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RANGANATHAN'S FIRST LAW OF LIBRARIANSHIP (BOOKS ARE FOR USE) AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR LIBRARY ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Ranganathan's first law of librarianship, "Books are for use," though seemingly straightforward, carries deep and complex implications for library materials, services and organization. This paper explores the meaning and impact of this law, particularly in the Nigerian library context, emphasizing the role of bibliographic organization, accessibility, and service enhancement. The paper also provides specific an way forward for improving user's services and technical services to ensure holistic and efficient library management. Specifically expatiate upon key enablers such as library location, accessibility, infrastructure, digital transformation, and staff competencies are discussed to demonstrate the relevance of the first law in promoting knowledge dissemination. The paper also underscores the necessity through way forward for libraries to evolve and remain proactive in providing effective services to their users.
Keyword: Library Organization, Library Services, Librarians, Library User, Library Resources

Background to the Study

A book, a generic term for anything or device print or non-print, that carries information, historically is regarded as a cultural artefacts that transfers information (and consequently knowledge) across generations. Thus, a book is an object of preservation, given its cultural value. Before discovering the movable printing press, producing a book was an arduous task; the book was a scarce artefact requiring careful handling. Books were then an object for preservation rather than use.

The outstanding idea of "books are for use" emerged during the enlightenment era, following the discovery of a movable type printing press, which enabled mass production of printed materials. However, the consequent perversity of books and their readers propelled agitation for more books, public libraries and unhindered access to books. The establishment of public libraries in the 19th century gave more impetus to this agitation (Sani, 2019) & (Abubakar, 2020). Every great nation has had its public libraries.

According to Sayer (1963), preserving books in public libraries was more important than their use which is not factual. From all indications, the assertion and recognition that books are for use predate Ranganathan. Still, Ranganathan popularized and functionalized the phrase and made people accept it as a precept devoid of contradictions.

S.R. Ranganathan was an Indian Scholar, a mathematician, who became a librarian (indeed an international librarian) by providence, and was born in 1892 in Madras. After his education from India and England, he taught for several years before accepting a position as the first librarian of Madras University. Soon after he was appointed a librarian, he went to England for training. While in England, he interacted with several renowned librarians, one of whom was W.C. Berwick Sayers. Under the guidance of Sayer, Ranganathan visited many libraries, from which he gathered a lot of experiences (Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, 25, 1978).

Ranganathan returned to Madras after a month of training in England to begin the work of librarianship. As a versatile intellectual and a man of tremendous drive, Ranganathan used mass media to educate the public on the benefits of reading to society and oneself. He charged the library with a mission of self-education for everyone and made the library the hub of activities in the university. He propounded the Five Laws of Library Science in the same university.

1. Books are for use;
2. Every reader, his book;
3. Every book, its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader; and
5. A library is a growing organization.

Although, this paper aims to discuss the implications of the first law of library science, which is "Books are for Use." Books are for Use is a fundamental principle of librarianship. It is a law, a system of rules that every librarian must obey. But, like any other societal law, none abidance of the law should influence specified punishment, which incidentally falls within the powers of the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (NLA). Books are means of communication; they are very primary in all the means of communication in existence.

Ranganathan's First Law of Librarianship (Books are for use)

Ranganathan has used books as a generic term "to mean carriers of information". Thus, anything or a device that carries information is a book. Information is a significant individual and national asset. Access to and use of books strongly determines access to information. Here lie the reasons for providing books for use. Books are essential for individual's growth and for society to develop. Book is a sine qua non for the development of individuals in particular and society in general. In many civilized societies of the world, reading books is a compulsory societal requirement.

To ensure the use of books as provided by this law, Ranganathan identified many pre-

1. The site for a library
2. A restaurant
3. Conveniences
4. Opening hours
5. Establishment of branch libraries
6. Library furniture
7. Good internal layout
8. Qualified librarian(s)
9. Library marketing
10. Effective classification and cataloguing activities

According to Ranganathan (1963), each of these services and enablers strongly affects implementing this fundamental law of librarianship or library science. The religious dispensation of the services and the facilitators will go a long way to show the indispensability of a library in any society. As rightly observed by (Bello, Adamu & Salah, 2020) librarians realize that the existence of their libraries is justified only by the extent to which readers use books in the libraries. Therefore, it is important to discuss these services and enablers, viz-a-viz, the first law of library science.

The Site of the Library

A site is a place where a building is located. Modern libraries are transforming from fixed—library locations to virtual library sites. A virtual library has its location on the internet. Irrespective of the site's format for a library, the site plays a significant role in using library/information resources. Therefore, it is essential to choose both sites carefully for the library. In a traditional library setting, the library site must not be in a wet area, and the room must be accessible to the library community. Hence, the center of activities in any society is the best site for a library. In a virtual library, the most heavily patronized internet site is the best place for the library. Locating libraries (traditional) in serene areas is no longer in vogue. Librarianship communities now recommend building the conventional library in areas with the most potential to be accessible to the library user. In fact, in some cities, most public libraries are at the market centers. The argument is that the library can easily be seen or noticed by its community, especially public libraries. Locating a library in an area with noticeability enhances accessibility and the use of its resources.

A Restaurant

A restaurant is usually a place where one or people can buy and eat a meal. Providing a restaurant in a library brings about the requisite concentration, according to Ranganathan, while using books. Moving out of the library in search of food is a distraction to attention of users, because the act of reading, thinking and meditating are integral to concentration when using a book.

Provision of Conveniences

Besides providing a restaurant, provision of toilets, retiring rooms or lobbies are equally important as a restaurant. All these conveniences help library users to avoid distractions, which can be very frustrating. In Nigeria, and perhaps in most African countries, these are usually areas of neglect. According to Sani, (2019). Library management hardly considers these as an area of vital needs. Consider a scenario where a reader is hard-pressed and could not find a place in the library to ease themselves. It is discouraging and frustrating if they have to dash out of the library to find convenience elsewhere. It is even more disappointing where a person is suffering from a frequent bowel movement. Studies have shown that old aged readers have more of these problems than younger readers. The lack of convenience in the library can discourage both active and potential clients from using the library and the books.

The adage that "all works without play makes Jack a dull boy" is very apt and explains why most libraries in developed climes provide lobbies. After a concentrated reading, a user's withdraws into this lobby to recuperate. Some retire there to smoke, exchange pleasantries with other readers. A lobby is a dynamic place in the library to socialize and make friends. The significance of a lobby in a library is enormous. First, it provides room for the effective use of books. Second, the little time spent in the lobby has the potential to re-ignite a reader for another round of concentrated reading. A time spent outside the library may not provide the same zeal to go back to studying; one or two unexpected distractions can discourage a reader from continuing the reading.

Opening Hours

It has become a truism that information is a significant national asset. Therefore, no nation aspiring for enviable heights in development wants to toy with information (Ogbuiyi, Onogu and Ogbuiyi, 2013). Hence, there must be continuous access to information. Users must have access to information whenever the need arises for that. As noted by Mohammed and Yahaya (2019), the implication is that increased access to information keeps developed countries in an advanced position and has the edge over the world's less developed and developing nations. The essence is that the library, the primary custodian of information, must keep the library open twenty-four hours. However, this is not a problem in a virtual library situation, but how many users access digitized information resources in developing societies. Keeping access to information continuous is why libraries in underdeveloped and developing nations should adopt the twenty-four-hour opening schedules. A scholar at the University of Edinburgh who found the library closed remarked, "Woe unto you who has taken the key of knowledge:" (Ranganathan, 1963). Closing a library is the same thing as blocking people's access to information and knowledge; more pathetically, using books.

Establishment of Branch Libraries

The revolutionary words of Lord Lytton, as recounted by Ranganathan, (1963) are "A Library is not only a school, it is an Arsenal and armoury. Books and weapons; either for war or for self-defence. A library is also a panacea for all the ills of society. It is a social institution that is as indispensable as food. A library should, therefore, not be far away from its community. A branch library is necessary, where the central library is a little farther away from its community. Proximity to the library means proximity to books; indeed, the closer one is to the library, the higher the tendency to use recorded information to solve one social problem or another.

Library Furniture

The Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, (2010) described furniture as "objects that can be moved, such as chairs, tables and beds that are put into a house or an office to make it suitable for living or working." Library furniture is primarily tables, shelves, chairs, and display racks. Although the furniture is suitable for the library, especially for reading books, its ergonomic designs help improve people's working conditions. It also assists them to work more efficiently. The height of both chairs and tables must be complementary; one must not be too low or too high for the other. If a table is high and the chair is low, the book user will have to stretch themselves to an unbearable level. They become worn out after a few minutes of reading. Both the table and the chair, especially, must permit comfort. Sitting on a well-designed chair and table, a reader will read a book much longer than a poorly designed table and chair.

The shelves must not be too high for people to reach. Books on such shelves may not be inaccessible to their readers. It is rather frustrating if a reader would have to write for a helper to access a requisite book. An item of library furniture, especially chairs and tables, has some positive relationship with texts and perhaps other information bearing media.

Good Internal Layout of the Library

The internal layout of the library dictates its aesthetic features, effortless movement within the library and the general attraction of the library. It is not enough to stock the library with all the essential information resources, furniture and fittings; the aesthetic structuring of these items in the library is equally critical. The good internal layout of the library gives the library the requisite tranquillity, conducive atmosphere, attraction, safety and sense of belonging, which enhances the use of the library and its resources. These are features that help to sell the library and endear it to its community. They also serve as a motivation to endorse the library as an integral part of the community.

Library Marketing

Marketing is a child of civilization. It is as old as human civilization. According to Kotter and Armstrong (2014), marketing is a social and managerial process by which

individuals and organizations get what they need and want by creating and exchanging value with others. Value in this context is the basket of benefits or utilities that a user, be it an individual or organization, gets while using a product (information resources) or services. Amando (2021) observed that marketing helps create and maintain awareness of library and information services within an organization or community it serves. It also helps attract more users, especially those who never used or thought of using library resources and services, highlighting their purposes and usefulness. Marketing a library and its services have many other benefits, including promotion and endurance of the optimum use of information resources. The general goals of marketing of any library, as summarized by Bello (2015), are essentially two:

1. To attract customers or users by promising superior value or benefits
2. To keep and maintain already built up customers or users by continuous delivery of satisfaction

Marketing a library involves adopting marketing tools or marketing mix, which are essentially four: product, price, place and promotion (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014). In library marketing, librarians must be up and doing. They must adopt a proactive approach to the management of the library. The proactive approach to marketing library services results in immense gains. Libraries should take advantage of social media to sell or market their libraries. Social media provides the opportunity for selling the library with minimal cost involvement. Social media make marketing services easy, reachable and penetrating. However, few user communities, especially public library user communities, have requisite cellular phone and connectivity. So librarians still need to deploy physical, aggressive marketing strategies to sell their libraries and ensure that information resources therein are optimally used.

The Librarians

In order to realize the law "Books are for use" librarians working in Nigerian libraries must be competent in all ramifications: education/qualification, skills (professional and behavioural), personal traits and attributes and capabilities and attitudes.

Librarians must not substitute one item of the competencies for another. The competencies, Ranganathan seemed to give more premium to personal attributes over qualification and professional skills. For example, he mentioned good physical appearance, welcoming character, courtesy, cheerfulness, good conduct, and phlegmatic temperament (that is, not easily made angry or upset). Knowing what to do, how, and when to do it all belongs to academic and professional qualities. Still, the personal attributes separate exceptional workers from others. Outstanding workers perform tasks at the desired level. Marketing library services to customers makes the deployment of the personal qualities of the librarian vital. Outstanding librarians are those who can maintain the customers' loyalty. The relationship between the librarian and the reader should be a

cordial one and not of a superior telling an inferior what books user –ought to read (Ranganathan, 1963). He also noted that "it is such sympathetic personal service and hospitality that makes a library significant and blossoming, but not its size. The librarian should be friendly and guide everyone who comes to use the library.

Digitization of Books in Libraries

The digitization of books and other information resources that appear in formats that are not digitized is pertinent to ensuring that the law of Ranganathan "Books are for use" becomes a reality, particularly in this present era. This is due to advances in technology which have influenced the way in which information is packaged as well as used by library patrons. Most information appears in electronic forms and temporary users also use them in such forms with the help of various technological devices. For this reason, it is important that libraries, particularly in Nigeria, pay more attention to the digitization process of physical books and other research works and provide access to them in order to enable their utilization by users and to satisfy/fulfil the library rule "books are for use".

Bibliographic Processing of Library Resources

Ranganathan's first law which states that "books are for use" has a strong implication on bibliographic work in libraries. Classification, cataloguing and indexing activities are most critical in ensuring the use of books in the libraries. The importance of these activities in ensuring that information resources are easily accessible for use in libraries cannot be overemphasized. Effective use of books depends on easy access to them, which in turn depends on their proper organization. When library users find it easy to locate book(s) of their choice from the library's holdings, they will always be willing to come to the library to use its resources. Therefore, it means that librarians must take the works of cataloguing, classification, and indexing seriously. They should be detailed, efficient and effective in performing such bibliographic activities.

Conclusion

Ensuring the effective use of books in a library goes beyond mere acquisition, cataloguing and classifying; it requires proactive measures to create an environment conducive to their optimal utilization. It is costly to provide books in a library. In a civilized society, a large proportion of the national income goes to the library. It is equivalent to wasted resources if the books to which so much has been sunk are not utilized.This paper highlights the various infrastructural, operational, and managerial elements necessary to uphold Ranganathan's first law. Nigerian libraries must prioritize accessibility, comfort, and technological advancements like digitization to meet the evolving needs of their users. Furthermore, empowering librarians with appropriate skills and attitudes, alongside well-designed services, will foster greater engagement with library resources. The principle of "Books are for use" must be seen as a guiding

mission for all librarians to ensure the maximum value is derived from their collections, ultimately contributing to national development.

Way Forward

1. Libraries managements must adopt a proactive approach in ensuring that books are accessible and utilized. This includes providing necessary tools and creating an environment conducive to reading and research.
2. Libraries Cataloguers and technical staff should focus on improving classification, cataloguing, and indexing activities to make information easily accessible. Proper organization of library resources is critical for their use.
3. Libraries, both traditional and virtual, should be located in easily accessible areas. In traditional settings, libraries should be placed at the center of community activities, while virtual libraries should optimize their online presence.
4. Nigerian Libraries should endeavour to provide eessential facilities like restaurants, restrooms, and lounges should be provided within library premises to enhance user comfort and avoid disruptions in reading and research.
5. Nigerian Libraries should consider 24-hour operations to provide continuous access to information. Virtual libraries can easily adopt this, but physical libraries must also aim for extended hours.
6. Libraries managements should establish branch libraries in areas far from the central library to ensure that users in remote locations have access to resources. This will increase the use of library materials in the broader community.
7. Libraries managements should engage in marketing activities to raise awareness about their services. Social media and other digital platforms should be utilized to reach a broader audience and highlight the value of library resources.
8. Nigerian libraries should provide designed furniture to promote long reading sessions without discomfort. Shelves must be reachable, and furniture should facilitate the ease of access to resources, smooth movement and make the library an attractive and welcoming space for users.

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