

Ranganathans Laws of Library Science & their Implications

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes in detail the Five Laws of Library Science and their implications on library activities. These laws have provided a scientific approach to library science. They constitute the philosophical basis for work and services of all types of libraries. These also provide guidance in the practice of Library and Information Science. Every student and teacher of library Science and librarian must give a thought to the implications of these laws. In the changing environment of libraries in the emerging society has to fall within the purview of these laws. The new interpretations of these Laws shows that in today's international world of librarianship, Ranganathan's Five laws are much important and relevant what was before and even it is increasing. The total adoption of ICT in libraries could be a little bit difficult because of the fact that libraries are not money making ventures but with proper application of Ranganathan's five laws of library science everything seems possible and easy. Having known that users' satisfaction is a focal point of discussion in all Librarian's gathering and it is also paramount to an effective promotion and marketing of library and information services; every practicing librarian should know that marketing is an attitude not a procedure and as a result of constant changes in library management system, it is therefore expected that libraries needs to develop effective strategies for improving the marketing, publicity and promotion of library services.

Keywords: *S. R. Ranganathan's five Laws of Library Science, Relevance of five Laws, New Interpretations of five Laws, and Imperatives of five Laws.*

INTRODUCTION

Dr. S.R. Ranganathan(Shiyali Ramamritra Ranganathan , who is often regarded as the Father of Library Science in India, was born in Shiyali, a small village in the Tanjavoor district of Tamilnadu state on 9th August 1892. He was an inventor, educator, librarian and a philosopher (Kumar 1992). He aims to apply scientific method and principles to different areas of library science. His Laws of Library Science was published in 1931. This is a classic work, which describes in detail the Five Laws of Library Science and their implications on library activities. These laws have provided a scientific approach to library science. Most librarians worldwide accept them as the foundations of the philosophy of their work and service in the library. The Five Laws of Library Science are some of the most influential concepts in the field. Since they were published in 1931, these five laws "have remained a centerpiece of professional values..." (Rubin 2004). These basic theories of Library Science continue to directly impact the development of this discipline and the service of all libraries. [From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia].

These laws of Library Science are the "fundamental laws" of Library Science. These are applicable to any problem in the areas of library science, library service, and library practice. These laws are like pot containing oceans. Prior to their enunciation, the subject of Library Science had no philosophy. These laws gave a philosophical base, guaranteeing an everlasting future to the subject of library science, the profession of librarianship, and the use of libraries. These laws have provided a scientific approach to the subject of library science. Even though S.R. Ranganathan proposed the Five Laws of Library Science before the advent of the digital age, they are still valid and equally relevant today.

The five laws are:

1. Books are for use (the term book should be interpreted broadly to stand for information resources)
2. Every reader it's Book
3. Every Book its reader
4. Save the time of reader.
5. Library is a Growing organism. Let's discuss them briefly as:-

II.FIRST LAW :“BOOKS ARE FOR USE”

The first law focuses on the selective use of information. For effective use of information there should be proper storage and dissemination of information. Library and Information professionals have to keep in their minds that, they have to serve “Right information, to the right user at the right time”. Books (information resources) are for use and laid more emphasis on the fact that it is imperative to ensure library patrons use the materials that were selected and acquired for them. This is to prove that libraries do not just exist to store information resources, but also ensures that people have access to the available information resources, which therefore necessitate the need for information professionals to understand that it is essential for them to actively market their products and services.

A book is a guide, a friend, and a philosopher. A writer writes a book to communicate his thoughts. The primary purpose of writing, therefore, is that the thought it contains should be communicated. To do so it is necessary to put the books for use. The first law, therefore, truly demands that all efforts should be made to ensure that all the books kept in the library are used because it is created for use. The first law "Books are for use" places emphasis on the use of books rather than storage. Books were once kept in closed access in order to prevent theft, but this discouraged free use and prevented loaning. Dr. Ranganathan observed that books were often chained to prevent their removal and that the emphasis was on storage and preservation rather than use. He did not reject the notion that preservation and storage were important, but he asserted that the purpose of such activities was to promote use. Without user access to materials, there is little value in these items. By emphasizing use, Dr. Ranganathan refocused the attention of the field to access-related issues, such as:-

(1.1) Library's location, (1.2) open Access, (1.3) hours (1.4) building and furniture (1.5) book selection policy (1.6) techniques (1.7) publicity, library staff and library reference.

1.1. Location of Library - A library should be located near the central place. If it as an institutional/college library, then it should be situated near the center of the college. If it is a public library then it should be in the center of the city.

1.2. Open Access - Open access of books enhance their use. In this system, every reader/user has to go to the shelves and choose the book of his/her interest. In case he does not find the desired book of his interest, he can choose some other from the shelves.

1.3. Library Hours - The first law demands that a library should be kept open for long hours, and during the hours which suits to its patrons most.

1.4. Library Building and Furniture - There should be a functional library building with pleasant, natural, and electrical light, soothing interior, good looking furniture, comfortable chairs, etc.

1.5. Book Selection Policy - Books should be purchased which are relevant to the needs of the readers. Books should be attractive such as it fills the reader with pleasure.

1.6. Library Techniques - Proper cataloging and classification of books are essential for promoting the use of books.

1.7. Publicity - The First Law demands wide publicity of each and every book of the library. For example, the librarian can bring out the list of new additions and latest arrivals through the Current Awareness Service (CAS) or Selective Dissemination of Information Services (SDI).

1.8. Library Staff - A library cannot come up to the expectation of the first law unless its staff is attentive and cheerful, and cares for the books and readers.

1.9. Reference Service - Reference service aims to establish the right contact between the right reader and right book at the right time. A collection of library resources would not be used fully unless the reference librarian makes effort to help the users to exploit the resources of the library. This personal service will lead to the greater use of books. So the first law constitutes the basis for the library services.

III. SECOND LAW: "EVERY READER HIS / HER BOOK"

Considering the second law, "every reader his or her book," means that information needs of library patrons are diversified and that there are books and other information resources that are available for each patron's consumption. Librarians' duty is to help library patrons to find the information they require and to ensure that the library patrons derive satisfaction from the services rendered to them. The second law also emphasizes the need for Librarians to treat patrons equally. The implication of the second law is marketing of library and

information services to meet user's information needs satisfactorily by collecting and interpreting information, studying and understanding the needs of patrons, and matching the needs with the available resources. This law implies that the "books are for use of all" or "books for all." The Second Law stressed on the democratization of the library where every reader has the equal right to get the book of his / her interest. The second law fixed some responsibilities or obligations of the state, the library authority, the library staff, and the readers. A library should serve all patrons, no matter their age, race, or economic status. This law suggests that every member of the community should be able to obtain materials needed. Dr. Ranganathan felt that all individuals from all social environments were entitled to library service and that the basis of library use was education, to which all were entitled. These entitlements were not without some important obligations for both libraries/librarians and library patrons. Librarians should have excellent first-hand knowledge of the people to be served. Collections should meet the special interests of the community, and libraries should promote and advertise their services extensively to attract a wide range of readers.

However this law has some obligations i.e. (a) Obligations of the State (b) Obligation of the Library Authority (c) Obligation of Library Staff (d) Obligation of the Reader.

IV. THIRD LAW: "EVERY BOOK ITS READER"

The Third Law prescribes "Every Book its Reader". The emphasis is on the book. This law desires that every book in a library must find its reader. It implies that there should be maximum use of books by their users. This principle is closely related to the second law, but it focuses on the item itself, suggesting that each item in a library has an individual or individuals who would find that item useful. Dr. Ranganathan argued that the library could devise many methods to ensure that each item finds its appropriate reader. This law advocates easy access to materials, and one way to do so is by connecting library users to whatever information they require. We could interpret readers' development as being part of the third law, since we promote books to patrons who may not be aware of the availability of those library materials which may offer opportunities for enrichment that other titles do not offer. Literarily, reference work has been identified within the third law, and this continues to be the case in the virtual library. Virtual reference services continue to grow in popularity in both academic and public libraries. The implication of the third law in marketing the library involves performing activities that take library products and services to the patrons: publicizing the value and benefits, promotional campaigns, advocacy, public relations, personal communication, selective dissemination of information, social networking tools etc. So "every book its reader" means a library's books have a place in the library even if a smaller demographic might choose to read it. It is, therefore, necessary to adopt measures to ensure successful implementation of the demand of the Third Law.

V. FOURTH LAW: "SAVE THE TIME OF THE READER"

The Fourth Law says "Save the Time of the Reader." A library user must be assumed a busy person. It is essential to keep the reader satisfied and a reader is satisfied most if his/her time is saved, i.e. if he/she gets the needed service in minimum possible time. This law is recognition that part of the excellence of library service is

its ability to meet the needs of the library user efficiently. To this end, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan recommended the use of appropriate business methods to improve library management. He observed that centralizing the library collection in one location provided distinct advantages. He also noted that excellent staff would not only include those who possess strong reference skills, but also strong technical skills in catalogues (card or OPAC or Web Pac) bibliographies, cross-referencing, ordering, accessioning, and the circulation of materials.

The fourth law stress upon the time. Time is precious to everybody. Time management is a key to success in life. Libraries must strategize, and plan towards reducing the length of time spent by patrons while retrieving a material saving the time of the reader also relates to how information is organized and disseminated. In the libraries, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are used to save thousands of hours of the reader's time when compared to manual systems of information retrieval. The implication of Ranganathan's fourth law in marketing library and information services is that, it pays more attention to users' benefits and preferences. This has to do with consolidating and repackaging of information into appropriate format, making information readily available when needed, ensuring that the quality of services and offerings take user benefits and preferences into account. The goal of the library should be to ensure effective service delivery for optimum satisfaction of user's needs. For this there should be Open Access in the library, library should be located at the centre of the institution, proper shelf arrangement, classification and cataloging, reference service, and proper document service etc etc should be used in the library.

VI.FIFTH LAW: "THE LIBRARY IS A GROWING ORGANISM"

The Fifth Law is "The Library is a Growing Organism." A library is a social institution and it will keep growing like an organism. A library will grow in terms of documents, readers, and staff. The nature of organic growth can be either growth as a body of a child or growth as of the body of an adult. The growth of a new library will correspond to that of a child growing in all aspects. In case of a service library, once its growth has reached the adult stage, the growth would be in terms of replacing old books by new books and new users will continuously replace old users. Librarians should know that availability of e-resources does not stop the acquisition of new print materials, and the level at which the resources grow has not changed. The implication of the fifth law for library marketing is adapting the library services and resources to both present and the future users' need, including mobilizing resources, dealing with uncertainty about future user' need, new services, new patron groups, new environment, etc.

This law focused more on the need for internal change than on changes in the environment itself. Dr. Ranganathan argued that library organizations must accommodate growth in staff, the physical collection, and patron use. This involved allowing for growth in the physical building, reading areas, shelving, and in space for the catalog. So the fifth law of library science "the library is a growing organism" means that a library should be a continually changing institution, never static in its outlook. Books, methods, and etc the physical library should be updated over time. The implications i.e. balanced growth, casting of the old (obsolete) and valuable

books, choice of classification scheme, choice of catalog code, modernization, trained staff and safe guard systems etc should be available.

In order to utilize these laws, library and information centers must adopt marketing tools and promotion tools such as exhibition/displays, posters, sign posts, Bulletin Board, electronic bill boards, flyers, advertisement, blogs, twitter, flicker, you tubes, mass media, proper and catching labeling, library guide and newsletters, extension activities, library tour, Library week/day, ICT based channels-website, e-mail, web links/hyperlinks etc.(Bhat R.K 2011)The ICT can bring great changes in the library, thus Librarians must be prepared to exploit online resources which can be used to attract patronage. The e-marketing is another great asset in marketing library and information resources. Bobinson recommended the use of internet as a very good means of advertising library services.

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