



FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Dr. Mahesh M. Dalvi¹ and Dr. Hemant K. Chitte²

¹Librarian , Satish Pradhan Dnyanasadhan College Thane.

² Principal, Satish Pradhan Dnyanasadhan College Thane.

ABSTRACT

Ranganathan's five laws of library science are a step towards putting library work on a scientific basis. Information literacy is a set of abilities required to become a successful information searcher in the modern knowledge society. This paper discusses five laws of library science and their implications in the context of information literacy.

KEYWORDS: S.R. Ranganathan, five laws of library science, information literacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The five laws of library science are notable contributions to the theoretical base of librarianship. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan was a library scientist par excellence. He aims to apply the scientific method to different areas of library science. In the context of library science, he conceived the five laws of library science in 1924 which took final form in 1928 (Krishnan, 1997). The five laws which are the initial move towards putting library work consistently giving general standards from which all library practices could be derived (Garfield, 1984) were fully developed and published in book form in 1931. The term information literacy came into existence much later when Paul Zurkowsky (197) then the president of the Information Industry Association (IIA) used it in his report submitted to National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (Dalvi, 2019). It is the process of knowing when and why information is needed, where and how to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical way. It is common to all disciplines and all learning environments. The researcher here wants to find out how the concept of formation literacy help to achieve what is stated in the Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science.

2. FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

Dr. Ranganathan's five laws of library science apply to all fields of library activities and any problem in the areas of library science. Though these laws are five simple statements that appear to be too simple and short, are quite bold and clear. These essential laws which have been acknowledged as the fundamentals of library science are even ninety years of their formal exposition are particularly well known, pertinent, and relevant in the present electronic and computerized time. These give direction and reasoning of training and instructing of library science and are helpful in the educating of various parts of library science. These laws will fill in as a wellspring of motivation and direction to the field of library and library science in years to come.

1. Books are for use

The Five Laws of Library Science

1. Books are for use.
2. Every person his or her book.
3. Every book its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. The library is a growing organism.

2. Every Reader his/her book
3. Every book its reader
4. Save the time of the reader
5. Library is a growing organism

3. INFORMATION LITERACY

Information literacy has gained widespread recognition due to the exponential growth in information and rapid technological development in the field of libraries and information. The term was first used in a business context in 1974 by Paul Zurkowski, then the president of the Information Industry Association (IIA) in his report submitted to National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. According to him "People trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literate. They have learned techniques and skills for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information-solution to their problems" (Zurkowski, 1974). Lee Burchinal (1976) stated "To be information literate requires a new set of skills. These include how to locate and use the information needed for problem-solving and decision-making efficiently and effectively."

The most simple, frequently used and cited definition of information literacy has appeared in the report of the American Library Association (ALA) President Committee on information literacy. According to the definition "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and can locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (ALA, 1989).

4. RELATION BETWEEN FIVE LAWS AND INFORMATION LITERACY

The five laws of library science are the fundamental laws that deal with the functioning of the library to serve the user and maximize the use of library and resources in a scientific way. Ranganathan's five laws were formulated in the context of traditional libraries their use and services rendered by them to their users are relevant in the modern context also. Information literacy on the other hand is relatively a modern concept deals with the approach and abilities of the library user. Recent development due to exponential growth in information has made it necessary for a user to gain proper information-seeking skills to effectively identify, search, retrieve and use information, and information literacy discusses the same. It forms the basis for lifelong learning. The five laws are focused on the role and responsibility of the library as a service organization whereas information literacy discusses the information skills of users. The information literate user can use the library resources effectively and efficiently which ultimately help to give maximum satisfaction to the individual law of library science (Dalvi, 2019).

4.1 First Law: Books are for use

The first law "Books are for use", resembles a straightforward explanation that doesn't justify genuine thought and examination yet on the off chance that taking a gander at the historical backdrop of the book in the library can change this assessment. In the prior emphasize time, the libraries were a storage facility of books and the books were for conservation as opposed to their utilization. Archaic libraries were an illustration of anchored libraries. The books in a real sense were joined to the racks with metal chains and must be utilized in a solitary area it was very normal while creating a book was a troublesome undertaking. It was changed after the invention of printing which makes the creation of various duplicates effectively conceivable. Yet, even in the present circumstance, this law is appropriate in the cutting edge library challenge.

The law emphasizes access and use of library resources. The task before the librarian is to ensure that the information resources available in the library irrespective of its media and form are accessed and optimally used. The reputation and ranking of a library do not only depend on its collection or building but the use of its resources by the users.

The first law insists on access and use of information and to achieve this in addition to the collection, staffing, building, services, access, and accommodation the ICT-based technologies are also

playing a vital role. Library automation helps in computerizing library collections and the housekeeping operations of the library, now with the help of ICT user can access and retrieve similar information from various locations.

The library OPAC helps users in accessing bibliographical information from anywhere. With the help of the internet, users can access information through different databases. To access the information especially in the modern age user needs to acquire certain skills which play an important role in the process of accessing the information. Users are not aware of the tools and techniques used in the library hence sometimes results in not reaching the required book and it remains unused. Hence educating the user becomes a crucial task to ensure the use of information. Therefore the user should be oriented about the collection of the library and how to access it. Information literacy training enables the users to use the library resources comfortably, leading to their greater use. On the other hand selection of information resources also become more challenging especially after the recent information revolution which has created abundance information. The librarian needs to have certain skills and expertise to make the proper selection of information resources for their users. Hence the librarian also needs to acquire or update his information searching skills.

4.2 Second law: Every reader his book

The second law is an extension of "Books are for use", with more emphasis on the reader or user of the library. The law upholds the right of patrons to have access to the information resources hence a user of the library is a primary factor here. Every single activity in the library is aimed at satisfying and empowering the user. Dr. Ranganathan felt that individuals from any social environment are entitled to get library services.

The second law also advocated the philosophy of 'Right to information act 2004' well in advance as it suggests that every citizen should be able to obtain the required information. This law preaches that "Books (information) are for all irrespective of their class, caste, religious background. This law insists the library and information professionals assure access to information without any obstacle." "While the first law put an end to the concept of 'Books are for preservation than use' the second law broadens the concept from 'Books are for the selective few to books are for all' (B. Ramesh, 2011).

The second law also appeals for open access system where the user has a better chance of choosing the right book (information) than merely consulting the library catalogue. It has been found that the provision of open access motivates the users to use the library resources (Krishnan, 1997). Here certain rules are obligatory on the user to make the optimum use of the library resources. Here the user education plays a vital role. In the modern knowledge society information is a key component for all activities and progress. The skilled or information literate can make the optimum use of the resources as he knows how to access the required information. He has the advantage of knowing the different tools and techniques to search the information online as well as offline. Therefore the information literacy training helps to fulfill the second law "Every reader his book (information)".

4.3 Third law: "Every book its reader"

The third law prescribes "Every book its reader/user". The principle is closely related to the second law but the approach is oriented towards the book. The law asserts that every book in the library should have a chance of finding its appropriate reader. In other words resources in the library look for users and the success of the library lies in a well-organized collection of resources to maximize the chance that the appropriate user will find it as and when needed. The open-access system increases the chances of readers noticing the book. In the modern world with the advent of information technology, information professionals accept the modish methods and techniques to organize and manage the collection. Every piece of information ought to serve the users whether it may be the form of printed book, a digital collection, or e-resources.

Automated technical operations such as cataloguing, indexing, abstracting help the users in the context of the third law. Dr. Ranganathan mentioned that the users often do not possess adequate

knowledge about the available resources. They have a poor understanding of their information needs hence they are not in a position to find proper information sources. The proper training in handling the library resources, the tools, and techniques used as well as to make them understand their information need and the resources available to fulfill their information needs and can be achieved through information literacy training.

4.4 Forth law: Save the time of the reader

Therefore the law "Save the time of reader" revolves around the users of the library. It recognizes that the user has to be always at the center point while formulating the policies. The emphasis on saving the time of users by adopting suitable methods. Therefore the collection must be organized in such a manner so that the user should not waste his valuable time in searching for required information. On the other side, the time of the library staff is also important hence the library should function on scientific principles. Dr. Ranganathan suggested the use of suitable business methods to improve library management. He realizes that centralized library collection at one location with open access system has its advantages as per as users time is a concern. The success of the library depends on how fast the library can be delivered to its users.

Satisfaction of user is a key aspect a frustrated or disappointed user means that the library is failed to deliver. The user who can quickly search for required documents or information is a satisfied user. The library can make use of ICT to save the time of the user. Apart from library services, certain things from the user end are helpful to save the time of users. If the user is well aware of the organization of information in the library will be able to get the information quickly. The libraries provide access to its collection through classification, catalogue, indexes, etc. With the use of ICT in the library, the operations are now automated. The concept of "library without a wall" has come into existence.

The chances of the user getting information quickly depend on the knowledge of the above-mentioned aspects and, to get quick access to the information the user must have expertise over it. It may be how to search the library catalogue or OPAC, how to develop a search strategy, how to evaluate the information available and bring it in a usable format. In short, the user should possess the modern age information literacy skills to be a successful user and get faster access to the information. It is not only a library its collection and services but user education is also playing an important role in saving the time of users'.

4.5 Fifth Law: Library is a growing organism

In the fifth law "Library is a growing organism" Dr. Ranganathan compares library to a growing organism. A library will grow in terms of collection, users, staff, services, furniture and equipment physical infrastructure, and other resources. In a living organism, the nature of growth is two types the child growth or adult growth. The growth of a child is characterized by an increase in physical dimensions. This type of growth is fast and visible hence can be recognized easily. But on the other hand, the growth of adults is mostly in form of the replacement of old cells. The growth of a new library corresponds to that of a child grow in all aspects. Once the growth is reached at an adult stage the growth will be in terms of replacing old collections and services with the new and the new users will keep on replacing the old. The library being a growing organism refers to the dynamic growing entity, not a static one.

The term organism has been used here as a 'system' concept rather than a living system and talks about sustainable development. Lancaster (1988) while highlighting the importance of the fifth law in today's modern libraries with ICT-enabled services stated that "Were Ranganathan alive today he would undoubtedly urge us to remember the fifth law. Most likely, he would point out that observance of this law is even more important now than it was fifty years ago. Furthermore, he would give us some leadership, pointed us in the direction in which we should be headed. Therein lies his greatness."

Considering the exponential growth of information flooded with different forms, formats, and media it is difficult as well as unmanageable for a single library to provide access to the available information on the subject. It applies to users also as it is impossible to keep pace with the available information available in the field of his interest. The user may get lost in a lot of information. The organic growth of the library is also pertinent to library users. In the modern knowledge society, the user or information searcher is more self-dependent and as the library grows the users' needs to acquire certain information skills to become a successful user. The growing organism in the context of the user is not only replacing the old users but to enhance their library and information skills. Therefore to information literacy skills are very much needed to give maximum satisfaction to the fifth law.

5. CONCLUSION

Ranganathan's five laws of library science apply to all fields of library exercises and will fill in as a source of motivation and guide in years to come. These laws pass on the essential way of thinking of library science and pass on a profound comprehension of libraries. The essential guideline of these laws is to join readers/users with required information. Now we have entered into the digital era and where a library user is not a passive one but a self-directed active user who possesses a set of lifelong information skills. The information literacy skills help the user to get the desired information in the right place and format at the right time which is even the basic philosophy behind Ranganathan's five laws of library science.

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