library Material Act, 1986 (Act 331) designated Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia as the sole Legal Depository Centre for the nation. Under the Act, publishers are required to deposit 5 copies of printed materials and 2 copies of non-printed library materials to the National Depository Centre.

Under the National Library Board Act 1995 of Singapore, Singapore National Bibliography acts as a center for legal deposit which makes it compulsory for two copies of library materials published in Singapore to be deposited with the Board. In Indonesia, as early as the 17th century, there was an Act imposed on publishers of the Netherlands East Indies to submit a copy of their latest publications to the library to the National Museum Library. During the World War II, the Japanese Colonial Government (1942-1945) sent their publications to the Museum Library. They consisted mostly of Indonesian materials, in addition to several newspapers and journals printed in Japanese. However, it was only in 1990 that the Deposit Act No. 4/1990 for Printed and Recorded Materials came into being which made com-

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pursory that two copies of every new title produced by the national publishing industry and/or bearing a national imprint should be submitted to and deposited at the National Library.

In Brunei, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar the situations are rather different. In Brunei, which still have no national library of its own, the *Preservation of Books Act, 1967* empowers the Brunei Museums instead of the Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka Brunei, to collect and preserve three copies of all local publications published in Brunei. In Laos, Thailand and Myanmar, the national libraries are not the depository centres of library materials and have not been designated the legal deposit laws. The National Library of Laos whose major function is to compile and publish the national bibliography has no direct access to the deposited publications. The Department of State Publishing, Distribution, Library and Sign, which is responsible for publishing, printing and book distribution has also been designated as the government depository house. It has been issued a temporary legal depository regulation requesting all publishers to send their publications to the National Library. Prior to this, between 1975-85, all rules and regulations established for controlling printing materials including deposit law, were abolished. The National Library of Thailand acquires library materials through the provisions of the *Press Act B.E. 2484 (A.D. 1941)* and the Cabinet Resolution urging all government offices and state enterprises to send copies of all their publications to the national library. In Myanmar, the *Printers and Publishers Registration Act*, promulgated in 1962, empowered the National Library of Myanmar to receive one copy of any printed material published in the country. Every publisher has to present a copy of each publication to the Press Security and Registration Division and the office has to forward this copy to the national library. The authorities concerned will also enforce the act. *The Copyright Act*, enacted in 1911, accorded to the National Library of Myanmar the privilege of accessing one legal deposit copy of every publication in Myanmar, but since its promulgation there has been little enforcement.

Cambodia is the only country of Southeast Asia that have no legal deposit Act. The *Legal Deposit and Copyright Act* is still being drafted by the legal authorities with the assistance of the National Library of Cambodia.

**NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Through the collection of national imprints and enactment of legal deposit laws, national bibliographies are to be compiled and published. However, not all national libraries of Southeast Asia publish national bibliographies. Some published national bibliographies are also not current and not comprehensive in its coverage. Most national libraries, excluding national libraries of Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines only cover books in their national bibliographies.

National Library of Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam do not publish their national bibliographies due to the lack of funds and difficulties in the implementation of the legal deposit laws. The compilation of the Myanmar National Bibliography for the post-independence period (1948-1996) is still in its planning stage. However, some retrospective dissertations and bibliographies on bibliography of books published in Myanmar from 1920-1955 have been compiled.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, publishes the Malaysian National Bibliography which lists all materials published in Malaysia, deposited at the National Library of Malaysia under the *Deposit of Library Material Act 1986*. The last printed edition is 4th quarter 1990. Since then retrospective compilation of Malaysian National Bibliography 1967-1988 in CD-ROM format has also been produced. Bibliographic records for materials published from 1989 onwards is accessible from our database.

In Indonesia, the task of collecting all printed materials published in the country was carried out by the National Museum Library as early as during the Dutch colonial period from the 17th century to just before the start of 2nd World War. It was taken over by the National Bibliography Centre in early 1950s. It collected and listed the imprints in Monthly News from 1953 to 1962 with an annual cumulative edition. The
Monthly News changed its name to Bibliografi Nasional Indonesia in 1963 and its frequency from monthly to quarterly. The three quarterly issues of one year were then cumulated with the fourth quarter edition to form the annual edition. This cumulative edition was later abandoned due to budget constraint leaving the publication to be published quarterly.

Bibliographic control activities in Thailand was started as early as 1882. The first bibliography produced by the National Library of Thailand was the Catalogue of the Books of the Royal Vajiranana Library published in 1882. The bibliography contained 6,564 foreign book entries. However, the first National Bibliography of Thailand was only published in 1958. In 1967, the first retrospective bibliography for the period 1962-1967 was published followed by the second retrospective bibliography of 1968-1973 in 1981. In 1987, with the cooperation of 16 major libraries in Thailand, the computerised National Bibliography was published covering publications up to 1975.

The National Library of Lao PDR has published its first national bibliography covering books published from 1967-1974. Another project to compile and print the National Bibliography of Laos from 1975-1990 has not been carried out due to lack of fund.

In Brunei, although the Preservation of Books Act was passed in 1967, the Brunei Museum’s Library was only able to publish a retrospective national bibliography covering 1967-1991, in 1996.

**NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CD-ROM**

Presently, only Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia and the National Library Board of Singapore have published National Bibliographies on CD-ROM while Indonesian National Library is still preparing theirs. However, as have been mentioned earlier in this paper, the National Bibliography on CD-ROM published by Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia is a reproduction from print format of records covering the years 1966-1988 and perhaps later records from 1989-1993. As for Singapore, its national bibliography was first produced on CD-ROM since 1993 which superseded the print versions. Since 1993, the Singapore National Bibliography is produced in CD-ROM format. The production of the CD-ROM is cumulative and updated semi-annually.

**RESOURCE SHARING OF INFORMATION**

The most common resource sharing of information of libraries in Southeast Asia is the inter-library loan of library materials. It allows participating libraries to share library resources irrespective of their locations within the country. National libraries in Southeast Asia carry out this function and act as liaison centre to other libraries in their own respective countries.

To encourage free flow of information, libraries in Southeast Asia carry out resource sharing of information in the form of library consortia, inter-library loan or networking. Library consortia involve cooperating cataloguing projects between libraries. The national libraries of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand have carried out these projects.

In the Philippines, the DOST-ESEP library network was set up to provide member libraries an integrated library system that they can be used and at the same time accessed through their networks. The National Library of Philippines has also set up its own Public Library Network (PUBLIN) which is the automation program of the National Library which include the National Bibliographic services program and the collection program.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia together with five university libraries and the Nanyang Technical Institute in Singapore carried out a shared computerized cataloguing project in an effort to develop a centralized union catalogue system in 1978. This project resulted in the creation of a *Union Catalogue Database* of consortium libraries, the National Union List of Serials and the Malaysian National Bibliography. This MALMARC project ended in 1990 when member libraries decided to have their own integrated library system. However each library had downloaded their records from MALMARC databases to their own database which in turn enable libraries to share their
catalogue databases via Internet or Telnet facilities. The Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia also, together with Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics system (MIMOS) jointly undertake an R & D project called JARINGAN ILMU to establish a national information network system. Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia also acts as the main body and coordinator. Information available consists of bibliography, fulltext and multimedia, access to e-mail, electronic file transfer, remote access and on-line Document Delivery System.

A network of bibliographic database was established with the setting up of the Singapore Integrated National Library System (SILAS). SILAS was conceptualised out of a proposal from the Sub-Committee on Library Automation (SCOLA) which worked under the wings of the Joint Standing Committee of the Library Association of Singapore (LAS) and the Persatuan Perpustakaan Malaysia (Library Association of Malaysia). One of the projects identified was the National Bibliographic Database Project. Among the major objectives of SILAS are to develop the national bibliographic database, provide co-operative online shared cataloguing services and facilitate co-operative acquisition and interlibrary loan services. SILAS makes available a database containing the cataloguing records of over 7.8 million titles of monographs, audio-visual materials, computer files etc. Through its network, SILAS links most major public, academic, special and commercial organisation libraries as well as book vendors in Singapore. Its 44 local member libraries use the National Bibliographic Database for online reference searches, bibliographic verifications and copy cataloguing.

In Indonesia, an informal national information network comprising of libraries specialising in certain subject areas, started to emerge in the early 1970s. In addition, an integrated national library system was set up for the development of libraries, comprising of the national libraries, regional libraries, public libraries, school libraries, university libraries and special libraries. To date, there are about 23 library network systems available with the national library as the coordinator and secretariat of the network.

Laos and Myanmar are using CDS/ISIS for its computerisation project. There is no library networking as yet. However, in Myanmar, the Central Biomedical Library, Department of Medical Research (CBL/DMR) in the field of medicine, has already formed a cooperative network among medical libraries i.e HELLIS (Health Literature Library and Information Services) assisted by World Health Organisation (WHO). Indexes of articles from medical journals and literature and union lists of all medical libraries’ holdings are being compiled and disseminated to other libraries.

The National Library of Vietnam, has established databases to facilitate the sharing of information. Database SACH (BOOKS) includes all Vietnamese books received through Legal deposit from 1986 onwards. Database SVHC (Retrospective conversion books) of all Vietnamese books published before computerization of National Library of Vietnam in 1986. The national Library is also working on the “Controlled vocabulary” and Vietnam MARC specification as a standard to be implemented by other libraries in Vietnam.

In Thailand, Thai National Information System (THAI NATIS), a national bibliographic database network was also created consisting of six member libraries specialising in specific fields such as agriculture, medical science and humanities, to facilitate exchange of information and resources. The National Library of Thailand acts as the Secretariat of THAI NATIS.

**PROBLEMS AND ISSUES**

**LACK OF FUND AND RESOURCES**

Insufficient funds and resources are the important factors which causes disparity between national libraries of Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia to national libraries of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines. These countries received very little budget from the government and have to depend on donation from foreign government and international organisation. For this reason, library cooperation and resource sharing in the form of networking cannot be
carried out even though there are plans to implement this programme.

**COMPUTERISATION**

Not all national libraries are able to carry out computerisation of their bibliographical records as budget allocations are only spent on purchasing of library materials. Even if the donations received were in the form of PCs and equipment, there would not be enough budget for maintenance. National libraries of Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar are unable to create databases pertaining to their collections.

**LEGAL DEPOSIT ACT**

As have been mentioned above, there are still national libraries without legal deposit law. For this reason, comprehensive national bibliographies have not been compiled. National and cultural heritage of a particular country cannot be documented and preserved for future generations. In Laos, between 1975-85, the government abolished the deposit law and prevented the national library from publishing the national bibliography as it was believed that those materials might contain confidential information. Enforcing and implementing the act is another hassle that national libraries have to encounter. Some publishers are unaware of the existence of legal deposit laws. Publishers too are often reluctant to deposit their publications to the national libraries free of charge.

**DOCUMENTATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

There is little uniformity in bibliographic description of data especially in countries which have many dialects. In Laos for example, although English, French and Vietnamese are spoken, there are another 60 dialects being spoken by the minority groups. The computer software used in the national library cannot accommodate Laos font and has to be transliterated into Roman scripts before being input into the computer.

In Myanmar, the non-standardisation of transliteration rules of Myanmar scripts for bibliographic work made it difficult for the national library to compile national bibliography. At present, computer software use for bibliographic records is not able to index and retrieve materials in Myanmar language.

In Malaysia, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia is experiencing difficulties in documenting materials in Jawi scripts using computers as there is no computer software that accommodate this scripts. Bibliographic data in Jawi scripts has to be transliterated into Roman scripts before inputting into the database.

**CONCLUSION**

The development of national libraries in Southeast Asia varies between the more developed and the less developed countries. National libraries, especially in countries which were suffering from the aftermath of war or oppressive political system are still struggling to plan and implement library programmes. Generally, national libraries do not receive the same priority as that given to other services especially education, health and public work. Insufficient funds and resources and the lack of enforcement of Legal Deposit laws are some of the problems which hindered national library development. Despite various setbacks, these national libraries are making considerable efforts to recover, conserve, compile and guard its national heritage and at the same time, making it accessible to their users. In view of this, there is a need to increase cooperation and resource sharing of information between the national libraries of Southeast Asia. National libraries in Southeast Asia which are more advanced in technology and resources should, together with IFLA, play the leading role in organising cooperative projects especially on bibliographic control activities. It is hoped that with the “Plan of Action” (Appendix) agreed upon at the end of the IFLA/UBCIM Regional Seminar on Bibliographic Control held in Kuala Lumpur on 9-12 March 1998, bibliographic control activities in Southeast Asia will be able to move forward and improve further.
REFERENCES


Malaysia. Deposit of Library Materials Act, 1986


I. Legal Deposit
   i. All governing bodies for National Libraries/National Bibliographic Agencies of Southeast Asia must take steps to ensure there is a legal deposit provision in the country;
   ii. Countries with Legal Deposit provisions must ensure that the National Libraries/National Bibliographic Agencies take concrete and effective steps to enforce the Act, especially in acquiring government publications.

2. National Bibliographies
   i. Countries which have not published or have stopped publishing their national bibliography need to make financial provisions and set priorities to publish current national bibliographies of all their national imprints;
   ii. National Libraries/National Bibliographic Agencies which have published their national bibliographies must ensure that they are current in their publication and that they cover all the national publishing output regardless of forms;
   iii. The publication of retrospective national bibliography not covered by the legal deposit should be considered; and
   iv. Each National Library/National Bibliographic Agency should ensure that copies of their national bibliography are made available to all countries in the Southeast Asian region through the exchange of publications programme.

3. Cataloguing Standards

National Libraries/National Bibliographic Agencies in Southeast Asia must play a leading role in setting up a National Cataloguing Committee to look into the formulation and adoption of various national and international bibliographic standards.
4. Non-Roman, Multilingual and Multiscript Materials

IFLA Division on Bibliographic Control Section on Cataloguing and Division on Information Technology together with National Libraries/National Bibliographic Agencies in Southeast Asia must make a concerted effort to study the problems of documenting non-Roman, multilingual and multiscript materials faced by the South East Asian region and provide the necessary guidelines on it.

5. Malay Language Materials

Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Singapore should establish the following cooperative projects due to the common usage of Bahasa Melayu:

i. Union catalog of Malay language materials

ii. Authority files on personal names

6. UNIMARC

National Libraries/National Bibliographic Agencies should look into the possibility of using UNIMARC for purposes of exchanging records with other countries.

7. Training

IFLA to continue conducting relevant training/workshops/conferences and consultancy pertaining to bibliographic control in the Southeast Asian region especially to countries less advanced in their bibliographic activities.