



Professor Girja Kumar (1925-2022): An Illustrious Social Science Information Scientist

Prof. Girja Kumar, former University Librarian of Jawaharlal Nehru University, breathed his last on 18th November 2022 at his residence in New Delhi. Born on 27th April 1925 at Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab province, India (now in Pakistan), he along with his family migrated to India after the partition. He was the first batch student of the Department of Library and Information Science, in the University of Delhi during 1947-48, and completed the Diploma in Library Science course in 1948. Prof. S.R. Ranganathan was his teacher, as well as a professional mentor. He joined the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi as its Librarian and was associated with Sapru House Library (as the ICWA Library is known) for more than two decades. The Indian School of International Studies was housed at the ICWA, which later became of a School of the newly established Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in 1969. Girja Kumar got transferred from ICWA to JNU to become the first University Librarian of JNU.

Girja Kumar started several documentation and bibliographic services from ICWA Library, and compiled several compendiums co-published with ICWA. Some of the well-known multi-volume compendiums edited and compiled by him were (i) Documentation on Asia (vol. 1, 1960; vol. 2, 1961), and (ii) Documents on Indian Affairs (1960). He also regularly contributed a featured section "Indian Books of the Quarter", in the *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs*, published by ICWA. In all, Girja Kumar contributed 31 pieces of scholarly items in the *India Quarterly* between 1954 and 1971. After his superannuation from JNU in 1985, he became a prolific social science researcher, and published many monographs including, *Censorship in India: Studies in Fundamentalism, Obscenity and Law* (1990), *Ranganathan, Dewey and C.V. Raman: A Study in the Arrogance of Intellectual Power* (1991), *The Book on Trial: Fundamentalism and Censorship in India* (1997). *Brahmacharya, Gandhi and His Women Associates* (2010), *Mahatma Gandhi's Letters on Brahmacharya, Sexuality and Love* (2011) and *The*

Indus People: Saraiki Saga and Sufi-Sant Renaissance (2013). These books are the testimony of his extensive research, as he carried out visiting several libraries, archives, repositories, and personal collections.

Among the LIS students, educators, and practitioners, Girja Kumar is an established name for his several practice and theory-oriented books on different aspects of library and information services. Some of the popular LIS books authored by him are, for example, *S.R. Ranganathan: An Intellectual Biography* (1992), *Theory of Cataloguing* (1975, with Krishan Kumar), *Bibliography* (1976, with Krishan Kumar), *Philosophy of User Education* (1983, with Krishan Kumar), *Crisis Management of Libraries in India* (1980), *Library Development in India* (1986), *Politics, International Relations and Law: Scope, Methodology and Classification* (1965), besides others. With S.R. Ranganathan, Girja Kumar co-edited a book titled "Social Science Research and Libraries: Papers and Summary Proceedings of the Library Seminar on Research in the Social Sciences" (1960), which outlined social science information services in India. He was also instrumental in establishment of the National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC) in 1969, under the aegis of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). His intellectual inputs helped NASSDOC design several documentation services for the social science researchers in India. He was familiar with the major European and Russian libraries, and the U.S. Library of Congress. He visited these renowned libraries on several occasions.

Girja Kumar was deeply associated with the professional development of LIS professionals in the country. He became the President of Indian Library Association in 1985. Consequently, he became the Chairman of the Indian Organizing Committee for hosting the 58th World Library and Information Congress and General Conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), which was held in New Delhi in August-

September 1992 to coincide with the birth centenary of S.R. Ranganathan (SRR). During the event, a commemorative stamp was released by the Minister Arjun Singh at the inaugural session to mark the birth centenary of SRR celebrated by IFLA-1992 delegates. Girja Kumar considered IFLA-1992 was a historic moment in the annals of Indian librarianship.

Girja Kumar actively mentored many of the LIS leadership throughout his career, including the ones who reached the pinnacles of library

institutions and associations in India. LIS professionals, researchers and educators in India deeply mourn his death, and pledge to continue his academic legacy matching his professional and personal commitments.

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