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# Relevance of Ranganathan's Laws of Library Science to Academic Libraries in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Era

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined relevance of Ranganathan's laws of library science to academic libraries in the Information and Communication Technologies era. The paper discussed the five laws of library science propounded by the father of library science in India, S.R Ranganathan in 1931, detailing the principles of operating a library science. The paper further examined academic libraries in the ICTs era and the relevance of these laws to academic libraries in the ICT era. The study concluded that, although, Ranganathan conceived these laws nearly a century ago, the laws made a fundamental contribution to the development of Library and Information Science because they are relevant in relation to the past, present day developments as well as future developments; they are very much applicable in the present electronic and digital era. The laws have been useful in academic libraries because they have made an impact on the growth and development of the libraries.

**Key words:** Ranganathan's Law, Academic Libraries, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

## INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries all over the world have their own place of importance in the scheme of higher learning. Libraries are not only repositories of knowledge but also dispensers of such knowledge. There is no doubt that where libraries of institutions of higher learning are ignored or not given due recognition, the country as a whole suffers because the standards of study, teaching and research heavily depend upon the qualitative and quantitative service rendered by the institution libraries (Kashyap, 2016).

Academic libraries are libraries attached to post secondary institutions (academic institutions above the secondary level), serving the teaching and research needs of students and staff. Libraries are the bedrock of higher institutions of learning such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education etc. They support the institutions' mandate of teaching, research and community service. Academic libraries are the 'heart' of the learning community, empowering students and faculty to learn, do research and advance the frontiers of knowledge.

The institutions advance the knowledge of the citizenry through their libraries with the help of the collections that are the bedrock for the services provided to the users (Abioye and Adeowu, 2013).

Academic libraries constitute a significant segment of libraries in Nigeria and also the most formidable and active of all types of libraries. This is because academic libraries in Nigeria have more professional staff, resources, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other infrastructures for effective information provision and dissemination. In fact, we generally refer to the present time as Information Technology (IT) Age or Information Era where libraries and librarians all over the world have been constantly championing the course (Abbas, 2014).

Since its inception, library is known to be a service oriented organization. This according to Tikekar (2009) informed the promulgation of Ranganathan's *Five Laws of Library Science*, in 1931 which are:

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

According to Dasgupta (2007) "later on Ranganathan 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" (Ranganathan, 1963)

In some documents the second law appears as "Every reader his/her document" possibly, this was done to sink the gender difference. The changeover from the word "book/s to document/s in the law indicates that Ranganathan realized that question may arise in the mind of an inquisitive scholar as to why Ranganathan used the term "book/s" instead of "document/s" in 1931 when libraries contained not only books but also other types of documents such as periodicals, patents, standards and so on.

The aforesaid change made by Ranganathan offered enough freedom to learned scholars to present the laws in any form they like. This study investigated relevance of Ranganathan's laws of library science to academic libraries in Information Communication Technology era.

## **RANGANATHAN'S FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE**

The father of library science in India (S.R. Ranganathan) propounded the five laws of library science in 1931, detailing the principles of operating a library system. Many librarians worldwide accept them as the foundations of their philosophy. The laws cover, theoretically and practically, the activity fields of the library in general and those of the academic library in particular.

### **1. Books are for use**

The first law forms the basis for the library services. Ranganathan observed that books were often chained to prevent their removal and that the emphasis was on storage and preservation rather than use. He did not reject the notion that preservation and storage were important, but he asserted that the purpose of such activities was to promote use. Without user access to materials, there is little value in these items. By emphasizing use, Ranganathan refocused the attention of the field to access-related issues, such as the library's location, loan policies, hours and days of operation, as well as the quality of staffing and mundane matters like library furniture, temperature control and lighting (Rubin, 2004)

Ranganathan (1931) opined that it is imperative to ensure library patrons use the materials selected and purchase for them. Libraries are not just about storing books, they are about people having access to books. This law focuses on the selective use of information. For effective use of information there should be proper storage and dissemination of information. Library and Information professionals have always kept in their minds that, they have to serve "Right information, to the right user at the right time" (Ramesh, 2011).

### **2. Every reader his/her book**

This law suggests that every member of the community should be able to obtain materials needed. Dr. Ranganathan felt that all individuals from all social environments were entitled to library service, and that the basis of library use was education, to which all were entitled. These entitlements were not without some important obligations for both libraries/librarians and library patrons. Librarians should have excellent first-hand knowledge of the people to be served (Wallace *et al* 2001). Collections should

meet the special interests of the community, and libraries should promote and advertise their services extensively to attract a wide range of readers (Rubin, 2004). This second law of library science means that librarians serve a wide collection to patrons and acquire literature to fit a vast collection of needs, do not judge what specific patrons choose to read. Everyone has different tastes and differences and we should respect that. Simpson (2008) asserted that “every reader his or her book,” means that we all have diverse interests and that there is a book out there to satisfy each of us. The duty of librarian is to help users find the information they require and ensure any blocks in the way are not blocks they have created. Barring access to knowledge is totally against the philosophy of Ranganathan's law (Case, 2008). In fact, the second law provides roots to the freedom to access information and knowledge in the forms of writings of all kinds and to be informed on topics that others may wish to suppress.

### 3. Every book its reader

This principle is closely related to the second law, but it focuses on the item itself, suggesting that each item in a library has an individual or individuals who would find that item useful. Dr. Ranganathan argued that the library could devise many methods to ensure that each item finds its appropriate reader. One method involved the basic rules for access to the collection, most notably the need for open shelving (Rubin, 2004). The third law of library science “every book its reader” means library's books have a place in the library even if a smaller demographic might choose to read it.

Ranganathan advocates easy access to materials, and one way to do so is by putting people together with what they require. Putting books into the hands of people who do not necessarily know what they need is also at the heart of the third law. We could interpret reader development as being part of the third law, since we promote books to users that may not be known to them and that may offer opportunities for enrichment that other titles do not (Bhatt, 2011). Historically, reference work has been identified within the third law, and this continues to be the case in the virtual library (Chopra and Partap, 2014).

### 4. Save the time of the reader

This law makes its approach from the side of the readers. Ranganathan discussed the importance of saving the time of the reader to get to the library by appropriate placement of library buildings, branches, and mobile libraries. A more modern approach would include online manifestations of library resources and services. The author starts with a review of the “Closed System” of library stacks, which required readers to scour catalogue books or cards, fill out slips with the required information precisely transcribed, submit those slips to the appropriate person, and wait...and wait...and wait...from an average of 30 minutes to upwards of hours. Just to receive the books or to be told that they weren't available or that the information was not correct. Ranganathan was very supportive of the Open Access system.

Another development that Ranganathan cheered as in support of the Fourth Law was the arrangement of non-fiction books on the shelf by subject. Again, he supported his claims by providing calculations of time needed to locate books on a topic if the shelves were arranged by author. He also advocated having the most heavily used subjects located closer to the front of the library for easier access (think the opposite of grocery stores, which put their most wanted items in the back forcing us to walk by things we wouldn't otherwise think about).

Interestingly, when discussing charging systems and staff efficiencies, Ranganathan heavily advocates using the then-modern card-based systems rather the more common log-based systems. This was new at that time, using cards to hold a set of information about a book or a reader and then filing the cards for easy retrieval. The examples he provided clearly demonstrated the beginnings of databases, with each card a record which included a number of fields (boxes and lines). It is no wonder that Ranganathan was an early advocate of computer automation of library-related tasks.

This law recognized that part of the excellence of library service is its ability to meet the needs of the library user efficiently. The law emphasizes on saving the time of the readers by adopting suitable methods. At present, time is precious to not only to the reader but also to the library staff. While rendering library service there is time lag or delay in providing materials due to non-availability of materials, language barrier etc. To this end, Ranganathan recommended the use of appropriate business methods to improve library management. He observed that centralizing the library collection in one location provided distinct advantages. The skillful and qualified staff would not only include those who possess strong reference skills, but also strong technical skills in cataloguing, cross-referencing, ordering, accessioning, and the circulation of materials (Ramesh, 2011). This guideline is meant to improve the efficiency of the library.

Readers who can quickly locate the book they want will be more satisfied customers. This law highlighted on, how fast information can be delivered to its end users. According to Ranganathan (1988), time is important to every person. Time management is a key to success in life. Libraries must have the objective of saving the time of the reader. The entire journey of librarianship is about devising, designing, and developing methods, systems of organization and dissemination of information to provide the best service to their readers in the most efficient, accurate, and effective manner and thus saving the reader's time. For example, we create catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, and abstracts to save the time of readers. Saving the time of the reader also relates to how we actually organise information. Acceptance and adoption of ICT has used to save thousands of hours of the reader's time when compared to manual systems. Noruzi (2004) rightly opines that considering the time of the user as a vital notion, and that all five laws of library science are transferable and applicable to the Web. Increasingly, saving the time of the

user becomes navigating with them through the Web and creating high-quality and accurate guides to information in this challenging domain. The implication of the fourth law in academic library is its focus on the user benefits and preferences. Consolidation and repackaging information into an appropriate form, making information available when it is needed, ensuring the quality of services and offerings, are tasks that take user benefits and preferences into account (Ramesh, 2011).

## 5. The library is a growing organism

The fifth law, that the library is a growing organism (Ranganathan, 1931) states that libraries will continue to grow in the future. Ranganathan realised that libraries need to continually grow in order to survive. They should be constantly accumulating more information sources in their collection, and they should continually adapt to changes in culture, interest and technology. This law focused more on the need for internal change than on changes in the environment itself. He argued that library organizations must accommodate growth in staff, the physical collection, and patron use. In the Fifth Law, the word 'organism' implies a 'system' concept; 'growing' connotes a 'living system'.

The fifth law enunciates a basic principle that should govern the planning and organization of libraries. When a library grows, its entire constituents such as books, readers and staff will grow. Every year books are added to the library collection, due to knowledge explosion and the increasing rate of book production. The increase in the book stack affects the shelving accommodation and stack room area. Thus planning library building, furniture and fittings should have the character of elasticity. There should be provision for future expansion.

The fifth law of library science "the library is a growing organism" means that a library should be a continually changing institution, never static in its outlook. Books, methods, and the physical library should be updated over time (Rublin, 2004). Ranganathan sees the library as an institution that is active in a constantly changing environment; accordingly, the institute should change and adapt itself with spirit of time so it can serve best those who need it.

## ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN THE ICTS ERA

The concept of ICT has brought a phenomenal change in the information collection, preservation, dissemination scene of the world. The emergence of IT is one of the wonderful gift of modern science and technology which has brought tremendous changes in library and information science (Chopra and Partap, 2014). Application of ICTs to library and information work has revolutionized the traditional concept of libraries from a store house of books to an 'intellectual information center' connoting the concept of electronic library. It has opened up a new chapter in library communication and facilitated global access to information crossing the geographical limitations (Hussain, 2013). Using ICTs, libraries are also playing a very important role in facilitating access to global information and knowledge resources (Islam, 2006).

Gorman (2000) has analyzed well, the changing roles of libraries, librarians and the library profession. The core functions of libraries, according to him, have remained the same viz: collection, organization and dissemination of information and knowledge. However, the ways and methods to carry them out are undergoing changes due to application of ICT.

According to Arkorful (2007) Libraries in Africa have difficulties satisfying the information needs of their users. This is because the amount of information created these days is so huge that using the traditional method of locating and retrieving information leaves much to be desired. Locating access to the collections with the card catalogue is time-consuming, frustrating and unattractive to users. As such, the collections in the libraries are under-utilized.

Akinwumi (2015) opined that ICT has a great influence on academic libraries because ICT made information creation in digital format possible, it made online access and file transfer possible and also made networking and sharing of information resources possible. Libraries were always considered as storehouse of knowledge. With the advent of ICT, traditional libraries are shifted to digital or virtual libraries and got a new look in the ICT era. The services and activities carried out manually in the libraries earlier. Now, one can gain access to the same information from any place via Internet connection with greater effectiveness and produce greater result at a given time. Library Automation is the best example of ICT in the daily library services. With the help of web- OPAC users can see which resources are available in the library while sitting at their work. Institution Repositories are also the result of ICTs and played vital role to serve the academic community in the modern and advanced technological world (Akanni, 2008). With the advent of ICT, reference service is converted to virtual or Digital reference service.

Nebeliose (2013) while considering the benefits of ICT in academic libraries asserted that ICT has become an important subject for all information providers. This is because of its relevance and application to tasks in the Library such as quick and easier ways of performing increased workload of library tasks with greater efficiency, enables library to establish positive correlation in the networked world, concretizes the prospects and hope for information users as academic library are now involved in resource sharing enabled by ICT, enhances adequate ICT for easy accessibility of information needed by patrons in academic library, enables academic Library precisely universities to fully adopt the use of ICT in information handling and library activities/services such as indexing, cataloguing, reference and information retrieval services, circulation, serial control/management and the provision of other technical services. Nwankwo (2006) opines that ICTs application to library works and services could be seen as the best way to assist researchers solve problems associated with literature search. This is due to the

fact that the application of ICT to library operations greatly helps in providing efficient referencing and information services, as well as the utilization of network operations such as cataloguing, authority control, inter library loans and cooperation and participation in international bibliographic project.

Dike (2000) also claimed that instant access to information from a multiplicity of sources is one of the major roles of ICT application to library services. Not only can it help in locating the materials where the required information can be found also in sorting out what information is relevant from a mass of irrelevant information. Indeed, the use of ICT has impacted on library services as identified by Igbeka (2008), Adebisi (2009), and Uwaifo (2010). In fact, the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is a great relief to users of the library catalogue in the sense that different users can search for the same information at the same time using different terminals which is impossible through the traditional card catalogue. Also, the users can search the online library catalogue through ISSN, ISBN, and combination of title and author etc. Overdue notices are generated and sent to users through their e-mails.

In the area of reference services, chat technologies, ask a Librarian, Electronic-mail, fax, telephone, Compact Disc- Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), are used to answer users queries by the Reference Librarian in the technological age. Students and researchers can search and read through a single CD-ROM containing the 30 volumes of Encyclopaedia Britannica/Americana in the library and printout needed pages. It may also be noted that current and relevant information can now be accessed and downloaded by users through the internet. It is of interest to note that some higher institution libraries in Nigeria are connected to the internet and subscribe to online journals/databases of various disciplines frequently searched by students and staff. Afolabi and Abidoye (2012) acknowledge that it is a plus to those libraries especially in the area of providing current and relevant information to their users. For Oketunji (2000), information communication technology facilitates access to electronic information which has become invaluable in complementing traditional library resources.

ICTs in libraries has changed the mode of information storage and retrieval, acquisition, cataloguing and classification, circulation of materials, serials control, management statistics and administrative activities such as budgeting. This achieved the provision of more efficient information services to the users and the overall improvement in the performance of the libraries and other related information institution (Chisenga, 1999). Librarians, therefore, are encouraged to soil themselves with the challenges of grabbing this opportunity of learning the new skills to use the multimedia in information packaging, repackaging and delivery for optimal service delivery in the 21st century (Nebeolise, 2013).

Academic libraries in Nigeria make use of ICTs as tools to meet the information need of users who in this context are students and faculty staff. Academic libraries are established to support the objectives of their parent institutions which are to promote teaching, learning and research. Therefore, academic libraries are expected to serve the students, lecturers and other members of the academic community. To meet the information need of users, academic libraries provide various services such as user education (orientation/instruction services), inter-library loan/connection services, abstracting and indexing services, referral services and circulation services. Other services provided include library book loan, reference services, photocopying, online services, compilation of reading list and bibliographies, e-mail, internet connectivity, CD-Researching and publishing (Ifidon, 2006).

The platform of Internet and WWW has helped to change the ways of accessing and locating information and thereby change the functions of a librarian and library in the modern information society. The role of librarians and the importance of libraries in this digital era are even now based on the basic principles of library science described by Dr S.R Ranganathan in his Five Laws.

## **RELEVANCE OF RANGANATHAN'S LAWS TO ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN THE ICT ERA**

Librarians have been adapting to the digital environment to make meaning of Ranganathan's five laws of librarianship. These five laws are as relevant today as when he wrote them years ago:

- Books are for use.
- Every reader has his or her book.
- Every book has its reader.
- Save the time of the reader.
- The library is a growing organism (Ranganathans, 1931)

Noruzi (2004) revised these laws in the context of what they would mean for information provision in today's digital environment:

- Web resources are for use.
- Every user his or her web resource.
- Every web resource its user.
- Save the time of the user.
- The web resource is a growing organism

In the ICTs era it might be useful replace the term “book” with the term “sources of information and knowledge” and the term “reader” with the term “users or consumer”(Barner,2011)

In an article arguing the relevance of these laws in today’s ICT age, Cloonan & Dove (2005) came up with a comparison of the Ranganathan’s five laws of librarianship and what they would mean in today’s environment. Their comparisons are adapted in Table 1 to explain the relevance to academic libraries of today.

**Table 1:** Imperatives motivated by the 5 laws: Then and now

The Law	In Ranganathan’s Day	In Academic Libraries
Books are for use	Put books in circulation-not just on the shelf	Make sure online resources are available where and when they are needed
Every reader his book	Break down barriers to the principle of education (and books) for all	Eliminate the obstacles that prevent users from making effective use of electronic resources
Every Book its reader	Ensure the easy access of books to the user through a well-cross-referenced catalogue	Integrate electronic resources into virtual learning environments and other web pages of the institution
Save the time of the reader	Avoid the wastage of user’s time involved in search for particular books by creating effective catalogues.	Provide meta searching capabilities so that users can search entire sets of electronic resources. And link resolvers so that readers get access to the best source
Library is a growing organism	See libraries as part of the larger community	Offer anytime, anywhere, access to libraries; the Invisible Web.

Source: adapted from Michèle V. Cloonan & John G. Dove — April 1, 2005

This law “Books are for use” focuses on the selective use of information. For effective use of information there should be proper storage and dissemination of information. Library and Information professionals have always keep in their minds that, they have to serve “Right information, to the right user at the right time”. Library automation in academic libraries 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 Information and Communication Technology (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 (up to grassroots level) in the form of e-government projects. Through Internet students and staff in tertiary institutions can avail or access information globally. The library and information professionals have to perform the role of information navigator, knowledge manager and information evaluator (Thaker 2007). Many academic libraries in Nigeria, most especially in the universities have E-Libraries within the library which students and staff can go to search for information, they also subscribed to some databases which make information retrieval very easy and the users can get E-books, E-Journals while using the E-Library.

This rule is very relevant in academic libraries in this age because books and other information materials are now on open shelves where library user (such as staff and students) can have access to them. Books on reserved or at the reserved section can also be given to the students for usage if they request for it.

Apart from the university main libraries, many of the higher institutions now have faculty and department libraries situated at various faculties and departments which is in line with Dr Ranganathan view that library location should be central or close to the library readers so that they will be able to use the library and the issue of loan is being carried out at the circulation section of the academic libraries. Some of the academic libraries in universities and polytechnics also embraced 24hours operation i.e the library is opened all through the day and night. E.g Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Yaba College of Technology Library, this make it easy for students living within the school premises to make use of the library at the leisure time. Also in academic library, preservation or storage of the library materials is as important as usage.

The second law “Every reader his/her book is relevant in academic libraries today because the rule says that since librarians served a wide collection of patrons, they must acquire literature to fit a vast collection of needs. In higher institutions, there are various faculties and departments and the book that will be of interest to a student of law may not interest a medical student, as a result academic libraries acquire materials taking various departments and faculties in the institution into

consideration and the syllabus, that is why, in many institution at the beginning of every section or semester, letters are sent out to various faculties and departments to recommend books that can assist them in their various fields or discipline.

Apart from this, academic libraries also acquire general materials and put them on the shelves in the library. The library of congress classification scheme mostly adopted by academic libraries makes provision for class A i.e those general books should be classified as A. Apart from one's field, one can also have access to other books that could be on day to day life, fashion, politics and so on. Librarians should not bar access to knowledge or information. The law also connotes that libraries should acquire latest materials in the library and the old materials should not be discarded because it can still be find useful by the students. Lecturers and students alike should have access to the information needed.

The second law is user oriented law; every citizen 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 the necessity of user survey, user study and user education. User Orientation may help in acquiring the need and satisfying the purpose. Presently many Information Centers or Libraries are is self sufficient to serve all types of information needs of a particular client because of information explosion, budget crunches in the library and raising cost of information sources. But through the networking and the consortium approach of the E-journals and E-books, help to meet the changing needs of users (Satpaty, 2007).

While the first law brought about change of fundamental nature in librarianship and put an end to the concept of 'Books are for Preservation' the second law carried this objective further and widened the concept from "Books are for the chosen few to books are for all." The approach of first law is from the side of books, the approach of the second law is from the side of users of information sources on the line of democratic principle. The Second law insists some obligatory functions of government, library authority, library staff and readers in a welfare state. It is ultimate responsibility of the government to give education for all by any means and methods. Books are tools of education. It presupposes the concept of education for all.

The objective of the third law; "every book its reader" can be easily achieved today with the use of computers. In a manual system as Ranganathan suggested, the librarian has to adopt open access, prepare a comprehensive catalogue with all types of approaches, display books etc. to achieve the objectives successfully. In the computerised environment, the gap between the reader and the book is bridged with the help of the indexes which are automatically built by the computer to facilitate search by maximum number of approaches.

The fourth law "save the time of the user" is very relevant in academic libraries because according to Ranganathan (1931), time is important to every person. Time management is a key to success in life. Libraries must have the objective of saving the time of the reader. The entire journey of librarianship is about devising, designing, and developing methods, systems of organization and dissemination of information to provide the best service to their readers in the most efficient, accurate, and effective manner and thus saving the reader's time. For example, academic libraries create catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, and abstracts to save the time of readers. Saving the time of the reader also relates to how academic library actually organise information. Acceptance and adoption of ICTs in academic libraries has used to save thousands of hours of the reader's time when compared to manual systems. The purpose of the fourth law; "save the time of the reader" is simultaneously achieved by the use of computers and computerised indexes. A computer can carry out an instruction in less than a second. Searching of information, compilation of bibliographies, preparation of current awareness bulleting, indexing and sorting can be processed by a computer in a few hours (Tuyo and Ozor, 2015). Use of computer reduces the time of information retrieval. Computers are now used to provide quick access to information, whereas Ranganathan talked of this some eighty four years ago.

Noruzi (2004) rightly opines that considering the time of the user as a vital notion, and that all five laws of library science are transferable and applicable to the Web. Increasingly, saving the time of the user becomes navigating with them through the Web and creating high-quality and accurate guides to information in this challenging domain. The implication of the fourth law in academic library is its focus on the user benefits and preferences. Consolidation and repackaging information into an appropriate form, making information available when it is needed, ensuring the quality of services and offerings, are tasks that take user benefits and preferences into account. The main objective of the library should be that the user who enters in a library for a specific purpose should not leave empty handed. At the same time, it must also ensure that the users' valuable time is not wasted in searching for material.

This law highlighted 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 within a fraction of second. Day by day internet is speedy and reaching to every user irrespective of the place and time (Ramesh, 2011).

Lancaster (1995) while discussing the fifth law and its implications, said that, "Ranganathan was a futurist...he timely believed that the library profession will only survive and, retain its value if it continues to adapt to changes in its environment. This, of course is the entire thrust of the fifth law of library science; "library is a growing organism"

It is erroneously said that due to the impact of Information technology (IT), the fifth law has lost its relevance, as electronic publishing can save the space in the library, but it may be noticed that multimedia and electronic publishing came on the fore front only after realising the tremendous growth of literature (Mishra, Joshi and Mistra, 1992). Ranganathan had sensed the development much earlier and stated that, "what further stages of evolution are in store for this growing organism-the library- we

cannot anticipate fully who knows that a day may not come when the dissemination of knowledge, which is the vital function of libraries, will be realised even by means other than those of printed books" ( Ranganathan, 1957)

The real goal of the libraries and librarians is to make all the published works of humankind accessible to everyone, no matter where they are in the world. Many in the library community agree that universal access to all knowledge could stand as one of the greatest achievements of humankind (Kahle, 2005, Francis and Kabir, 2008). Several decades back, Ranganathan (1956) highlighted the necessity of mechanization of library routine as follows. "Perhaps, the most over-worked sector in the mechanization of library routine is that of the literature search. The Laws of Library Science demand that every reader should be supplied with all his documents, exactly, exhaustively, and expeditiously. This is the demand of first Four Laws. But, the Fifth Law puts a hurdle in the way. When the number of documents particularly micro documents increases beyond a certain measure, the fulfillment of the other Laws becomes difficult". Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science serve as guiding principles for assessing the usefulness of IT in library and information services (Kaur, 2000)

## CONCLUSION

Ranganathan lived at a time when computers had not come into existence or rather had not made much in roads in the field of library and information science but his contributions in various fields indicate that he lived very much ahead of his time.

It can be concluded that Ranganathan's Five Laws essentially constitute a fundamental contribution to the development of Library and Information Science. They are fundamental because they are relevant in relation to the past, present-day developments, as well as future developments. Although the Five Laws of Library Science consist of five short statements, the boldness and clarity of thought behind these is remarkable. These provide guidance and rationale for practice and teaching of Library and Information Science. The laws have been useful in academic libraries because they have made an impact on the growth and development of the libraries.

The five laws are equally valid in the present digital / information age as they have been in the conventional library environment. The five laws are the source and sum of all the practices of times, yesterday, today and tomorrow. Even eighty six years of its origin Ranganathan's Five Laws are very much popular and applicable in this present electronic and digital era. These Laws can never be obsolete as long as human civilization and culture exist.

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