

An Analytical Study on the Role of Legal Deposit Law in Sri Lanka in Building a National Collection

Sanjeevani, M.D.S.M
subashinimadumalika95@gmail.com

Abstract

Legal Deposit Law is enforced in almost every country with the aim of establishing bibliographic control of publications in a particular country and the formation of a national collection associated with it. This research concern that the legal deposit law in Sri Lanka plays a sufficient role in building the national collection. The main purpose of this study is to study about role of the legal deposit law of Sri Lanka. Other objectives are to study the legal deposit law in Sri Lanka and its origin, to study the systematic development of the legal deposit law, to identify the composition of the legal deposit collection. In this case, qualitative research methodology has been used and the case study method has been used as a research method. The authority of the legal deposit law in the country is National Archives of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the function of the registration section of books and newspapers of the National Archives of Sri Lanka has been studied. Data were collected through ordinances related to the legal deposit law, legal statutes and statistical reports, observations and interviews. Data analysis was performed by reporting and summarizing. The legal deposit law of Sri Lanka places the responsibility of the publishing industry entirely on the printer. There are instances where printers did not provide copies. It is clear that a complete national collection will not be created by not giving copies. It was found that non-print media are not covered by the Legal Deposit Law. Accordingly, the objectives of the legal deposit law in Sri Lanka should be amended and re-interpreted. Also it should focus to legislate inclusion of non-print media for the coverage of publications under the Legal Deposit Law of Sri Lanka and to make provisions for the implementing of an electronic deposit collection.

Key word : *Legal Deposit Law, Legal Deposit Collection, Deposit Copy, National Collection, Deposit Libraries*

Introduction

The people produces knowledge and information. They are recorded in written, printed, and audio-visual formats. It is based on existing knowledge and information. Therefore, it is essential to provide information on existing knowledge and information for the learners. In that case, every publication that is published in a particular country must be gathered in an authorized organization or more. Legal deposit law is enforced in almost every country. Legal Deposit Law can be defined as the legal stipulation that a deposit must be made in an institution authorized by the law to be published in a particular country. Accordingly, under the legal deposit law, the objective is primarily to build a complete national collection, thereby ensuring the present and future security of a country's intellectual heritage. Accordingly, the legal deposit law of Sri Lanka dates back to the newspapers ordinance no. 5 of 1839. Department of Archives of Sri Lanka was its chief authority. It is important to focus the legal deposit law needs to be enacted plays a sufficient role on building the national memory.

Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to study about role of the legal deposit law of Sri Lanka. Other objectives of this study are to study the historical background of the establishment of legal deposit law in Sri Lanka, to study the systematic development of legal deposit law, studying about maintaining of deposit collections, organization and usage, identifying weakness associated with legal deposit law, and identifying new trends related to legal deposit law.

Methodology

In this case, qualitative research methodology has been used and the case study method has been used as a research method. The authority of the legal deposit law in Sri Lanka is National Archives of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the function of the registration section of books and newspapers of the National Archives of Sri Lanka has been studied broadly. Data was collected by referring ordinances related to the legal deposit law, legal statutes, documents, statistical reports, etc. Interviews and observations were conducted. Data analysis was done by recording, summarizing, and tabulating the data obtained as appropriate and, when necessary, charts, diagrams are also used.

Results

The Department of National Archives is the foremost institution responsible for the collection of legal deposits in the country. Legal deposit law in Sri Lanka is based on three main constitutions. Namely, the Newspapers Ordinance No. 5 of 1839, the Publishers' and Printers' Ordinance of 1885 and the Printing Press Act No. 16 of 1902. Although, despite the Newspaper Registration Act is in force, newspapers have sprung up without registration in the island. Furthermore, published information contained in the newspapers are not being scrutinized by a scientific and comprehensive information service. Some newspapers are registered as magazines under the Printers and Publishers Ordinance. Also, it has not been possible to take legal action against delays in the printing of newspapers. Although the Publishers' and Printers' Ordinance of 1885 required the registration of all books printed in this country, a large number of books were not registered annually. By this Act the responsibility of the publishing industry has been transferred entirely to the Printer. The Director of National Archives does not have the power to verify the information provided by the printer and has to rely solely on the information provided by the printer. Periodicals are also registered as books. Also, books printed by some Sri Lankan authors abroad cannot be registered in this country under this Ordinance. Five copies to be deposited. Books, periodicals, and newspapers were identified as the means of publication covered by legal deposit law.

Discussion/ conclusions

The purpose of the legal deposit law in this country has not been formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Legal Deposit Law and the purposes for which it is intended. As well as it has not been formulated in accordance with dynamic challenges and future uncertainty. Based on the above results, it was identified that there were serious shortcomings in the implementation of the Newspaper Ordinance No. 5 of 1839. Although any law must be amended from time to time according to the social, economic, political and cultural changes of a country, the 1885 Ordinance has remained unchanged for 121 years. Although the 1885 Ordinance was amended in 1951, 1976 and 1983, no attempt was made to change the planning structure established in 1885. This Act was passed in 1902 and has been in operation for 104 years without any preliminary amendments. This is still being used as a colonial act as the basic structure of the Act remains unchanged after the few amendments made in 1951, 1955 and 1933. There were also instances where printers did not provide copies, it is an obvious to address that a complete national collection would not be created by not giving copies. It was found that non-print media are not covered by the Legal Deposit Law.

Recommendations

It should be amended and re-interpreted the objectives of the Legal Deposit Law in Sri Lanka. Action should be taken to reduce the number of copies required to be provided under the Legal Deposit law is essential. Publishers might face financial problem when they tend to produce expensive publications. Therefore, the study able to pointed out that the above condition can be minimized if reduced number of 3 or 2 copies. Although the number of copies should be reduced, the copies should be distributed in such a way that the objectives of the legal deposit law can be achieved. It is worth preparation of provisions regarding the inclusion of non-print media in the coverage of publications. Accordingly, action should be taken to acquire the audio-visual and all the electronic media which are being published in Sri Lanka. Strengthen legal deposit law against printers who do not provide copies of deposits is necessary. It should be prepared of procedures required to implement an electronic deposit. In this age of scientific and technological revolution, it would be a blessing for all Sri Lankans to be able to electronically preserve the writing heritage of Sri Lanka.

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