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# 3

## FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

### INTRODUCTION

In the previous lesson, you have learnt about role of libraries, documentation and information centres in relation to specialized information requirements of the users. In this Lesson, we will discuss the basic philosophy of laws formulated by Dr. Shiyali Ramamritra Ranganathan (1892-1972) who was an inventor, an educator, a philosopher, a mathematician and a universal librarian. Two fundamental contributions to library and information profession, made by him, are the Five Laws of Library Science (1931) and Colon Classification (CC, 1933). He has been acclaimed universally for his contributions and is considered to be the Father of Library Science in India.



### OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- define the basic philosophy of Five Laws;
- explain the guiding principles of library science applicable to various library activities;
- discuss the implications of these Laws in the library systems and services; and
- explain modern versions of these Laws in various contexts.

### 3.1 FIVE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

The Five Laws are fundamental and discuss the basic philosophy of library science. They concisely represent the ideal services and organizational philosophy of all types of libraries, even today. These laws provide scientific basis and general principles which serve as guidelines to librarians in organizing and managing information products and services.

The Five Laws given by Dr. Ranganathan are:

1. Books are for use.
2. Every reader his book.
3. Every book its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. Library is a growing organism.

### 3.2 IMPLICATIONS OF FIVE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS IN LIBRARY SCIENCE

#### 3.2.1 Books are for use (First Law)

The First Law of Library Science is simple and states self evident truth. In ancient and medieval periods, the use of books was limited and the emphasis was on storage and preservation rather than on use of the books. The libraries were regarded as institutions for preserving the books. With the coming of post –Industrial society, the concept of modern library came into being. The library is now regarded as a service institution to serve the social information needs of its users. Dr. Ranganathan didn't reject the notion that preservation and storage were important but he asserted that the purpose of such activities was to promote the use of books. By emphasizing on the use of books, he focused attention on access-related issues such as location, building, hours, book selection, library staff, etc. Dr. Ranganathan suggests following methods for maximizing the use of books.

#### Implications of the First Law

##### 3.2.1.1 Library Location

Library must be located in the midst of its users. If it is a public library, it should be located in the heart of the city. If it is an academic library, It would be wise to locate it centrally to enable accessibility to all the students. The surroundings must be noise free and other disturbances which impede the use of library resources.

##### 3.2.1.2 Library Hours

The timings of the library depend upon the community it serves. The Law says that the library be kept open for as long as it is possible. Its opening and closing hours should be adjusted to ensure maximum utilization of library resources.



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### 3.2.1.3 Library Furniture

Library Furniture should be comfortable, functional and easy to use. The stack rooms should be made vermin proof, theft proof and air proof. The Law states that best reading facilities should be provided, like sufficient lights, fans and sound proof floor. It may vary from library to library, depending upon the nature of clientele to be served, like children or adults. This law enforces that the height of the book racks should be short enough so that books in the topmost shelf can be easily picked by a person of normal height standing on the floor. Tables and chairs should be comfortable to the users.

### 3.2.1.4 Book Selection

The book selection should meet the needs of the present and potential users. The selection should also consider physical appearance of the books and ease of handling. The books should be kept clean and in good condition. Worn out and obsolete books should be weeded out from the library collection from time to time.

### 3.2.1.5 Library staff

The Law states that to disseminate knowledge and to put the books to maximum use, the libraries must have highly qualified and professionally trained staff. The First Law has had the most vital effect on the library staff. This is because most of the users do not know how to use the resources for their own purposes. To know the needs of the users, and teaching them use of library resources, is another task of library staff. In order to put library material to maximum use, qualified staff in proper numbers with suitable status and emoluments is required. The staff should cultivate service attitude toward readers.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.1

#### 1. Which is the correct answer

1. Who formulated the Five Laws of Library Science?
  - (a) Edward B. Ross
  - (b) Dr. S. R. Ranganathan
  - (c) V.C. Vickery
  - (d) W.C. Berwick Sayers
2. Which is the fourth law of Library science
  - (a) Every book its reader.
  - (b) Save the time of the reader.
  - (c) Library is a growing organism

### 3.2.2 Every Reader his/her Book (Second Law)

According to Dr. Ranganathan, if the First Law replaced the concept, “books are for preservation”, the Second Law widens the concept “book for the chosen few.” If the approach of the First Law is from ‘books’ point of view, the approach of the

Second Law is from 'users' point of view. It emphasizes the availability of library services to every kind of reader, irrespective of age, sex, vocation, the capacity for self help and the ability to read.

### Implications of the Second Law

It imposes a number of obligations on:

- (a) The State,
- (b) The Library Authority,
- (c) The library staff, and
- (d) The readers

#### 3.2.2.1 Obligation of the State

Establishment and maintenance of library systems and their development along the proper lines is also State's responsibility. To meet this responsibility, the State has certain obligations. The first and the foremost is the library legislation. Through library legislation, State can create the public library system in different areas by its policies and decisions which makes adequate provisions regarding library cess, percentage of cess to be collected from the people and grants to be given by the Government for library system. Legislation leads to cooperation between libraries in a State and integrated whole with State Central Libraries at the apex. This type of coordination strengthens their resources through inter library loan, which enhances the efficiency and standard of service for the readers.

It also recommends making a provision for,

- Union Library Act
- National Central Library Law
- Finance

The Law desires an integrated library grid (horizontal and vertical levels) of public library system.

#### 3.2.2.2. Obligation of Library Authority

The choice of the books and choice of the staff are the two necessary obligations of library authority. The actual provision of library services is rendered by library authorities. Therefore, library should have proper stock, keeping in view the readers' demands.

##### (a) Choice of books

Selection of books is determined by the demands of the users. Demand refers to the selection of reading material for a given library. It is the duty of the library authority to make necessary provisions to build up collection for the community to be served. A comprehensive user survey of different groups of people can be done in this respect. This will help to build up collection according to the tastes and interest of the readers.



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### **(b) Choice of Staff**

Careful selection of books is not an ultimate aim of the library. To exploit these resources, competent library staff is needed. Only competent staff can satisfy the users requirements and be able to locate books and other materials that they want. To implement the Second Law, the library authorities should make all possible efforts to recruit well qualified library staff at the stage of planning.

#### **3.2.2.2 Obligation of the Library Staff**

The objectives of Second Law can not be achieved unless the library staff discharge their obligations in an efficient manner. To perform their duties, the library staff has to adopt certain attitudes and practices to realize the word “His”. Only provision of reading material is not the only duty of library staff. The staff must ensure that readers get the material of their interest before leaving the library. Besides this, the staff should try to know the reader, possess adequate knowledge of books and other collection of the library, to provide reference service and help readers in all possible ways. The Second Law puts another obligation on the library staff, i.e., to provide bibliographical, indexing, abstracting and other services to the users as per their requirements.

Catalogue is another facility that Second Law demands. Majority of documents are of composite nature in their treatment of subject and do not disclose fully all the contents. The catalogue is such a tool which reveals the hidden contents of such documents by cross reference entries and subject analytical entries. Otherwise, reader may not get this material in spite of best efforts. This requires that library catalogue should be fully analytical having necessary cross reference entries for the subjects covered in documents.

Besides other implications, the open access system will satisfy the expectations of this law, which enables the reader to decide what he should read. In open access system, books are kept on shelves and are easily accessible to the reader. If a reader is not satisfied, he can shift his choice to another suitable book. Thus, it will increase the chance for every reader to get his book in exact terms.

#### **3.2.2.3 Obligation of the Reader**

The Second Law imposes certain obligations on the reader towards library. It is the duty of the reader to follow the rules and regulations of the library in order to use and utilize library resources in an effective and efficient manner.

Thus, fulfilling the above four obligations make it possible to provide every reader his book. The Second Law recommends that all the libraries of A country/region cooperate with each other and work as a single system. The entire documentary resources of a country should be regarded as a single pool of knowledge. Every book lying idle on the shelf of any library should be made available to readers.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.2

### 1. Fill in the blanks

1. The Second Law emphasizes on \_\_\_\_\_ of library services to every kind of reader.
2. The catalogue is a tool which reveals the hidden contents of documents by \_\_\_\_\_ and subject analytical entries.

### 3.2.3 Every Book its Reader( Third Law)

The Third Law stresses the maximum use of books by their readers. It urges that an appropriate reader should be found for every book. Although, it is closely related to the Second Law, it focuses on the book itself suggesting that each book in a library has an individual or individuals who would find that book useful. It is the duty of the library staff to bring the readers in contact with books. The Law advocates for open access system, classified shelf arrangement, subject analytical entries, provision of reference services, publicity methods, extension services and book selection policy.

#### Implications of the Third Law

##### 3.2.3.1 Open Access

In an open access system, the reader is allowed to select on his own, books/items of choice or interest on the shelves. It increases the use of the books. Open access thus, helps in achieving the Third Law.

##### 3.2.3.2 Shelf Arrangement

The Law emphasizes the need to arrange the books on shelves in classified sequence based on their thought content. If the shelf area is provided with well devised guides and labels, the use of each item would increase.

##### 3.2.3.3 Easy Access

Another important factor helping every book to get its reader is that the books may be placed within the easy reach of the readers. The Third Law emphasizes that the height of the racks should not be more than the average height of the reader, i.e., top most shelf of a book rack should be within easy reach of a person of average height. The shelf should not have more breadth than required. Also, the books lying on the immediate shelves are better used than the other shelves.

##### 3.2.3.4 Catalogue

The Third Law also advocates that the library catalogue should play an important role to provide every book to its reader. Subject analytical entries help in finding readers for a suitable book. There are series entries and subject cross reference entries. The series entry provides information about the whole set of books to the



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reader. In alphabetical part of the catalogue, all the entries having the same series as the heading, are brought together. In the classified part of the catalogue, subject cross reference entries help to find a specific reader for the documents having a subject as the heading. It also indicates that the book is placed under different subjects.

### 3.2.3.5 Publicity

Publicity through annual reports, library bulletins and magazines, printed catalogues, subject book lists, list of latest additions, etc. is a powerful technique to attract the attention of readers to find every book its reader.

### 3.2.3.6 Showcase System

The show case label, with catching words like “Book of the hour” or “long forgotten but useful book,” etc. enhances the chance of every book to find its reader.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.3

### 1. Fill in the blanks

- (a) Second Law advocates \_\_\_\_\_, classified shelf arrangement, subject analytical entries and book selection policy.
- (b) We need \_\_\_\_\_ arrangement of books to find \_\_\_\_\_ its reader.
- (c) Third Law advocates library \_\_\_\_\_ should play an important role to provide every book to its reader.

### 3.3.4 Save the Time of the Reader (Fourth Law )

This Law requires that there should be no time lag between the demand received from the user and the document supplied in minimum possible time. This Law makes its approach from the point of view of the user. It almost completely centres round the user from the moment he enters the library to the moment he leaves it. The objective of this Law is to save the time of the reader. To provide better services, it is required that latest technologies in library operations be adopted and to educate the users to use them independently.

#### Implications of the Fourth Law

##### 3.3.4.1 Classified arrangement

The classified arrangement of books in the stack room saves the time of the reader. It is easy for a reader to find all desired books arranged at one place for easy browsing. The arrangement of entries in the catalogue cabinet in classified manner aids the reader to select the books easily from the respective shelves. The Fourth Law, therefore, calls for classified arrangement of books in stack room.

### 3.3.4.2 Catalogue Entry

In case of composite books, classified arrangement is sufficient to save objective time of the reader. The various facets of composite books can be brought to the notice of the reader by making cross references and subject analytical entries. Therefore, the Fourth Law calls for (i) classified arrangement of cards in the catalogue cabinet, and (ii) analytical entries for composite books. In order to save the valuable time of the reader, the Fourth Law also recommends a bipartite classified catalogue for this purpose because readers have diverse approaches to find books, i.e., author, title, collaborator or series approach. In the classified part, the entries are arranged in the sequence, each subject is represented by an ordinal number, i.e., class number. In alphabetic part, author, title, collaborator and subject approach is provided.

### 3.3.4.3 Open Access

The Fourth Law strongly opposes the process of the closed access system. It supports open access system for saving the time of the reader.

### 3.3.4.4 Reference Services

The Law supports that the library staff should provide adequate personal help to their readers, such help is known as reference service. A reference library staff should have adequate professional knowledge and be active to serve their reader in efficient and effective manner. The message “save the time of the reader” makes all necessary efforts to meet demands of the reader in least possible time with the help of reference cum guidance services. The reference librarian should be able to answer the queries of readers by providing ready reference service and long range reference service with the help of information tools. Therefore, a reference librarian should be humble, friendly, devoted and with a positive attitude and welcome every visitor to the library.

### 3.3.4.5 Issue Method

Adopting efficient circulation system is another step towards saving the time of the reader. This enables maximum books being issued and returned in minimum possible time. This system should provide answers to the following *queries*:

- What and how many books are lent on a given date?
- How many books have been loaned out to a given person?
- What books are due for return on a given date?

The Fourth Law recommends that the two card system will answer all queries and eliminate wastage of objective time.

### 3.3.4.6 Centralized/ Pre-natal Cataloguing

To save the time of the staff, Dr. Ranganathan has advocated pre-natal centralized cataloguing and classification. The Law urges the library to evolve a uniform cataloguing code to make way for international cooperative cataloguing. It also supports the centralized documentation work at international level to save time, money and manpower.



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### 3.3.4.7 Stack Room Guides

To save the time of the reader, the library should provide an efficient system of guides in the stack room. The guides along with placing tags enables the readers to find the books easily.

Thus, this Law deals with the different aspects of library policy and administration for reducing factor in all the library activities. The devices proposed in the Law are the best classification and cataloguing system, open access, shelf arrangement, stack room guides, reference service and centr allocation of the library. The basis objective of all such measures is to save the time of the reader.

### Library Location

The Fourth Law also deals with the time taken by the readers to reach the library. It should be located so as to save the time of the readers. But the location of urban area libraries is impossible to be equally accessible from all parts of the city due to geographical difficulty. The Law demands the branch libraries and delivery stations for the same. In rural areas, branch library can be useful as in the town, the rural population can be served by the mobile vans which serve the small libraries and delivery stations. All these are connected and operated with district central library.



### INTEXT QUESTION 3.4

#### 1. Tick the correct answers

1. Following is not time saving device according to the fourth law of library science.
  - (a) Open access
  - (b) Physical appearance
  - (c) Reference service
2. Fourth Law does not call for
  - (a) classified arrangement of cards in the catalogue cabinet,
  - (b) analytical entries for composite books.
  - (c) The shelf should not have more breadth than required.

### 3.3.5 Library is a Growing Organism( Fifth Law)

The Fifth Law states “Library is a growing organism”. It is an acceptable biological fact that a library is a growing organism along with its services. This Law maintains that the library as an institution, has all the attributes of a growing organism, which takes in new matter, casts off old matter, changes in size and takes new shapes and forms like human beings. As a library is trinity of books, readers and staff, it is bound to grow in all three respects. Therefore, library authorities should plan the library building in such a way to make it easy to keep pace with the necessary growth in size of collection, number of readers and the members of staff.

According to Dr. Ranganathan, the organism growth can be of two kinds, growth as of body of the child and growth as the body of an adult. The child growth is characterized by the overall increase in size and weight. The adult growth is characterized by the absence of an overgrowth. He examined both types of growth in libraries.

### Implications of the Fifth Law

#### 3.3.5.1 Growth in Size

As the body of a child grows steadily in size and weight, similarly a newly started library grows steadily in size in terms of reading material. The growth and size of reading material has effects on :

#### 3.3.5.2 Library Building

- Stack area
- Circulation area
- Reading room area, etc.

#### 3.3.5.3 Growth in Readers

The growth of library is dependent upon the growth of its readers. The growth of reader affects:

- The size of the reading room
- The issue method
- Certain safeguards (in case of open access system)

#### 3.3.5.4 Growth of Staff

With the growth in size of reading material and the readers, growth of the staff is inevitable. The book selection activity, cataloguing section, binding section, periodical section and the reference section have to grow as the library grows. The Fifth Law advocates that the library authorities have to make all necessary provisions for growth of library staff in these sections.

The Fifth Law urges the library authorities to provide adequate well qualified and trained staff to serve its readers. It also supports to develop and enhance the working environment in accordance with the latest tools and techniques in the working area.



### INTEXT QUESTION 3.5

#### 1. Fill in the blanks

- (a) According to Dr. Ranganathan, the organism growth can be two kinds, growth as a \_\_\_\_\_ and an \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b). Growth of circulation area is implication of \_\_\_\_\_.



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### 3.4 MODERN VERSION OF LAWS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Looking through the library literature, one can see clearly the same Five Laws discussed, reused, or re-worded in various contexts.

In 1975, the American interpretation of Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science was as follows:

1. Books are for use.  
(Tapes, films, records, relic and books are for use in the information delivery system)
2. Every reader his book.  
(Every Reader his/ her medium)
3. Every book its reader.  
(To every tape, record, etc. its utility)
4. Save the time of the reader.  
(Save the down time of the patron)
5. Library is a growing organism.  
(A learning resources center is a growing organism)

In 1992, James R. Retting devised a Sixth Law as an extension of Ranganathan's Five Laws. The Sixth Law is "Every reader his freedom".

Jim Thompson (1992) revised Ranganathan Laws as follows:

1. Books are for profit.
2. . Every reader his bill.
3. Every copy its reader.
4. Take the cash from the reader.
5. The library is a growing organism.

Kuronen and Pekkarinen have suggested two supplementary (6th and 7th) Laws to Ranganathan's Five Laws:

6. Every reader his library.
7. Every writer his contribution to library.

Michael Gorman and Wait Crawford have focused the validity of the Five Laws and suggested five new Laws as an extension of the first Five Laws. They are:

1. Libraries serve humanity.
2. Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated.
3. Use technology intelligently to enhance services
4. . Protect free access to knowledge.

5. Honour the past and create the future.

In 2004, Alireza Noruzi applied Ranganathan's Five Laws to the web in his paper "Application of Ranganathan Laws to the web". They are:

1. Web resources are for use.
2. Every user his or her web resources.
3. Every web resource its user
4. Save the time of the user.
5. The web is a growing organism .

In 2008, Carol Simpson revised these laws and applied them in media field, they are:

1. Media are for use.
2. Every patron his information.
3. Every medium its user.
4. Save the time of the patron.
5. The library is a growing organism.

### Five Laws and Modern Libraries

In automated libraries, OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) fulfills all the laws of library science. Sitting at a computer terminal, a user can search the entire collection of the library and gets to know if the required document is available in the library or not. He can reserve a book, recommend a new title to be purchased and renew a borrowed book. If it is WEBOPAC, he can access the library collection from anywhere, anytime (24 hours on all days of the week). Here, the library goes to the user instead of the user coming to the library. Library networking has brought the collection of various libraries together in the form of a consortia. For example, in DELNET, (Development Library Network) resources of over 4,000 libraries are accessible to its users from its website available at [www.delnet.nic.in](http://www.delnet.nic.in).

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

1. Visit any library and observe the building, services, classification and cataloguing scheme of that library and prepare a report with reference to Five Laws of Library Science.



### INTEXT QUESTION 3.6

#### 1. Fill in the blanks

1. Media are for use as first law has been revised by\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Every reader his history has been suggested on sixth law by \_\_\_\_\_.



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## WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Dr. S. R. Ranganathan enunciated the normative principles, known as Five Fundamental Laws of Library Science for all kinds of library work.
- These laws emphasize that library is a service institution and serves as a guide to the librarian in policy making, planning, programming at every stage both at micro as well as macro levels to make their library as an ideal place for reading.
- These are universally accepted as fundamental laws for all kinds of libraries.
- The first and second laws have brought a revolution to fundamental concept of the older conservative attitude towards the use of a library.
- The third law complements the second.
- The fourth law virtually pervades all the others and fifth law points out that the library must be willing to adopt to new conditions for future planning and organization of the library.
- Each law emphasizes the case for open access so that user and staff time can be effectively used.
- Modern version of these five law has also been discussed, reused, and reworded in various contexts by different authors, which includes James R Retting, Kuronen and Pekkarinen, Michael Gorman, Wait Crawford, etc.
- Have also been discussed role of five laws in the modern libraries which are automated and networked.



## TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Explain the fourth law of library science and its implications on library activities and operations.
2. “Library is a growing organism” is fifth law of library science. What is its implication on library building and furniture?
3. Explain how modern libraries fulfill the five laws of library science.



## ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTION

### 3.1

1. (b)
2. (b)

**3.2**

1. (a) Availability
- (b) Cross reference entries

**3.3**

1. (a) Open access system
- (b) Classified ,Every book
- (c) Library catalogue

**3.4**

1. (b)
2. (c)

**3.5**

1. (a) Body of child, Body of adult
- (b) Fifth Law

**3.6**

1. (a) Carol Simpson
- (b) Kuronen and Pekkarinen

**TERMS**

The terms covered in this lesson which require further explanation are given below in an alphabetic order. The learner is required to explain each term.

**Catalogue:**

**Classified Arrangement:**

**Open Access System:**

**Library legislation**

**Reference Service:**



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