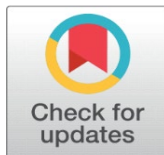


VARIANTS OF RANGANATHAN'S FIVE LAWS: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Five Laws of Dr. Ranganathan are the fundamental laws of library science which were propounded in the year 1931. Though more than 80 years have passed they are as useful as they were in their starting time but with some modifications. Various variants of Dr. Ranganathan's Laws have been made in the changing environment of information and communication technology, this article explores most of them and discusses their implications in new era.

Keywords: Five Laws of Library Science, Dr. Ranganathan's Laws of Library Science, Variants of Five Laws of Library Science

1. INTRODUCTION

Shiyali Ramainrita Ranganathan, better known as S. R. Rangnathan, was an Indian mathematician who later became a librarian. He was born on August 9, 1892, in the Shiyali village of the Tanjavor District in the state of Tamil Nadu. Matriculation was awarded to him by S.M. Hindu High School at Shiyali in 1908-09, and he went on to enroll in the junior intermediate class at Madras Christian College in March of 1909. In March and April of 1913, he received a first-class grade for his Bachelor of Arts degree. It was in June of that year that he enrolled in the Master of Arts programme in Mathematics with Professor Edward B. Ross serving as his instructor. He was successful in passing this examination in 1916. After completing his master's degree, he was given a position as an Assistant Lecturer in a

Government College in Mangalore and Coimbatore between the years 1917 and 1921. Later, in July 1921, he joined Presidency College in Madras as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics. However, he left the College in January 1924 to accept a position as the first librarian of Madras University [Dhiman & Rani \(2015\)](#). After that, according to [Dhiman & Rani \(2015\)](#), he went to England for a nine-month study-plus-observation tour to learn library science. Upon his return to India, Ranganathan established a school of library science in 1929, initially operating it under the auspices of the Madras Library Association and subsequently moving it under the jurisdiction of Madras University.

He served the university as Director for close to 15 years during his career. During the university's centenary celebrations in 1957, he gave the university one lakh rupees, the entirety of his life's savings, to endow a chair in library science. This chair is now known as the Sarada Ranganathan Professorship in Library Science. Additionally, he has worked in a variety of capacities for the Banaras Hindu University in Benaras and the Delhi University in Delhi. In addition to this, he played a significant role in the establishment of the Documentation Committee of the Indian Standards Institution and served as chairman of the organisation until 1967. In 1962, he also established the Documentation Research and Training Centre in Bangalore, which was to operate under the auspices of the Indian Statistical Institute. From 1962 until 1972, he held the position of Honorary Professor at this Centre. After an eventful and productive life of 80 years, he passed away on September 27, 1972. He penned sixty books and two thousand articles on a variety of topics pertaining to library science.

2. RANGANATHAN'S FIVE LAWS

The five laws of Ranganathan offer a paradigm of how libraries operate, how they grow and serve, and how they live. As a result, they offer us a framework through which to examine both our professional lives and the libraries in which we work. At an Educational Conference that was held in Chidambaram (Tamil Nadu) in December 1928, he presented a formal explanation of these laws for the first time. He was the first person to ever state them. However, it was until the year 1931 they could be published in the book form. It is possible to summarise his "Five Laws of Library Science" as follows:

- Books are for use.
- Every reader his book.
- Every book Its reader.
- Save the time of the reader.
- A Library is a growing organism.

3. VARIANTS OF RANGANATHAN'S FIVE LAWS

When Ranganathan presented his Five Laws of Library Science, he did so with the intention of providing a comprehensive framework and guideline for evaluating library programmes and activities as well as for developing library policies and strategies. This is made abundantly clear by the fact that more than eight decades after their initial publication, these assertions are still receiving a significant amount of attention in the form of citations [Connaway & Faniel \(2015\)](#). However, when Ranganathan used the expression "books and readers," he naturally meant that

books stand for knowledge and information and readers stand for users of library and information services. However, in contemporary studies of knowledge and information and all related expressions, it is important to note that the carriers and channels of information and knowledge have shifted from print to other forms, but all of the services are revolving around information and users. As a result, the dimensions of services have significantly expanded in scope, despite the fact that the fundamental philosophy underlying services has not changed.

Therefore, these five laws might be restated to suit the changing context and modern developments taking place in the world of libraries and information science. When, the word Documentation came into vogue, [Ranganathan \(1963\)](#) himself revised these laws as follows:

- Documents are for use.
- Every reader his document.
- Every document its reader
- Save the time of the reader.
- A library is a growing organism.

However, in later years, many different versions of his laws were proposed to account for the shifting environment. In [Bhattacharya \(1984\)](#) reading of them, he substituted the word "information" for the word "books," and he presented them in revised form. [Thompson \(1992\)](#) rewrote Ranganathan's laws to argue against the existence of libraries and to support the notion that bookselling and reading should be viewed as lucrative businesses.

Gorman's variants were developed after Ranganathan's original laws were published. [Gorman \(1995\)](#), [Gorman \(1998\)](#) proposed additional variants for Ranganathan's laws. This was followed by [Satija \(2003\)](#) and [Bjorneborn \(2004\)](#), who, in Bjorneborn's PhD thesis titled "Small-World Link Structures across an Academic Web Space - a Library and Information Science Approach," attempted to rephrase the five laws in the context of Link. In the research paper titled "Application of Ranganathan's Laws to the Web," written by [Noruzi \(2004\)](#), the word "book" was changed to "web."

In their respective Editor's Notes, [Dasgupta \(2007\)](#) and [Simpson \(2008\)](#) use the term "media" rather than the word "books." [Sen \(2008\)](#), on the other hand, has substituted the term "e-resources" for "books" and proposed his own set of five laws. More recently, [Shadrach \(2015\)](#) has used the term 'knowledge' instead of 'book' and reproduced the five laws ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five laws of library science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_laws_of_library_science)), and [Munigal \(2016\)](#) advocated the inclusion of social tools and came out with the new laws in the context of social media ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five laws of library science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_laws_of_library_science)).

[Table 1](#) summarizes all the variants of Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science.

Table 1

Table 1 Variants of Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science

Ranganathan (1931)	Ranganathan (1963)	Bhattacharyya (1984)	Thompson (1992)	Gorman (1995, 1998)	Satija (2003)	Bjorneborn (2004)	Norui (2007)	Dasgupta (2007)	Simpson (2008)	Sen (2008)	Shadrich (2015)	Munigal (2016)
Books are for use	Documents are for use	Information is for use	Books are for profit	Libraries serve humanity	Information is for use	Links are for use- the very essence of hypertext	Web resources are for use	Tapes, files, records, relics and books are for use in the information delivery system.	Media are for use	E-resources are for use	Knowledge is for use in 'all' forms	Social media is for use - increasingly in libraries by librarians
Every reader his book	Every reader his document	Every information user his/her information	Every reader his bill	Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated	Information is for all	Every surfer his or her link -the rich diversity of links across topics and genes	Every user has his or her web resource	To every media - etc. his/her medium	Every patron his information	Every e-resource user	Every citizen has the right to access 'all' knowledge	Every user has his/her social tool
Every book Its reader	Every document its reader	Every piece of information its user	Every copy its bill	Use technology intelligently to enhance service	Every byte of information its user	Every link its surfer	Every web resource its user	To every tape, record etc. its utilizer	Every medium its user	Every user his/her e-resource	Every piece of knowledge is for access by 'all' without discrimination of any kind	Every social tool its user
Save the time of the reader	Save the time of the reader	Save the time of the information user	Take the cash of the reader	Protect free access to knowledge	Save the time of the citizens to ensure timely information	Save the time of the surfer - visualizing web clusters and small-world shortcuts	Save the time of the user	Save the downtime of the patron	Save the time of the patron	Save the time of the user	Save the time of the 'all' knowledge seekers	Save time of user by providing information he/she seeks using the social tool he/she is

A library is a growing organism	A library is a growing organism	The universe of information is ever growing	The library is a growing organism	Honor the past and create the future	Library is a trinity of users, staff and collection	The Web is a growing organism	The Web is a growing organism	A learning resource center is a growing organism	The library is a growing organism	E-resource is a growing organism	A library is one that evolves with time to achieve all of the above laws
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Thus, many variants of Ranganathan’s laws are made but the ‘soul’ of them is as same as they were during their formulation time. Anyhow, the original conception and new conceptions of Ranganathan’ laws are reflected as shown in [Table 2](#) (based on [Connaway & Faniel \(2015\)](#)).

Table 2

Table 2 Original Versus New Conceptions of Ranganathan’s Five Laws				
Laws	Ranganathan’s Original Conception	New Conceptions in the Current Environment		
First Law	Books are for Use.	E-Books are for reading.	Netflix is for watching.	Blackboard is for writing.
Second Law	Every person his or her book.	Every listener her iTunes.	Every artist his Photoshop.	Every student her EasyBib.
Third Law	Every book its reader.	Every blog its reader.	Every Google Map, its traveler.	Every digital repository its researcher.
Fourth Law	Save the time of the reader.	Save the time of the listener.	Save the time of the traveler.	Save the time of the researcher.
Fifth Law	A library is a growing organism.			

More recently, [Safii \(2018\)](#) has also redefined Ranganathan’s laws in the perspective of digital environment. [Table 3](#) reflects his intentions in changing environment of ICT and digital era as shown in [Table 3](#).

Table 3

Table 3 Safii Revision of Five Laws	
Five Laws of Ranganathan	Redefined Five Laws
Books are for Use.	Information: Focus On Content, not Container
Every person his or her book.	
Every book its reader.	User Engagement
Save the time of the reader.	Quantitative Analysis of Information
A library is a growing organism	Learning Common (Online and Offline)

4. REVERSAL OF FIVE LAWS

[Connaway & Faniel \(2015\)](#) have proposed that Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science can be reordered and reinterpreted to reflect today's library resources and services, as well as the behaviours that people exhibit when

interacting with them. They suggested that these changes should be made in order to account for the historical context in which the laws were formulated. The purpose of their publication is to offer a timely and pertinent context for Ranganathan's laws, which modern librarians, library researchers, and information scientists can refer to when they are considering making changes in practise and developing agendas for future research. They hope that their work will be published so that others can benefit from it.

[Connaway & Faniel \(2015\)](#) have reversed the Ranganathan's Laws and interpreted them as shown in [Table 4](#).

Table 4

Table 4 Ranganathan's and Connaway and Faniel's Conceptions	
Ranganathan's Original Conception	Connaway and Faniel's Conception
Save the time of the reader.	Embed library systems and services into users' existing workflows.
Every person his or her book.	Know your community and its needs.
Books are for use.	Develop the physical and technical infrastructure needed to deliver physical and digital materials.
Every book its reader.	Increase the discoverability, access and use of resources within users' existing workflows.
A library is a growing organism.	A library is a growing organism.

Thus, it is seen from above details that various variants are devised of the Ranganathan's laws: some of them are in favour of Ranganathan's philosophy but some are opponents of them, especially when comes to 'fifth law that is library is a growing organism". Actually, the Ranganathan's philosophy was that the library will always grow in their size, collection and staff but today's libraries are shrinking due to less space occupied by online digital resources. However, supporters of Ranganathan still argue that libraries are growing because their collection is increasing but it is not physically rather virtually.

So more than 80 years have been passed, Dr. Ranganathan's Five Laws are still relevant today for library science. However, by changing how we think about the five laws in terms of interpretation and order of importance, they hope to reflect the current resources and services available for use and the behaviours that people demonstrate when engaging with them.

5. CONCLUSION

Therefore, in conclusion, it can be stated that Ranganathan's laws — even when taken verbatim today without any changes or additions, they are still useful to the same extent as they were when Ranganathan formulated them. They provide a framework to keep the focus on the fundamental principles of librarianship, which have remained remarkably consistent over the course of time despite the incredible changes that have occurred in information technology. However, because of the passage of time and the changes that have occurred in the methods of acquiring and disseminating information, certain shifts are unavoidable. These laws, as discussed, can be used anywhere with some modifications.

In addition, as stated by [Sen \(2008\)](#) for temples; for search engines and institutional repositories as stated by [Babu \(2011\)](#) and for museum, classrooms, hospitals etc. as stated by [Dutta \(2014\)](#). They can even be modified and used for

other purposes. Nevertheless, the laws can be interpreted as an imperative for librarians to muster the boldness and courage to evolve their libraries in accordance with user needs, to embrace new roles, and to abandon roles that are becoming obviated. This is because the laws require librarians to abandon roles that are becoming obviated Carr (2014). Carr adds more that in a significant sense, embracing the message of the five laws is only half of the challenge additionally; the librarians must develop strategies to compel user communities to actually apply their agency as constructors of meaning. Carr is referring to the fact that the five laws have been around for a long time.

However, libraries and information centres must adopt marketing tools and promotion tools such as exhibitions and displays, posters, signposts, bulletin boards, electronic billboards, flyers, advertisements, blogs, twitter, flickr, YouTube, mass media, proper and catching labelling, library guides and newsletters, extension activities, library tours, library week/day, ICT-based channels such as websites, e-mail, and web links/hyperlinks, etc. Bhatt (2011) in order to make use of these laws.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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