Applications of Five Laws of Library Science for Users with Disabilities

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Abstract

The spirit of the first three laws propounded by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan stressed on equal opportunities to all readers-both normal and abnormal which are taken as the guiding principles for providing library services to all without any discrimination. This includes students with disabilities like visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically disabled and so on. This study makes an attempt to apply the spirit of the five laws of library science and established norms as the guiding principles for providing library services to persons with disabilities (PWDs). Also tried to enumerate the assistive technologies to be used by the libraries for providing effective services to persons with disabilities (PWDs) and tries to unearth the extent to which such principles are put into practice.

Keywords: Five Laws of Library Science, Library services, People with Disabilities

1. Introduction

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan is known as "Father of Library Science" in India. He wrote five laws of library science in 1928 and published in 1931 as "Five Laws of Library Science" which are still considered as fundamental laws and are taken into consideration for evaluation criteria of library services, activities and functions. Library users with disabilities have equal opportunity of equal education as Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. Application of five laws of library science to provide equal library services and resources to people with disablilities is essential to streamline them in the process of education. It will help to provide accessible infrastructural facilities as well as accessible library services through use of various adaptive and assistive technologies.

The Five Laws of Library Science can be considered as below for users with disabilities are:

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1. Books are for use: Books are for use of user with disabilities
2. Every reader his / her book : Every user with disabilities his / her book
3. Every book its reader: Every book its user with disabilities (reader)
4. Save the time of the reader : Save the time of the users with disabilities (reader)
5. The library is a growing organism : The library is a growing organism (with growth in users with disabilities)

2. Implications of Five Laws of Library Science

3. Books are for Use (Books are for Use of Users with Disabilities)

Libraries should be provided books to all disabled users to satisfy their required information needs. For maximizing use of library books by disabled users following points should be taken into consideration.

3.1. Library Location

The location of the library should be the central place of the institute and accessible by all suers with disabilities. users can easily access or use all library resources and services. It is suggested to make a ramp for them at the entrance of library so that they can easily enter into the library.

3.2. Library Staff

For use of library books, library staff should be qualified and trained. Library staff must have disability awareness; they should politely ask and solve the queries of disabled users.

3.3. Library Furniture

Library furniture - tables and chairs should be adjustable. Shelf heights and switches should be wheelchair accessible. It is recommended be make available special furniture that would help them to access the books easily.

3.4. Book Selection

Book selection should satisfy the information needs of different users with disabilities especially visually impaired students. Braille books, talking books, talking newspapers, audio books, tactile books, and large print books should be procured in libraries to cater their informational needs.

3.5. Library Finance

Library management should provide sufficient funds to procure disability related various formats books, adjustable furniture, various adaptive technologies and special funds for providing accessible infrastructural facilities to disabled users.

3.6. Library Hours

Library hours should be decided as per convenience of disabled users. Maximum time should be provided to such users to access their library resources. The website should be user-friendly with web accessibility initiative for users so that they can access the library 24x7.

3.7. Library Rules

Special library rules should be prepared for disabled users. With special rules for person with disabilities, they will be comfortable to use the library more confidently.

3.8. Arrangement of Documents

All disability related library documents should be arranged in a systematic way as per different types of disabilities like visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically disabled, etc. Users can use all their related documents very easily when they are arranged properly.

4. Every Reader His / Her Book (Every user with Disabilities His / Her Book)

Every disabled user should have the right to access their required books. Every reader itself emphasis include all readers specially persons with disability. For second law, following points should be taken into consideration.

4.1. Obligation of the State

State government should be designed library acts which help to provide maximum user friendly library services, resources, infrastructural facilities to disabled users. State government should be provided with special funds to purchase various adaptive or assistive technologies, special accessible format books.

4.2. Obligation of the Library Authority

4.2.1. Choice of Books

Library authority should be planned for books selection as per special requirements of different types of disabled user groups.

4.2.2. Choice of Staff

Library authority should appoint qualified and trained staff which will serve persons with disability smoothly.

4.2.3. Obligation of the Library Staff

Library staff should be provided required reading documents to disabled persons. They also provide guidance on how to use particular assistive technology.

4.2.4. Obligation of the reader

Persons with disability should follow library rules and regulations; and use library resources carefully.

5. Every Book Its Reader (Every Book its Students with Disabilities (Reader))

Second law concentrated on the reader and third law concentrated on book. Each and every book should have the right reader at the right time. Library staff should bring the right reader towards the right book as per their information needs.

5.1.1.1. Open Access

SWDs can be searching their required books through open access system. They directly search books which are kept in the stack room. Even open access educational resources should be converted by using braille book.

5.2. Shelf Arrangement

Scientific shelf arrangement of books helps disabled users to easily search their books.

5.3. Easy Access

Shelf height should be provided easy access to wheelchair users.

5.4. Catalogue

Catalogue is a list of reading materials available in the library. Subject catalogue and author catalogue helps users with disability to search their required books within a few seconds.

5.5. Book Selection

Book selection as per information needs of the users provides the right book to the right reader at the right time.

5.6. Publicity

Publicity of purchase special format disability related books through new arrivals list, library bulletins and college magazines. Subject wise books list helps to attract disabled users groups towards each and every book.

5.7. Extension Services

Extension services like book exhibitions, display of new arrivals, library tour helps to provide new books as well as required books to disabled users available in the library and then only they can access that book easily.

6. Save the time of The Reader (Save the time of the Students with Disabilities (Reader))

Library's main objective is saving the time of the users through supplying required reading materials to them and satisfying information needs of such users. For fourth law, following points should be taken into consideration.

6.1. Classified Arrangement

Subject wise classified arrangement of books in the stack room saves the time of the users who can easily search their books without wasting time.

6.2. Catalogue Entry / OPAC

Catalogue card of book or Online Public Access Catalogue helps users to search books as per subject, title, author, editor and series, etc.

6.3. Open Access

In open access, users directly search their book in the stack room. As compared to closed access, open access saves the time of the users with disability.

6.4. Circulation System

Circulation system involves issue and return of books. Computerized circulation system saves the time of users and is also useful for preparing various circulation reports which are necessary for NAAC as well as for academic audit.

6.5. Centralized / pre-natal Cataloguing

In centralized cataloguing, catalogue cards are prepared at central place. In pre-natal cataloguing, catalogue cards are printed in the verso side of the title page. Thus centralized / pre-natal cataloguing saves the time of the users and library staff.

6.7. Stack Room Guides

Shelf list as well as various guides or directions in the stack room helps to save the time of the persons with disability.

6.8. Library Location

Library should be located at the central place and provide departmental libraries at each department which helps to satisfy information needs of disabled user community at the right time.

6.9. Reference cum Guidance Service

Reference cum guidance services helps new users to know the library rules, arrangement of books, circulation systems, use of assistive technologies which ultimately saves the time.

7. The Library as a Growing Organism

Basically, the library will grow in three factors such as books, staff and readers. For fifth law, following points should be taken into consideration.

7.1. Easy Extension / Expansion

Library building foundation should be strong which is necessary for extension / expansion of extra floors in future. Library building should have enough space to cope with additional books, staff and readers.

7.2. Growth of the Readers

Readers of the library will be increased in relation to different courses and different types of disabilities. Growth disabled user community required extra reading room space as well as infrastructural facilities.

7.3. Growth in the Staff

Library staff will be increased as per different types of disabled users visiting the library. Library requires qualified as well as disability awareness trained staff to serve different types of persons with disability.

7.4. Growth in the reading materials

Different types of disabled persons required different format reading materials. Reading materials will be increased / procured as per different types of persons.

7.4. Assistive Technologies

Users with different types of disability required different types of specialized assistive technologies hardware and software such as screen reader, screen magnifier, screen enlarger, hearing aids, mobility aids, etc. Assistive technologies should be kept in separate rooms for easy access by respective users.

8. Assistive technologies to be used by libraries for providing library services to persons with disability

"The "Technology for the Blind Program" also provides adaptive devices such as talking and large-print calculators, Braille writers, four-track tape recorders, note-takers, and other specialized adaptive devices for use in the workplace." (2021)

The various assistive technologies useful for persons with disabilities are given below:

❖ Screen reading softwares: NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access, JAWS (Job Access with Speech,) Openbook, Zoom Text, Kurzweil, Voice Over, BRELTTY, ORCA, Web Anywhere etc.

❖ Screen Magnification software: MAGic screen magnification software, DAISY text and audio etc.

❖ Low Vision Devices Kit: It includes various types of spectacles, lenses and pocket magnifiers

❖ Plex Talk device: to read material.

❖ Type Ability – Keyboard Learning Software:

❖ Marathi/ Hindi OCR Scanning Software:

❖ EL-Braille Note Taker Machine:

❖ Kibo XS device for converting text books in accessible form.

The above technologies are needed to be provided to PWDs to bridge the gap between digital divide among normal readers and readers who are PWDs. According to Ekwelem"The uneven availability of new information technology among the disabled compared to non- disabled and

non-disabled student users has highlighted a digital divide that separates students who are able to access electronic resources from those who have no opportunity to do so." (Ekwelem, 2013)

9. Conclusion

Five laws of library science guide libraries for how to provide user friendly services to their respective students with disabilities. Implications of five laws of library science provides information about requirements of students with disabilities and guidelines for satisfying information needs of students with disabilities for equal treatment by library staff and library authority. Libraries should take initiatives by using the assistive technologies for rendering effective library services to persons with disability (PWDs).

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