Social Justice Laws of Librarianship: New Directions of Impact in Iran

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Transforming Library and Information Science to Integrate Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy

"To the oppressed, and to those who suffer with them and fight at their side"

"Knowledge emerges only through…the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world"

--Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)

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Social Justice and Social Equity in Library and Information Science

A social justice and social equity perspective in library and information science (LIS) promotes activism and advocacy to support fairness, justice, equity/equality, change agency, and community development via information-related work, with, and on behalf of all people, especially those considered on society's margins.

What Does Social Justice in the Field of Information Look Like?

❖ An impact-driven concept of justice that expects information professionals to better operationalize and implement social justice in ways that are fair, just, inclusive, and equitable (Jones, 2020; Mehra 2021a; Jaeger, Gorham, Taylor, and Kettnich, 2014).

❖ The push is for social justice in LIS to generate community-based social justice impacts that are intentional (deliberate), systematic (rigorous), constructive (i.e., asset-based), action-oriented, and outcome-driven
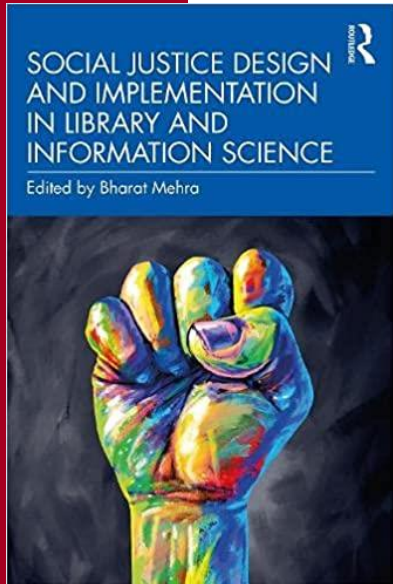Cooke and Sweeney, 2017; Freire, 1970; Mehra Elmborg, and Sweeney, 2019).

What is Social Justice in Library and Information Science?

❖ *Social Justice Design and Implementation in Library and Information Science* presents a range of case studies that have successfully implemented social justice as a designed strategy to generate community-wide changes and social impact.

❖ Social justice in LIS seeks to achieve action-oriented, socially relevant outcomes through information-related work
(Jaeger, Shilton, and Koepfler, 2016; Mehra and Rioux, 2016).

SOCIAL JUSTICE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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CONCEPTUAL + THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN LIS

This presentation draws on the chapter to **trace the actualities and possibilities of representing social justice and social equity concerns in LIS via extending Ranganathan's five laws of librarianship within today's contemporary neoliberal and geopolitical realities.**

OPPORTUNITY TO OPERATIONALIZE AND IMPLEMENT SOCIAL JUSTICE IN LIS

In the next presentation, Dr. Seifi and I invite you to develop book manuscripts of case studies of your existing and future initiatives in LIS to operationalize and implement social justice to meet the needs of underserved communities and users. We will showcase a "roadmap" to guide you in the process.

Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan: Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan (1892-1972)

❖ Father of library science (or librarianship), documentation, and information science in India with his vast knowledge, direction, purpose, creativity, sensitivity, and vision for the growth of the intersecting professions in the country and world.

❖ Ranganathan is most well-known globally for the development of the first faceted classification (i.e., Colon Classification), chain indexing for deriving subject-index entries, and the Five Laws of Library Science (in 1931) to include: 1) The books are to be used; 2) Every reader has his book; 3) Every book has its reader; 4) Save the reader's time; 5) A library is a growing organism.

First Law of Social Justice in Librarianship

FROM "The books are to be used" (Ranganathan's First Law)

TO "Information is for equitable use to make an impact via social justice changes in people's everyday lives"

What To Do?

❖ Apply plurality of measures to determine access, use, and impact at different levels differently for different people (i.e., equity).

❖ Adopt different paradigms, approaches, methods, methodologies, and strategies, including formal, informal; qualitative, quantitative; collection of multiple stakeholders' point of view (Mehra and Sikes, 2021).

How To Do?

Traditional information functions (e.g., acquisition, storage, processing, dissemination, etc.) are applied towards a non-traditional purpose (i.e., to change imbalanced power differentials at intersecting social-cultural-political-economic levels).

Second Law of Social Justice in Librarianship

FROM "Every reader has his [sic] book" (Ranganathan's Second Law)

TO "Every person their information to meet their needs and make the world a better place for themselves and others" (i.e., by the people, of the people, and for the people

What To Do?
Identify the "needs" (wants, expectations, realities) of the person (including the vulnerable) beyond library or information-centricity.

How To Do?
Generate impact via use/user generated content, sustainable engagement, community-engaged collaborations with external constituencies and using culturally relevant and community-appropriate metrics.

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Third Law of Social Justice in Librarianship

FROM "Every book has its reader" (Ranganathan's Third Law)

TO "Every information is developed in response to situated context of the person and their interactions with the librarian"

What To Do?
Develop a positive experience for the person to provide them what they need. Facilitate conscious decision-making around information application and use.

How To Do?
Self-reflection and practicing ethical responsibility (e.g., via asset-framed constructive approaches) and reflective critical practices.

Fourth Law of Social Justice in Librarianship

FROM "Save the reader's time" (Ranganathan's Fourth Law)

TO "Facilitate implementing action-oriented information activities situated and responsive to contextual realities"

What To Do?
Apply use of information tools (e.g., library guides, electronic databases, resources) in informing, enabling, and equitizing.

How To Do?
Adapting and innovating with change to encourage sustainable partnerships for people to flourish.

Fifth Law of Social Justice in Librarianship

FROM "A library is a growing organism" (Ranganathan's. Fifth Law)

TO "Information institution situates its positionality in its privilege and is there to serve" [Time: which refers to the dates or seasons of the subject; Space: which relates to the geographic location of the subject].

What To Do?
Generate specific community-based (information-related) outcomes.

How To Do?
Develops tangible deliverables through participatory design and community-engaged processes.

Conclusion

❖ Extending Ranganathan's five laws of librarianship can bridge the gap of the "how-tos" in developing theory-and-practice (and impact) in LIS that acknowledges and changes imbalanced status quo power dynamics in tangible and meaningful ways (Bates, 2005; Mehra, 2021).

❖ It is urgent for emerging LIS professionals to extend limited Anglo/Euro-centric notions of humanism surrounding librarianship towards integrating "action-oriented" initiatives.

❖ We need to take ownership of the social justice laws in librarianship and extend them further in their conceptualization and application for generating greater impact and positive social change and social responsibility, moving toward sustainable growth in the modern world

Questions?

Thank you!

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