

Use of Moys Classification Scheme in Classification of Legal Materials

Olayinka Tuyo (Mrs.)

Nigerian Law School Library, Bwari FCT, Abuja

Email:lawlady57@yahoo.com

Tel: 2348033505859

Abstract

Purpose: *The paper explains how to use Moys's Classification in the classification of law collections. The paper also discusses the rationale behind the creation of Moys classification scheme to accommodate law materials and also appraises the suitability of the classification scheme to law library.*

Design / Methodology / Approach: *The explanatory approach was used for this study. An observation method was used to identify the relationship between Moys classification scheme and others classification schemes and the rationale behind choosing the Moys Classification scheme over other schemes in the classification of legal materials.*

Findings: *The paper found out that the scheme covered all areas of law in its schedule and tables and explains all subject areas of law.*

Practical Implications: *The use of Moys classification scheme is simple and is dedicated to law as a subject area alone. The usage of this classifications scheme in the classification of legal materials will bring uniformity in the arrangement of legal collections in all law libraries.*

Originality /Value: *The value of this paper lies in the discussion and explanation of various tables in this unique Classification scheme and how it's to be used by law Librarians.*

Key word: *Classification Scheme, Moys Classification Scheme, Law Library, Legal Materials.*

Paper type: *Conceptual*

Introduction

Classification of law libraries collections arrived late in librarianship when compared with other subject's collections. This could be attributed to the fact that law libraries collections were initially limited, and the alphabetical arrangement sorted the purpose of the law librarians then. Moreover many of the general classification schemes in use treated law as part of social sciences.(Dewey: 340) Library of congress in its classification scheme, (herein after referred to as LCC) classified law books with their subjects matter thus materials on land law are classified in HD 1141-1239. This evidently resulted in scattering law books on the shelves. Though the LCC tried to remedy this by the use of "class K" for law books, but this too have been found to be inadequate.

As a result of the fact that classification scheme for law books came rather late, many law libraries resulted in devising homemade schemes

for their use. Elizabeth M. Moys was appointed the University of Lagos librarian (1962-1965), she saw the challenges in the classification of law materials in the library, she then came up with a draft scheme which later became known as the Moys classification scheme for law books.

It can thus be reasonably assumed that the University of Lagos library was the first to use the scheme for its law collections. The university used LCC to classify its collections on other subjects, and it was the class K of LCC that Elizabeth Moys expanded to form Moys classification scheme for law Books. This explains the fact that the Moys scheme and LCC have similar characteristics but unlike the LCC which runs into many volumes the Moys classification remains a one- volume book even though in its 4th edition (the fifth edition is presently being worked on by a committee in the U.S.)

Basic Structure of the Scheme

The scheme is divided into three main groups 1- Books of a general nature and materials concerned with legal systems that do not belong to individual modern nation states, Thus in the first group we have the following classes.

Journals and reference Materials

- KA- Jurisprudence
- KB- general and comparative law
- KC- International law
- KD- Religious legal systems
- KE- Ancient and Medieval Law

The second group consists of all modern national legal systems. This is further divided into two that is the common law and all the rest.

The common law section consists of materials from countries with “pure common law systems six classes were allocated to the common law section. One class was allocated to each of the remaining non-common law continents, and another class was allocated for own country.

KF – KN- Common law (The common law countries have been highlighted as the following:

1. 1.British Isles i.e. England and Wales(KF), Scotland and Ireland(KF)
2. Canada(KG)
3. 3.United States(KG)
4. Caribbean(KG)
5. West Indies(KG)
6. Australia(KH)
7. New Zealand(KH))
8. KP-Own country
9. KR- Africa
10. KS- Latin America
11. KT- Asia and pacific
12. KV- Europe

The third group consists of the class KZ this is a class for Non-legal books, which may be possessed by specialist law libraries.

Though general libraries which are not strictly law libraries are advised not to use class KZ.

Class KP

This is a special class for own country. The question commonly asked is why class KP when there is KR for Africa?

The Moys scheme KP provides 60 units of numbers to play with for primary materials and 150 units for secondary materials. Thus there is provision of 60+150 units of numbers =210 for the country Nigeria (Being our own country) whereas if we were to use KR we will have only 80 units of numbers. That is 20 for primary materials and 60 for secondary materials.

Table 1 is used for primary materials whilst

Table 11 is for secondary materials.

Undoubtedly the table 11 is not as detailed as the provision made in sub classes KL –KM and KN. It is advised that until a new edition of the scheme is published where it is hoped this lapse will be taken care of, broad subjects should be used or else the law librarian can use his or her ingenuity to expand the block numbers provided by the table provided it does not in any way compromise the number of the next subject.

Example of classifying a law text written for home country or written by an author from own country. In our case a book written for Nigerian or written by a Nigerian author. Such as The Administration of Justice in Nigeria By Peter Olujede. KP will be used in conjunction with table 11 column A. thus the classification number for above stated title will be KP 68 .O4

KP is the classification, 68 is the number provided for administration of justice in column A whilst .O4 is the cutter number for the author.

How to Classify Law Journals

The title of the journal forms the classification number of the journal (disregard articles such as “A, An, and The”. from the beginning of the title, substitute the alphabet for a number i.e.

A B C D E F.....X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6.....24 25 26

e.g African Human Rights Law Journal would be classified as K1 F84 v. i.e.

- K for law
- A for 1
- F the next alphabet on the title as cutter
- R 8 (cutter no.)
- I 4(cutter no.)

Thus we have K1 .F84 v.

General Use of Tables

The tables are to be used in conjunction with the main schedules wherever the scheme so directs. e.g. where the schedule provides block numbers it directs as to which table is to be used to get the class number i.e. The schedule provided a block number for Kenya KR 3101-50 © what this translate to is that using table 1 or 11 column C will be used to compute the classification number for the text being classified. For example : to classify a book titled “Administration of Justice in Kenya” using class KR which is for Africa block number for Kenya as provided in Moys is 3101-3150 (C). Since the book is a text book and not a primary material table 11 will be used. Number allocated to Administration of justice in table 11 column c is 15. Thus to get a number for the text the number 15 is added 3101 which will give us 3116 thus the classification number for the title will be KR 3116. A cutter number will then be assigned to the author’s surname.

The same applies to other tables in the scheme

Table 111 provides a system of ‘Cutter’ numbers to be use in arranging materials by date, this is most desirable with the earlier works. It provides for works produced after 1400 AD. An alphabet represents the century whilst the last 2 digits represents the year. 1578 will be represented by .B78. In essence where the schedule stipulates the use of table 111, this will be the cutter no to use and not the cutter table. Also table three can be use where the user finds it more appropriate especially with the early reports.

Table IV is used for common law jurisdictions, it is to be used where the schedule so directs.

Table V - this table should be used for Courts, where the schedule directs that the table should be used in the classification of materials emanating from or about courts this table should be used. The table is not exhaustive, there might be the need to make provisions for courts

peculiar to the users jurisdiction such as ‘Shariah Court of Appeal’

Table VI is for Special legal forms and topics. It should be used as directed in the schedule.

Table VII is for persons, it should be used for legal capacity, liability, compellability etc. of persons whether natural or corporate at any place in the schedule, whether the schedule stipulates its use or not. Here the user of the scheme is expected to use his/her skill to ensure that materials are appropriately placed.

Table VIII this table is meant to be used in the classification of Non-Legal forms and treatments. It can be used in conjunction with the class KZ.

Conclusion

The use of Moys classification scheme for law librarians have been found to be very easy and not at all cumbersome, especially since it’s a one volume scheme. The class KP for own country with individual law librarian’s ingenuity can be found to be more robust than the class KR. The subject law is very dynamic and new areas of law keep emerging, thus there is need for the law librarian to strive to keep abreast of new development in the subject law.

References

- Dada, T.O. (2007): Legal Collection in Perspectives being a paper delivered at the National workshop on Technical Services in Law Libraries. Organised by the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies
- Jegede, Oluremi: Introduction to the Moys Classification Scheme being a paper delivered at the National workshop on Technical Services in Law Libraries. Organised by the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies
- Moys, Elizabeth (2001): Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Materials/4th edition.- Munchen: K.G. Saur