

Unit 3

Laws of Library Science and Their Implications

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3.0 Unit Overview and Description

This unit will provide the information about laws of Library Science and their implication.

This unit will impart following knowledge and skill:

- Laws of Library Science
- Need, purpose and uses of laws of Library Science
- Implication of laws of Library Science

Resource Material:

1. Mittal, R.L. Library administration theory & practice. 5thed. New Delhi: Metropolitan Book, 2000.
2. Khanna, J.K. Handbook of library administrations. 1sted. New Delhi: Crist Publishing House, 2003.
3. Kumar, Krishan. Reference service. 5thed. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1993.

Duration: 10 Hours

Learning Outcomes:

Unit - 3: Laws of Library Science and their implications	Learning Outcomes
3.2 Five laws of library	You will be able to understand laws of library, their need and purpose.
3.3.1 Implication of the first law	You will be able to understand implication of first law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Location ● Library hours ● Library building & furniture ● Book selection ● Staff
3.3.2 Implication of the second law	You will be able to describe certain obligation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State ● Library authority ● Library staff ● Reader
3.3.3 Implication of the third law	You will be able to understand implication of third law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open access ● List of new editions ● Display of new books ● Book exhibition ● Catalogue ● Self-arrangement ● Easy accessibility ● Reference service

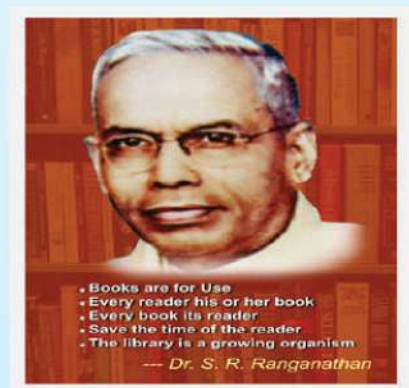
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publicity ● Extension service ● Book selection
3.3.4 Implication of the fourth law	<p>You will be able to understand implication of fourth law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open access ● Classification, cataloguing ● Charging system
3.3.5 Implication of the fifth law	<p>You will be able to understand implication of third law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Book stock ● Readers ● Staff ● Classification and the catalogue ● Modernization ● Provision for the future ● Weeding out books

Assessment Plan (for teachers)

Unit - 3	Topic	Assessment Method	Time Plan	Remarks
3.2	Five Laws of Library Science	Activity Exercise Question & Answer		
3.3	Implication of Laws of Library Science	Exercise Question & Answer		

3.1 Introduction

S. R. Ranganathan conceived the Five Laws of library Science in 1924 in embryo form. The statements embodying the Five Laws were formulated in the final form in 1928 and published in 1931 under the same title "The five laws of library science". The essence of this Classic is that books are for use, and user is the KING whose time must be saved.



Review Questions

Fill in the blanks:-

- i. Five laws of library science was developed by _____.
- ii. Five laws of library science was first published in _____.
- iii. User is the _____ whose time must be saved.

3.1 The Five Laws of Library Science are:

- Books are for use
- Every reader his/her book
- Every book its reader
- Save the time of the reader
- Library is a growing organism

3.2.1 First law 'Books are for use'

'Books are for use' is not a self-evident statement. This will become evident if we examine the history of the use of the book in libraries. The historical importance previously placed on preservation of books rather than access. This was only a normal urge at a time when books were difficult to produce. Even after the invention of printing, which facilitated the easy production of several copies of each book. This habit somehow continued. Although, isolated examples of reluctance to permit the unrestricted books can be occasionally seen even today, the general position is that books are available for use without any let or hindrance. All policies relating to a library should be helpful in promoting the objective of books so as to maximize its use.

3.2.2 Second law 'Every reader his/her book'

The Second Law of Library Science is 'Every Reader His / Her Book'. A variant of this is 'Books are for All'. According to the reader's need, there should be mandatory provision of library services. Every reader of a library should have the books he wants. The above statement advocates the universalization and democratization of library service. In the early days, the masses were kept out and only a privileged few belonging to the aristocracy and the upper classes of the society were given access to libraries and books. Democracy which ensured participation of every citizen in governing the position drastically changed. Democracy, for its sustenance and survival, needed educated, knowledgeable and responsible citizenry. So, education and acquisition of knowledge through whatever institution this was possible became a societal imperative. One of the most important channels for the flow of knowledge and information to all, which is Library Service, became a basic right of all citizens without any distinction whatsoever. Hence the Law, 'Every Reader His / Her Book' or 'Books are for all'.

3.2.3 Third law 'Every book its reader'

Third Law of library Science is Every Book its Reader. The approach here is from the angle of the book. Every book in a library should have a chance of finding its appropriate reader and be used by him.

Investment in unused books is a dead and waste investment. This should be avoided or at least minimized.

3.2.4 Fourth law 'Save the time of the reader'

Readers coming to the library should not be made to wait longer than necessary, to get their needs met. The exact and fast service from the library should be given to them. Intellectual interest may exist only momentarily in many individual and unless it is satisfied at the moment of its existence, it may vanish.

3.2.5 Fifth law 'Library is a growing organism'

The fifth Law states “Library is a Growing Organism”. The word used is 'Organism' not 'Organization'. It underlines certain characteristics of the library as living organism. The nature of the growth of the library will reflect these characteristics.

The growth is of two kinds in a living organism - child growth and adult growth. Child growth is chiefly characterized by the growth in the physical dimensions and it is fast and visible. But in the case of adults, the growth is mainly in the nature of replacement cells. It is a kind of internal qualitative change and is not visible.

It is important that we do not conceive of the library as a static entity, but as a dynamic growing entity. This has to be kept in view and its implications properly grasped provided for from the time of the starting of a library so that its growth is not stifled to lack of fore-thought and planning.

The basic components of a library are (i) the book stock (ii) the staff (iii) reader and (iv) the physical plant i.e. the building, furniture and equipment's. When we say that a library grows, what we mean is that each of these components grows.

Review Questions

- i. Write down the five laws of library science.
- ii. Explain the fifth law i.e., library is a growing organism.

3.2 Implication of Five Laws of Library Science

In the following section we will discuss the implication of five laws on the basis of different criteria.

3.3.1 Implications of the First law

i. Location

If you choose a location for a library building, it should be as centrally located as possible. So that it can easily catch the attention of the public. If the people have to walk a long distance to reach the library then it will be a discouragement to them to use books. At the same time the location should be free from noise and other disturbances so that serious study is possible. The public library should be centrally located. A school and college library should be located at a prominent place in the school where the students will take an easy notice of it. The description of a university library as the heart of the university should be reflected in its geographical location also. The point to be kept in view is the users should have easy access to library.

ii. Library Hours

The hours of the library should be convenient to users. In our country this message is not paid much heed. Especially school libraries, college libraries and public libraries are careless in this matter and many libraries are kept open when their clientele are busy and are not able to visit the library.

iii. Library Building and Furniture

The library building and various items of furniture should be planned and designed with proper attention. The building should be functional as well as aesthetic. The furniture should also be functional and attractive. The racks in which the books are kept should not be too tall and the books on the top shelves should be easily reached. Keeping in view the goal of the promotion of the use of books the furniture used in children's libraries should be especially designed. It should also be attractive and comfortable so that users will feel tempted to frequent the library.

iv. Book Selection

This law states that the librarians have the sacred responsibility of selecting books which should meet the needs of the present and potential users.

In a suitable proportion the informative, elevating, recreative and inspiring books should be selected by the public librarian in order to maximize the use of books. The libraries which are instinctive, entertaining, fascinating and having pictorial literature attract the children. For neo literates book selection preference should be short stories to novels in fiction. Only those books are permitted by First Law on shelves which are continuously read, enjoyed, understood and acted upon by readers.

v. Staff

The First Law, for its fulfillment, calls for certain qualifications and qualities for the library staff. In order to organize the library efficiently and provide satisfactory services the staff of the library should possess appropriate qualifications. This would ensure the proper use of books. Personal qualities are perhaps more important than formal qualifications of the library staff. They should be courteous, cheerful and helpful. The motto should be 'Service with a smile'. Everything that the staff does in the library is towards an end and the end is service to readers. The member of the staff is sure to turn away permanently from library if the potential library user encounters an unhelpful attitude on the part of any member of the staff. In the promotion of the use of books the credibility of the staff, both in respect of knowledge ability and their personal attitude to readers, is a crucial factor.

vi. Academic status & scales of pay

The most laudable step of the First Law was to strive for the academic status and scales of pay for the library staff.

Academic status may enhance the efficiency and boost the morale of the library personnel. Money is also important as it rules the world. Services rendered by men as well as the status of the men are determined by the money. If the academic status and scales of pay given, the library staff can work up to the enthusiasm necessary for the successful carrying out the missions of the First Law. The enthusiasm, the zeal, and the solitude of a good paid staff would produce the desired results. The beneficial voice of the poor is seldom heard. A famished staff will render the efforts of the First Law as futile as the paucity of books or paucity of staff. “Therefore, pay the library staff well”, says the First Law.

3.3.2 Implication of the Second Law

The Second Law enjoys certain obligations on the:-

- State
- Library authority
- Library staff
- Reader

i. **Obligation of the State**

Development and maintenance of a library system that is capable of providing adequate library service to all people is the obligation of the state. This is preferably done through legislation which should make provision for the financial support of the library system and the coordination of the activities of its different units. A prior goal should be set the type of the library system and services best suited for a society and the legislation should be so framed that it would serve as an effective means for achieving the goal. For library development finance is always a bottleneck and the aim should be maximum output in the form of library services with available financial input.

The library system envisaged here through legislation is a public library system which is available for use by all. But a public library system by itself will not be able to make available to every reader the books that he wants. In fact as far as students, teachers and researchers are concerned; its role in fulfilling the Second Law would be just margin. Therefore the state has also the responsibility of establishing other types of libraries school libraries, college libraries, university libraries and special libraries.

ii. **Obligation of the Library Authority**

As far as the Library Authority is concerned, its obligation necessitated by the Second Law is in respect of (a) choice of books (b) choice of staff.

a) **Choice of books**

To buy all the needed books, no library has enough funds. Hence the need for selection arises. This has to be done judiciously so that the funds are utilized for the purchase of the most relevant and wanted books. The library should leave

the undone to ascertain the books requirements of its clientele and accordingly form the selection and acquisition policy. In fact, systematic user surveys are conducted in modern libraries to ascertain the requirements of their clientele in order to frame their policy of selection and acquisition. User surveys are important to determine user requirement for books, to build up a collection in a library. If we buy a book that has no actual or potential demand in preference to a book that is in demand, this will be the violation of the Second Law.

b) Choice of staff

To give Every Reader His/Her Book, an adequate and competent team of staff is essential. A reader should be able to exploit the entire resources of a library which are relevant to his needs and in this exercise he has to be actively helped by the staff. In the absence of such help the chances are that he will not be able to locate a good number of books that he wants. Frequently a library finds itself in such a predicament for want of adequate and competent staff. The Library Authority should not grudge the provision of staff which would obviate such situations.

iii. Obligation of staff

If the Library Authority makes adequate and competent staff available. They have to be constantly conscious of the Second Law in their work and conduct and be guided by its message.

This law emphasizes the need of Reference Service by the Staff. Here they have to make an effort to understand their readers and their book requirements and help them get the books they want. There may be several books in the library of interest to a reader, but of which he may not be aware. So if Book Service is limited to making available only the books demanded by readers, the Second Law is not fully served. Reference Service is an effective means of ensuring that a reader gains access to all books of possible interest to him held by the library.

Sometimes a matter of interest to a reader may be contained in a chapter or a few pages of a book. He may not consider the book as of interest to him and may not look it up in the normal course. Therefore there is every chance of the reader missing such matter and the Second Law would feel aggrieved. To avoid such a contingency, the library catalogue should have profuse subject analytical or cross reference entries which would draw the attention of readers to the contents of books in which they are interested.

The word 'book' in 'Every Reader His/Her Book' also refers to micro-documents like articles in periodicals. In the present context of the massive production of the literature in each branch of knowledge and its wide scattering in different sources, literature search has become a difficult and complex task. The Second Law demands of the staff and their active help to the readers to locate and use such literature with the help of tools like bibliographies, indexing and abstracting services, etc.

iv. **Obligation of the reader**

By the Second Law, the reader has also certain responsibilities cast on him. It particularly wants him to observe the library rules in respect of the duration of the loan of books. If a reader retains a book beyond the period of loan, he is depriving other readers who may want to use the book. The books are misplaced with a view to monopolies their use, pages are torn off from books and even stolen by the readers. The result is a gross violation of the Second Law. The readers should be made conscious of the consequences as it is now commonly referred to. This law strongly advocates Users Education programs in libraries.

v. **Resource Sharing**

It is not possible to make a library self - sufficient. There would hardly be any library that is capable of ensuring every reader his book. Even the most resourceful libraries of the world like Library of Congress in Washington and the Lenin State Library in Moscow would be deficient in this respect. These points towards need for resource sharing among libraries. The resource of one library should be available to the other libraries brought into the resource sharing net-work. This can be practiced at local, state, regional, national and international levels. Efforts are already on for promoting such resource sharing and other cooperatives programmes under the auspices of national and international agencies. This is an important step in the direction of satisfying the Second Law.

3.3.3 Implications of the Third Law

i) **Open Access**

The most effective way of satisfying the Third Law is to introduce an arrangement in which the books have a chance of catching the attention of readers. This is possible in the Open Access system.

In this system, books are arranged in open shelves in the classified orders and have freedom of access to them. In the course of the readers browsing through the shelves, they may come across books of interest to them the existence of which they were not aware of. The chances of readers noticing the books and reading them are enhanced in the open access system. The Third law therefore definitely advocates open access.

To make the open access system work in full conformity with the Third Law, the staff and readers of the library have certain responsibilities and obligations vested in them. The classified arrangement of books, i.e., restoring the misplaced books to their correct place, should be done by the staff on the regular basis. They should also provide shelf guides, bay guides, etc., which would guide the readers to their appropriate regions and shelves in the stack room.

Readers also should conduct themselves with a sense of responsibility. They should not try to shelve back the books once taken out because in that process they are apt to misplace the books. They should resist the temptation to misplace books deliberately, mutilate and steal

books or indulge in other unsocial activities.

Open access, if practiced in such a balanced and orderly manner that its advantages outweigh the disadvantages, contributes to the fulfillment of the Third Law.

The advantages of open access to library shelves provide an opportunity to users to get access to other books in the library kept along with the particular book in which the user may be interested. In this process of browsing, he gets not only more information about books in his field of interest, but also in related fields. This opportunity of browsing is not available to a user in a closed access library.

The disadvantages of open access are that:-

- Books get quiet often misplaced on shelves by readers which may deny other users the benefit of browsing.
- Unsocial activities such as tearing pages from books.
- Stealing and deliberate hiding of books may cause problems.

Although this unsocial behavior of some users can be controlled but cannot be totally eliminated. However the advantages of open access, i.e. meeting a primary objective of library service, outweigh the disadvantages.



Open Access

ii) List of New Additions

Lists of newly added books to the library should be regularly compiled and distributed. This will be helpful in bringing such books to the notice of their potential users.

iii) Display of New Books

The newly added books should be displayed prominently in the library so that they will catch the attention of readers and be read by those who are interested in them.

iv) Book Exhibition

Periodical exhibitions of books which have a bearing on topical themes also enhance the chances of books finding their readers.

Even with the best attention paid to book selection, there are bound to be books unused in a library. This may be partly due to the fact that the books do not come to the notice of readers. An occasional exhibition of unused books might prove useful in their catching the attention of readers and being used.

v) Catalogue

A well-designed catalogue meets all the approaches of readers.

vi) Shelf-arrangement

It plays a vital role in making the books findings their appropriate reader. This law emphasizes the need for the arrangement of books in classified sequence based on their thought content. By means of well-devised guides and labels, aided by the catalogues and indexes to the classification, a reader for more ordinary purposes can find what he seeks without personal assistance.

vii) Easy Accessibility

Another important factor helping every book to get its reader is that the books may be placed within the easy reach of the readers. It is observed that the books within the comfortable reach of the readers are more frequently used. Experience has shown that books lying on the intermediate shelves are better used than on the others. Shelves with a height greater than 6 ½' defy the very spirit of the Third Law. Finally, we must not have more than one row of books on a shelf should not be broader than what is necessary to hold one row of books.

viii) Reference Service

The books are mute and inert. They will reach the hands of readers when the reference staff will interpret the thought content. For books, the Third Law requires the provision of human beings as canvassing agents. The reference staff must know the qualities of books thoroughly well and have to act as the match-maker between books and the readers.



Reference Desk

ix) Publicity

To increase the chances for Every Book to Find Its Reader, Publicity is a powerful weapon to allure the readers to the library.

Through annual reports, library bulletins, and magazines, printed catalogues, subject booklists, lists of latest additions, special service folders, book week programmes, window displays, press notices, radio/TV talks, and public lectures. Libraries with their books, music, gramophone records, and tapes, archives, maps, prints, drawings have their great potentiality for visual appeal, and this can be expressed through exhibitions, displays, concerts, lectures, film shows, etc. continuous publicity is carried. The library should adopt all the recognized methods of attracting the public to the library, so that every potential reader may become an actual reader, and thus enhance the chances for the fulfillment of the Third Law.

x) Extension Services

To convert the library into a social center to encourage reading; to turn nonreaders into regular readers is the laudable purpose of the extension services.

Extension service aims at the creation and stimulation of desire for good reading and matching the book and its readers. Those librarians desirous of fulfilling the aims of the Third Law take to extension service great zeal and enthusiasm. It also recognizes the fact that occasionally man feels the necessity and the urge to read in groups, and to have group

discussions so as to enrich, deepen and extend his knowledge; to listen off and on to orientation talks and inspiring lectures by subject specialists to get stimulated.

The librarians celebrate local festivals, and certain national days dedicated to national leaders or ideas and participate in local festivals to satisfy the demand of the Third Law.

xi) Book Selection

The Third Law has an important bearing on Book Selection. One of the means of fulfilling the demands of the third Law is to give full weight to the tastes and requirements of the clientele to the library.

3.3.4 Implication of the Fourth Law

i. Open Access

In libraries where the closed system is practiced, the readers do not have access to books. They have to stand outside the stack room and requisition the books they want. The procedure is that they prepare a list of the books that they want, after consulting the catalogue and handover the list to a member of the staff. He may bring some of the books asked for and report the non-availability of others. The readers on actually seeing the books may discover that not all of them answer his needs. He will have to prepare another list and again wait. This trial and error process may have to be repeated several times and yet his needs may not be fully met. A lot of time is spent in the process.

There is both objective time and subjective time. Objective time is the time actually spent. Subjective time is time that we feel that we have spent. We may have waited for a bus only for 10 minutes, but we may feel that we have waited for 30 minutes. That is subjective time. In the closed system mentioned above, both subjective and objective times are involved.

But in the open access system, the reader is engaged in handling and perusing the books and he is not conscious of the passage of time. So a lot of his subjective time is saved. If the books are properly arranged and there is no misplacement of books, its object time is also saved. So open access is an effective means of satisfying the Fourth Law.

ii. Classification, Catalogue

Proper classification which would bring together books on a specific subject, a catalogue designed to meet the various approaches of readers, reference service, stack room guides are all basic tools for securing fulfillment of this Law. Adoption of an acquisition system that would ensure the speedy procurement of books and periodicals is also necessitated by this Law.

iii. Charging System

The earlier practice in the libraries was to enter all books lent out in a register and their return to be recorded in the same register. There are some libraries still following this system. Needless to say that this is time consuming process and is not an evidence of the

library paying deference to the Fourth Law. It is as a result of efforts to simplify this process and to reduce the time involved in the operation that the modern issue systems like the ticket system, photo charging system and computer charging system have been evolved. In these modern systems there is substantial reduction of time in issue and return process and so the Fourth Law strongly advocates them.

3.3.5 Implication of fifth Law

i. **Book Stock**

In the initial stages the growth of the book stock including periodical will be fast. This has impact on the size of the stack room, the catalogue cabinet and the catalogue room the number of racks for accommodating the books. All these will necessarily have number and/or in physical dimensions. Also, as the book stock grows and the added books are interpolated in the classified arrangement, there will be constant increment of books on the shelves. This would necessitate relabeling of shelves periodically. The stack room guides also will need to be periodically replaced by new ones to indicate the correct positions of the change arrangement of books.

ii. **Readers**

The readers of the library are also bound to grow especially in a library that functions in keeping with the spirit of the first four Laws of Library Science. This means that more reading space will be required.

iii. **Staff**

New services will have to be introduced corresponding to the increase in the book collection and the number of readers. The services will have to be diversified depending on the nature and interests of the readers. Reference service will have to be intensified. New information service backed by modern technology will have to be introduced. There will be quantitative increase in administrative work and services and qualitative diversification of services. These would necessitate an increase of staff at different levels both in the quantitative and qualitative sense.

iv. **Classification and the Catalogue**

One important implication of the increasing intake of books on a variety of new subjects is that the classification scheme adopted should be hospitable to the subjects. It should not be that subjects of different degrees of depth should share the same class number. If they do, retrieval of books on the same subject would become difficult. The growth factor of a library also points to the need for the catalogue like the card catalogue would permit the interpolation of the entries.

v. **Modernization**

Especially, the large ones libraries which grow fast in their size and services, may have to think of computerization of the various housekeeping jobs like books and journals acquisition, circulation, cataloguing etc.

vi. Provision for the Future

One important message of the physical growth of the library is that while planning and designing a library building there should be provision for the expansion of the building both horizontally and vertically. The need for more space often arises much sooner than anticipated and lack of provision for expansion would block its development.

vii. Weeding out books

Reference was made earlier to the development of a library similar to that of an adult. This development should include weeding out the obsolete and unwanted books and adding new ones which are relevant and useful. Some librarians hold the view that after a stage of development, the number of books weeded out will equal the number of books added. This view gives rise to the concept of a self-renewing library. Although this may not be entirely true, there is no doubt that the rate of growth would appreciably come down after a certain stage when the weeding out of books becomes a regular feature.

Weeding out need not necessarily means the discarding of the books. It only means the removal of the books from a library where their relevance has ceased, in order to make room for current and relevant books. Such books may be stored where they are available for occasional use. Different libraries in one area can store such books at a central place. This can be one of the areas of cooperation among libraries.

Review Questions

- i. Explain the implication or fourth law i.e., save the time of the reader on the basis of following criteria:-
 - a) Open access
 - b) Changing system.
- ii. Explain the implication of third law i.e., 'every book its reader' on the basis of following criteria:-
 - a) Open Access
 - b) References service

3.4 Summary

In this unit we explained the concepts, its need and use of five laws of library and what are the basic implication of the laws of Library Science.

3.5 Exercise :

1. Explain five laws of Library Science ?

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2. Describe the implication of first law?

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3. Describe the implication of Second law?

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4. Describe the implication of third law?

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5. Describe the implication of fourth law?

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6. Describe the implication of fifth law?

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