

Ranganathan's Five Laws in the Light of ICT

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Abstract

Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science are applicable to all fields of library activities. Now we have entered into digital era. Information Technology is the only solution to manage all types of information which is growing rapidly. Information professionals as well as users are handling information technology. In spite of multidimensional development in different area of library work and service and their enrichment with the application of modern technology Five Laws of Library Science are equally applicable till date, since its inception.

Keywords : Ranganathan - Five Laws, Library Automation, Information Technology, ICT

1. Introduction

Information is the key to democracy. We are all very much well acquainted that information are rapidly explored. So we have to manage that information systematically and properly. That is why there is a necessity for using Information Technology (IT). 21st century is fully depends upon IT. Almost all the countries in the world have accepted the IT including India. With the advent of IT, it has become possible for common people to access global information.[4]

IT together with Communication Technology has brought unprecedented changes in the way people communicate. The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) is widespread and has become essential tool for the efficient administration of any organization and in the delivery of services to the client. ICT can be broadly defined as a set of activities that facilitate capturing, storing, processing, transmitting and displaying of information by electronics means.[1]

2. Five Laws of Library Science

Dr. S.R. Ranganathan is known as "Father of Library Science". He has opined the "Five Laws of Library Science" in the year 1931[2]. According to Dr. Ranganathan the entire process of library or an Information Institution i.e. organizing, managing, disseminating & retrieving of information are directly or indirectly related to these Five Laws. He also replaced terms 'Books', 'Reader', 'Library', by terms 'Document', 'User', 'Information' respectively. During that time he had recognized there will be a possibility of problems in information handling due to information explosion. Five Laws are very useful and is a guiding principle for a library and information professionals. Nowadays we, the library professionals are facing the problems of information handlings. Most of the professionals have taken the help of IT in organizing, managing, disseminating the information properly & systematically. That is why where the five laws of library science is reconsidered in the context of ICT.[5]

2.1 First Law – “Books are for use”

This law focuses on the selective use of information. For proper uses of information there should be proper storage and dissemination of information. Library or information professionals have always kept in their mind that, they have to serve “Right information, to Right user at the Right time”. Library automation helps in computerizing library collections, where more than one user can retrieve the same information simultaneously. The OPAC of the library system helps users in accessing the bibliographical information from anywhere.

With the help of ICT across the globe at all levels, a number of efforts have been taken to promote the use of information. Government has also taken initiatives to serve the information to its citizens (upto grassroots level) in the form of e-government projects. Through Internet one can avail information globally. The library and information professionals have to perform the role of information navigator, knowledge manager, information evaluator etc.

2.2 Second Law – “Every reader his/her books”.

Second Law is user oriented law. Every citizens has the right to access the information (Right to Information Act, 2004). This law guides the library or information professionals to take care of information users, so that they can access information without any obstacle. Here is a necessity of User Survey, User Study and User Education. User Orientation may help in acquiring the need and satisfying the purpose.

Presently no information Center or Library is self sufficient to serve all types of information to a particular client because of information explosion, budget crunches in the library and raising cost of the primary resources. But through the networking and the consortium approach of the E-journals, E-books, help to meet the needs of users.

2.3 Third Law - “Every books its reader”

Third Law is information oriented. In modern situation information professionals have to accept the information technology to organize and manage the information. Except in rural area, most of the university and institutions libraries in India are automated. Few of them have taken initiatives in digitizing the collections. Now e-books and e-journals have taken place into the libraries instead of the print collections.

Every piece of information should be serving to users. Thus information professionals have to organize the information in such a manner that maximum information is used by user correctly and properly. Automated technical process of the library collection such as Cataloguing, Indexing, and Abstracting etc. helps user in the context of the third law of library science.

2.4 Forth Law – “Save the time of user”

This law highlighted on, how fast information can be delivered to its end users. ICT has helped user in getting their required information into their laptop, palmtop, and desktops. Today’s the concept “library

without wall" has come into the picture. Through broadband connection information professionals serve the information to its clients with in a fraction of second. Day by day internet is speedy and reaching to every user irrespective of the place and time.

2.5 Fifth Law – "Library is a Growing Organism"

Keeping in view the information available and growth in the area, it is impossible for the single library to acquire all the information of a subject. There is space problem, staff problem and most importantly the fund problem every library has. In the present electronic age, resources are available in electronic forms, such CD-ROM, DVD, VCD, Optical Disks. Due to availability in electronic format of the resources, space problem of the library gets no sense and smaller place can acquire billions of collection. The main problem of the library is availability of inadequate funds. In that case resource sharing and networki9ng between libraries and information centers are very much essential. To short out the library budget problem, consortium approach has come to the picture making libraries agreeing to share the resources under common platform [3].

3. Conclusion

Due to Information Technology, there are so many changes happened in the world. Information is growing rapidly. Information Technology is the only solution to manage and organizes the information in proper way. Today ICT application permits all human activities. Dr. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science was written seventy four years back and inspite of having so many changes in Library world, these Five Laws still fits in today context.

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