

ISBN and HRD

Why in news?

\n\n

ISBN International Agency has threatened the HRD ministry to revoke the ministry's appointment as the agency for issuing ISBNs in India.

\n\n

What is ISBN?

\n\n

\n

- International Standard Book Number (ISBNs) is a unique 13-digit code, usually found on the back cover of a book above the barcode.

\n

- It is used by buyers to identify books.

\n

- ISBN is not mandatory to publish a book.

\n

- But it has become an indispensable sales tool as bookstores.

\n

- e.g Merely coding the language of publication into the ISBN is known to increase sales. Distributors, bookstore chains and citation databases will not accept a book without an ISBN.

\n

- The method of assigning an ISBN is nation-based and varies from country to country.

\n

- In India, the Raja Rammohun Roy National Agency (RRMRNA), under the HRD Ministry, has been entrusted with this task.

\n

\n\n

ISBN 978-0-7334-2609-4



\n\n

What is the problem?

\n\n

- \n
- Last year, the HRD Ministry digitised the allotment of ISBNs.
\n
- Publishers complain that this move has inexplicably slowed down publishing in India.
\n
- The new online application system has also raised fears of censorship, with the ministry seeking details of each book before issuing ISBNs.
\n
- e.g Publishers have to provide the book jacket, which carries synopsis and blurbs from authors.
\n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

- \n
- The ISBN is purely taxonomic and the issuer is not supposed to have a regulatory function.
\n
- If there is a problem in the quality of a book, it should be tested in a court of law.
\n
- The government should divest itself of this function and devolve it to a private agency.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n

