

# *Extended Library Hours*

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[ Extension of library hours is useful both for public & LIS professional. Five laws, need for extended hours, problems of extended library hours, implication of extended library hours. ROCLOLIB are the related topics covered in the paper to highlight the importance of extended library hours.]

## **1 Introduction**

The concept of time is not as simple as it seems to be at the outset. It is an abstract phenomenon. Time is generally understood to be an "absolute duration; movement at which or stretch of duration in which things happen" (Geddi, 1952). Time is multifariously intertwined in social life. some of the etymological manifestations of time are like time ball (a ball arranged to drop at particular time); 'time beguiling' (making time seem to pass quickly) etc.

The importance of time in every ones life is of immense significance. Everybody tries to cope with the pace of time. Man tries to make / pack as many things as possible in as limited a time as possible and to be considered as more faster than others. Such is the importance of time. Interestingly there is a concept known as "SOCIAL TIME." "Social time is a time perceived according to social and cultural reference points" (Scott, 1988). According to P.A sorokin and R.K. Merton (1937) "the category of astronomical time is only one of several concepts of time .... social phenomenon are frequently adopted as a frame of reference so that units of time are often fixed by the rythm of collective life. The need for social collaboration is at the root of social systems of time. Social time is qualitatively differentiated according to the beliefs & customs common to the group".

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## 2. Library Hours :

In tune with the dictionary meaning, "library hours", may be defined as a duration or stretch of duration in which readers/users access information. Hence library hours refers to the time during which the libraries are open for the users / readers to have access to information.

### 2.1 Extended Library Hours & Five laws of Library Science :

Readers/users of the libraries in general come from diverse backgrounds, interests & places. Two major difficulties / constraints of the reader/user in using libraries are time and place (Devaraj & Kalyane, 1995). Time and again, readers press for extending the library hours. Librarians too are enthusiastic about extending library hours. Five laws of library science i.e. *Books are for use*, *Every Reader his/her book*, *Every book its reader*, *Save the time of the reader* and *Library is a growing organism*; reaffirm the significance of extended library hours. *Books are for use* -- all the time-round the clock. *Every reader his/her book* -- Library has limited copies of books -- to make the book available to many readers, extended library hours is needed. *Every book its reader* -- Readers for a particular book come to read the book at different times according to their own convenience -- any imposition of ceiling on time hampers the maximum use of the books. *Save the time of the reader* -- Readers time is very very precious. Reader has to attend to all the activities of social life within his limited available time. When he has to access information -- Whatever may be the time, Library is to be open. Library is a growing organism -- as the information stored in the libraries goes on multiplying, it is but natural that an interested user expects to spend longer duration of time in libraries. In future years, the dichotomies of day and night will reduce - clear definitions of resting time in night & working time in day time will change -- hence the library going habits of the readers users will also change over a period of time. Five laws of Library science are all out in emphasizing the importance of extended library hours.

**2.2 Need for extended library Hours :** Extended library hours is the need of the day. The level of extension of library hours makes the level of professionalism in Library & Information science service. Extension of Library hours is beneficial both for the LIS profession & public as well for the following reasons :

- i) Helps readers / users to come to library at their convenient time
- (ii) Helps serious readers to spend time in the library for longer hours in different spells
- (iii) Proves to public that librarians are socially committed for citizens.
- (iv) Boosts the image & status of LIS as a profession. It is a step forward towards professionalisation of Library & Information science as a profession (Devarai & Kalyane, 1995)

### **3. Problems :**

Though the concept of extension of library hours is worth while to consider, there are genuine problems which are described as below :

- (i) Most of the libraries of developing countries have manpower problems making it difficult to place different individuals at different timings of the library.
- (ii) Cost of salaries of additional staff required for extended library hours will be an additional burden on the shrinking library budgets.

### **Implications :**

Extension of library hours has healthier impact on the growth & development of library & information science as a profession. This helps serious readers, scientists & scholars to make continuous reference work in libraries.

### **3.1 Towards an ideal of ROCLOLIB :**

Slowly a momentum is gathering for the concept of ROCLOLIB (Round the Clock Librarianship). In every successful profession professional status & standing is achieved by hard

work, devotion and sacrifice on the part of the practitioner. If at all, librarian is interested in his professional development he should continue to be a librarian round the clock. According to Devarai & Kalyane, (1995) Librarians round the Clock means informativeness of the librarians out of their libraries, offices; practice of residential librarianship after library hour; eagerness to help clients making emergency call by cutting short one resting time (sleep), emergence of private library homes by enterprising librarian in the model of nursing homes; – Emergence of emergency words / counters in big public, private & research libraries, for prioritising among library / information — services — Emergence of librarians as information resource consultants; – Emergence of librarians as free lance information practitioners of libraries.

As a matter of fact *Round the clock Librarianship* should emerge as one of the most important ideals to be achieved by library & Information professionals.

#### **Last Word :**

Knowingly or unknowingly we are leading towards the ideals of ROCLOLIB, ROCLOLIB indeed has crucial implications for the profession. Alas ! the human quest for information & the librarians' wish to become a real professional should culminate itself into the realisation of the dream of Round the Clock Librarianship. Devarai & Kalyane (1995) caution "for those who live in intellectual boundaries, for those who never dream impossibles & for those who cannot outclass contemporary thinking, ROCLOLIB may seem like a far cry"! As such extension of Library hours brings forth a new, everlasting, indelible impact on the future of Library & Information science as a profession. If at all librarians wish to be at the helm of affairs of the society they are but to take such professional challenges.

#### **Reference :**

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