

Study materials for online platform for students.

Prepared by Ms. Nikita Lama DLIS, CU

NORMATIVE PRINCIPLES

The normative principles of classification have been recognised for a long time, and have proved to be highly useful. These have provided a scientific basis to the field of classification. The framers of classification scheme and classifiers have been making their use in varying degrees. These principles can serve many purposes, as stated below:

- 1) These can serve as the basis of a scheme for classification, leading to a scientific approach. As such a scheme should be designed keeping in view the guidelines provided by normative principles. These principles are also useful for a remodelling of the existing scheme.
- 2) Critical study of a given scheme can be carried out with the help of these principles.
- 3) The principles can be very helpful for the purpose of comparing different schemes of classification.
- 4) Interpretation of the rules and schedules of a scheme can be done with their help.
- 5) These can provide guidance to a classifier in the day to day work of classification.
- 6) These are helpful in developing a theory, and also provide a scientific basis to theory.

Ranganathan adopted a convention regarding the use of words like laws, canons and principles. These are all normative principles used in particular context. He has postulated these for working different levels, as given below.

Levels	Name of Normative Principles
Basic process of thinking	Basic Laws
Library Science	Fundamental Laws
Classification	Canons
Helpful Sequence in array	Principles
Work of classifying	Postulates and principles for facet sequence

The term 'basic law' is used at the level of a basic process of thinking. 'Fundamental law' is applied at the level of library science as a discipline. 'Canon' is used in the context of divisions of the first order of the discipline of library science, such as classification, cataloguing, book selection and so on. The term 'principle' is applied in the context of divisions of the second or later order of library science, such as helpful sequence in array and facet sequence.

Ranganathan has recognized the following basic laws;

- 1) Law of interpretation
- 2) Law of impartiality
- 3) Law of symmetry
- 4) Law of parsimony
- 5) Law of local variation
- 6) Law of osmosis

1) Law of interpretation – Ranganathan refers to 1008 principles of interpretation, listed in the Nyaya-Kosa. These principles are applicable in interpreting legal texts. The canons, principles, postulates and rules of classification taken together can be considered a legal document. Therefore, we should interpret various sections just like a legal text. In case of a conflict, the conflict should be resolved with the aid of the laws of interpretation. If necessary, the rules, principles and canons should also be modified to solve the conflicts. It has been suggested by Ranganathan that colon classification should be scrutinized from the angle of these laws. This will help in determining many of its weakness. CC could be revised to overcome these weakness. Similarly, the laws of interpretation can be applied in the study of other schemes also.

2) Law of impartiality – The law directs that between two or more claimants (e.g, for the first position among two facets of a subject or the choice to be made among the needs of different categories of users) preference should be made only on sufficient grounds, and not arbitrarily.

Example:

The law of impartiality insists that the sequence of facets in different subjects should not be determined in an arbitrary manner in each subject. The sequence should be based on some guiding principles of a general nature, equally applicable to all subjects. That is why Ranganathan has suggested the application of a wall-picture principles for facet sequence.

3) Law of symmetry – The law prescribes that of two entities or situation which admit of being regarded as symmetrical counterparts of each other, if one entity or situation is given weight in any particular context, the other entity or situation should also be given a corresponding weight.

Example:

In CC, Ranganathan allocated greater ordinal value to Roman caps than Indo-Arabic numerals. Later Roman small letters were used to represent posteriorizing common isolates. These were given lesser ordinal value than Indo-Arabic numerals, which led to the satisfaction of the law of symmetry.

4) Law of parsimony – The law directs that between two or more possible alternatives bearing on a particular phenomenon the one leading to overall economy of manpower, material, money and time, considered together with proper weightage, is to be preferred. A faceted scheme consists of a set of schedules instead of a single schedule

for all subjects in an enumerative classification. Our experience shows that the length of schedules gets reduced in the first one, thereby satisfying the law of parsimony.

Example:

In case a collection is to be reclassified the law of parsimony would suggest that only that part of the collection be classified which is known to be in much use, and also those documents which are returned by the users after being taken out by them from the collection.

5) Law of local variation - The law of local variation says 'that in any discipline and technique there should be provision for the users of them to secure, for strictly local use, results alternative to those for general use'. Therefore, the law directs towards the formation of special collections of documents separate from the general collection. The word 'local' should be interpreted broadly to refer to a geographical area, irrespective of the size such as European interests, interests of developing countries, Indian interests, Rajasthani interests and so on. One can go on to interests peculiar to a village or of a particular library. However, special interests are largely confined the national level.

6) Law of Osmosis – The principles says that owing to the canon of context , a change in the catalogue code or the scheme of classification becomes essential; then, from a particular date, the following work should be carried out.

A) 1) Catalogue and classify all newly accessioned material according to new code and new scheme.

2) Re-catalogue and re-classify that old collection which is known to be in much use.

3) Re-catalogue and re-classify, on return by readers, any book taken out by a reader from the old collection .

B) Maintain two catalogue (old catalogue and new catalogue) and two sequence on the shelf.

C) Attention of readers should be directed by the reference librarian to the two sequence on a shelf and to two catalogues.

If a library decides to re-catalogue and re-classify the entire collection, then in most cases the cost would be enormous. Often, the necessary finance is made available for the purpose at the cost of active service of book funds. As the cost of re-cataloguing and re-classification can be very high, most of the libraries avoid it. However, the approach suggested by Ranganathan reduces the cost and makes it possible for most of the libraries to go in for re-cataloguing and re-classification, if found essential due to the direction from the canon of context.

The approach not only reduces the cost but is a practicable one, without affecting the service of the library thus satisfying the canons of context and the law of parsimony. The basis of the method is that the old documents, which are used rarely, need not be re-catalogued and re-classified. In the beginning there would be a great deal of extra work to be done. Therefore extra staff would be required in the initial stage. But later on , the quantum of extra work would be reduced and become less and less. The

active collection would be smaller, as also its catalogue. The users would find it more convenient and helpful to use an active collection.

Fundamental Laws

The 5 Laws of Library Science is a theory proposed by S. R. Ranganathan in 1931, detailing the principles of operating a library system. Five laws of library science are called the set of norms, percepts, and guides to good practice in librarianship. Many librarians worldwide accept them as the foundations of their philosophy. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan conceived the Five Laws of Library Science in 1924. The statements embodying these laws were formulated in 1928. These laws were first published in Ranganathan's classic book entitled Five Laws of Library Science in 1931. These laws are:

- 1)Books are for use
- 2)Every reader his/her book
- 3)Every book its reader
- 4)Save the time of the reader
- 5)Library is a growing organism

These laws of Library Science are the "fundamental laws" of Library Science. These are applicable to any problem in the areas of library science, library service, and library practice. These laws are like pot containing oceans. Prior to their enunciation, the subject of Library Science had no philosophy. These laws gave a philosophical base, guaranteeing an everlasting future to the subject of library science, the profession of librarianship, and the use of libraries. These laws have provided a scientific approach to the subject of library science. Even though S.R. Ranganathan proposed the Five Laws of Library Science before the advent of the digital age, they are still valid and equally relevant today.

Canons

Canons means a rule,regulation or law. It can also be defined as a principle,model, standard or criterion hence various models, principles, test used for the working and efficiency of differentschemes of classification are called canons of classification. Ranganathan recognised three plane of work to explain the design and application of work, he provided a specific norms for designing a scheme of classification and classify the documents according to it. In designing a scheme for classification , it has to deal with dynamics, infinite and multidimensional universe knowledge which need to be clearly and thoroughly analysed thereafter it is required to be transformed into an artificial language for smooth and convenient use of the scheme as well as systematic and helpful arrangement of documents. To make this complicated system smooth Ranganathan has formulated a separate set of canons for work into three plane,they are

- 1) Idea plane,
- 2) Verbal plane, and
- 3) Notational plane

1) Canons for the Idea plane – In idea plane all aspects of the universe of knowledge are analyzed by its structure, dimensions, qualities, characteristics, kind of relationship and bond of strength among each item of knowledge. A scheme for classification assumes the prior concept of a scheme of classes. A scheme of classification involves five inherent concepts, they are

- a) Canons for characteristics,
- b) Canons for succession of characteristics,
- c) Canons for array,
- d) Canons for chain, and
- e) Canons for filiatory sequence.

2) Canons for the verbal plane – Verbal plane helps to decide the type of terminology to be used in the scheme of classification. Natural language is imperfect, there is a vagueness in the meaning of ordinary words used in everyday conversation. There are also the incidence of homonyms and synonyms. New terms appear from time to time and these may be used to express new ideas, the meaning of a new term often keeps changing from time to time unless it is accepted in the concerned subject. Classifier are concerned with the application of schemes, they may find this useful in interpreting the terms in the schedule at the time of classifying documents. These canons must be followed by those engaged in the designing and construction of the schedules of a scheme. Ranganathan has formulated the following canons of work at the verbal plane, they are

- a) Canons of context,
- b) Canons of enumeration,
- c) Canons of currency, and
- d) Canons of reticence.

3) Canons for notational plane – It has the responsibility of implementing the findings of of the idea plane. While designing the scheme of classification the idea plane decides the necessary characteristics to be used for the arrangement of the universe of subjects in the filiatory sequence. The notational plane therefore has to provide the mechanism in the form of the notational system for the helpful and systematic arrangement for the existing as well as for future unknown subjects in a scheme for classification. The canons for notational plane are,

- a) Canon of synonym,
- b) Canon of homonym,
- c) Canon of relativity and canon of uniformity,
- d) Canon of hierarchy and canon of non-hierarchy,
- e) Canon of mixed notation and canon of pure notation,
- d) Canon of faceted notatio and canon of non-faceted notation, and
- f) Canon of co-extensiveness and canon of under-extensiveness.

The notational system for a growing universe should satisfy canons for hospitality in array and chain. They are

- a) Canon of extrapolation in array,
- b) Canon of interpolation in array,
- c) Canon of extrapolation in chain,
- d) Canon of interpolation in chain.

Helpful sequence in array

According to the canon of helpful sequence, 'The sequence of the classes in an array of classes, and of the ranked isolates in an array of ranked isolates, should be helpful to the purpose of those for whom it is intended'. An array is essentially a systematically ranked and arranged group of equal entities. There are many ways the members of a group may be arranged. Librarians have to choose their sequence which is helpful to the majority of the users and also logical. Entities in an array may be arranged in a chronological or historical sequence as per the need of time and demand. Even within a small field, there can be various helpful sequence. What may be found to be the most helpful sequence to one category of users may turn out to be less than helpful to another category. Under this circumstances, the practical solution is to take care of the majority point of view. Most users are not able to pinpoint the specific subject of their interest in such cases helpful sequence may help to find out the subject so that a user approaching the sequence from a broader or narrower angles are led by the sequence itself to the specific subject. In order to achieve a helpful sequence in array, we can use the principles of a helpful sequence.

1) Time sequence

- a) Principles of later-in-time
- b) Principles of earlier-in-time

2) Evolutionary sequence

- a) Principles of later-in-evolution
- b) Principles of earlier-in-evolution

3) Spatial sequence

- a) Principles of spatial contiguity

4) Quantitative measure sequence

- a) Principles of increasing quantity
- b) Principles of decreasing quantity

5) Complexity sequence

- a) Principles of increasing complexity, or principle of decreasing simplicity
- b) Principles of decreasing complexity, or principle of increasing simplicity

6) Traditional or Canonical sequence

a) Principles of traditional or canonical sequence

7) Literary-warrant sequence

a) Principles of decreasing literary warrant

b) Principles of increasing literary warrant

8) Alphabetical sequence

a) Principles of alphabetical sequence

Postulates and principles for facet sequence

Postulates and principles for facet sequence are used in the practical classification of subjects. They guide the work of classifying, the postulates are also used in the design of a scheme for classification. In library classification, our problem is to choose what should be kept invariant in the classifications of subjects. While mapping a subjects there can be a different factors to see under which the subject lie, the most used method is to see its immediate neighbourhood relation but sometimes the mapping becomes extremely complicated. Different schemes have provided different solution to this problem. The problem of mapping has been solved by Ranganathan by means of postulational approach. The seminal ideas have been postulated and work is carried out with these. Nothing can be asserted about them being true or false. A postulate is a statement about which we cannot use either 'right' or 'wrong' . We can only speak about the set of postulates as 'helpful' or 'unhelpful'.The formation of postulates is guided more by intuition and logical inference at the unconcious level. It is not easy to verify this physically by means of a direct approach to our sense but instead it is very important to determine beforehand.

The postulational approach in library classification brings the objectivity in the study and practice of this discipline. It also puts the study and practice of library classification on a scientific basis. As a result of such an approach, practical classification has become easier and more interesting.The postulates given by Ranganathan are,

a) Postulates for freely faceted classification

b) Postulates for fundamental categories

c) Postulates of basic facet

d) Postulates of isolate facet

e) Postulates of rounds and levels

f) Postulates of rounds for energy

g) Postulates for facet sequence

Principle for Facet Sequence

The postulates are helpful in dertermining the sequence of isolate ideas in a compound subject where each isolate is the presentation of different fundamental categories but in determining the sequence of two personality isolates or two matter isolates or two energy isolate or two space isolates or two time isolates, postulates

may not be sufficient to define or to help us. Therefore there is a need for guiding principles which could provide a solution to these problems. The principles are,

- a) Wall-picture principles
- b) Whole-organ principles
- c) Cow-calf principles
- d) Commodity raw material transformation principles
- e) Actand-Action-Actor-Tool Principle

Conclusion

Ranganathan's theory is based on Normative principle and with this theory he has elaborately described about the principles, laws, canons which can be used to determine a subject and classify them. He has succeeded in providing a scientific basis and firm footing to the theory of library classification. As a result he was able to systematise the study and practice of classification.