

Guest Editorial

It has been almost five decades since we lost Prof. Ranganathan, the Father of Library Science in India. There have been publications brought out in his honour including biographies, festschrifts, conference proceedings, edited books and journal issues discussing his theories and philosophy. These and other published works, emanating both from within and outside India, amply reflect that his teachings and philosophy are valid in the changing times today.

Right from his Five Laws of Library Science that have been studied, interpreted in the context of the changing circumstances and found valid; to the Theory of Classification; Canons of Cataloguing; and Library Administration, all have been critically researched and found applicable in the current scenario, though with modifications. However, as is evident from published literature of recent years, there has been a general decline in the volume of research on Ranganathan's theories and philosophy. There is a need to research his theories and philosophy in the context of the changing scenario of digital information, spectrum of information providers, movement towards open access, digital repositories, knowledge society, and changing role of LIS professionals.

Even terminologies used by Ranganathan such as 'gap device', 'canon of currency' and 'canon of relevance' were futuristic. His works were broad based, holistic and user-centric. He tested his theories and practices in the field (library) and envisioned that they stand the test of times. These are directions for us to follow while interpreting, extending, adapting and adopting his theories and philosophy.

This special issue devoted to Dr. S R Ranganathan's memory, intends to bring thoughts from different quarters on various areas of LIS, discussing their relevance in the present scenario. Very encouraging responses to the call for the special issue were received with contributions on book selection, classification, cataloguing, librametrics, principle of helpful sequence, CC, CC in relation to DDC and UDC, ontology development, the concept of subject and discussions on his philosophy, contributions and impact of his works. The special issue reflects the need for a renewed effort by scholars to research on Ranganathan Studies. A brief of the papers in the issue is presented in the following paragraphs.

Prof. Satyanarayana has presented the contributions of Ranganathan in classification, indexing and cataloguing. He has also discussed Ranganathan's association with international bodies like FID and UNESCO. Ranganathan's contributions to librarianship in India as a theoretician, as a teacher and in promoting library legislation have been highlighted.

Libraries have an important role to play in the development of society, more so when we are moving towards a knowledge society. Prof. Ghosh in his paper outlines efforts being made by organisations and governments at all levels for a successful transition. He describes the contributions of Ranganathan in making knowledge easily accessible to all. He further observes that his philosophy and guidelines need to be followed for transition into the knowledge society.

Manu's influence on Ranganathan by Dr. Partha Pratim Ray provides a detailed presentation of the influence of Manu on Ranganathan as reflected in Ranganathan's Five Laws, Principles and Canons.

Collection development is an important activity in a library. There have been far reaching changes in the document formats and the reading preferences of users. The authors, Prof. Chandel and Dr. Avijit Rai have discussed the process of book selection relating to the developments in e-resources and Five Laws of Library Science. They infer that Ranganathan's principles of book selection are valid in the present day context and need to be applied for collection development.

Prof. Sen in his article on the contributions of Ranganathan in bibliometrics observes that Ranganathan coined the term Librametry in 1948 to denote the application of statistics in libraries. Ranganathan applied statistics in library processes, routines and services to streamline and standardize systems. He opines that scope of librametrics includes much of bibliometrics.

UDC and CC are both faceted schemes of classification having influenced each other. Prof. Amitabha Chatterjee has depicted this influence in his article, "UDC and CC: Their Mutual Impact". UDC originated far ahead of CC having an impact on it. In particular because of the flexibility it has, CC allows freedom to the classifier that was advocated by Ranganathan. The author has discussed the impact along different points like, structure, notation, common isolates, devices and phase relation. He opines that the UDC and CC have used and implemented the ideas of Ranganathan in the revision of the respective schemes.

Prof. P.K. Panigrahi, while comparing the schemes CC and DDC in his article, "Ranganathan and Dewey in Hierarchical Subject Classification: Identifying some Symbiotic Thoughts", observes that the popularity of DDC and the strong theoretical base of CC can be combined to design a new tool for organizing knowledge for a domain specific ontology. He has discussed similarities in the two schemes on the use of decimal numbers, common isolates and tables and the concept of main class and basic facet.

The next three papers are on the Colon Classification. Prof. Satija traces the status of CC, calls for the saving the 'national heritage' and suggests measures for the CC's revival. Prof. Raghavan presents the efforts being taken by Sarada Ranganathan Endowment at actually reviving the scheme. And Dr. Parvin Babbar's article takes a step ahead in this direction by proposing an expert system for CC. With libraries finding alternatives to the CC, these three articles highlight not only the need for revival of CC, but also give the steps that can be taken and also some measures currently being taken to revive the CC.

The relevance of Ranganathan's analytico synthetic approach of classification relevance today is aptly demonstrated in the next two articles reporting the design of ontologies for banking and library and information science respectively by Dr. Kaushal Giri & Prof. Pratibha Gokhale, and Ms. Shrabana Ghosh & Prof. Panigrahi. The Canons of Classification given by Ranganathan guide in the organization of concepts for the creation of ontology.

Mrs. Rosalien Rout and Prof. Panigrahi have demonstrated the relevance of Ranganathan's Canons of Cataloguing in the online environment. They observe that the Classified Catalogue Code needs to be updated in view of the developments in formats and media of information communication. The relevance of Canons and Principles still holds good, as has been compared with the principles of RDA by the authors.

The article by Prof. Shyama Rajaram on the Principles of Helpful Sequence and their application in technical writings demonstrates the wide applicability of Ranganathan's thoughts. The principles for arranging ideas in knowledge organisation can be used in technical writing. She has explained with examples how the principles can be used for expressing ideas clearly and appropriately. Applying these consciously would result in improved communication.

"Ranganathan's elucidation of *subject* in the light of infinity (∞)" by Dr. Bidyarthi Dutta explores and presents contributions of Ranganathan in explaining and applying the concept of subject. The author has discussed the influence of two mathematicians, George Cantor and George Gamow on Ranganathan's description of 'subject'.

Based on the data on Ranganathan's works indexed in Web of Science (core collection), Scopus and Google Scholar, the relevance and impact of his works even today are highlighted by Dr. Anup Kumar Das and Dr. Sanjaya Mishra. The authors report that EC3 Research Group at the University of Granada, Spain has placed Ranganathan in the 29 Classic Scholars Group in LIS and that Ranganathan is the only scholar from South Asia to receive the honour.

In all, the sixteen articles in this issue authored by LIS teachers, students, college, university & special librarians, and a distance education expert (former LIS professional) touch upon the various contributions of Ranganathan. It is hoped that the thoughts and ideas shared by the various authors will be discussed, debated and if required, refined to undertake further research and projects on Ranganathan Studies. As Prof. Satija remarks, "*We are left with no option but to act*". This call is not just for Ranganathan's CC but his entire legacy!

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