

National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran
A Dynamic library publisher model

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Abstract

With the invention of script, human beings tried to codify and register their knowledge and experiences. The need for transfer and dissemination of this knowledge caused the publishing industry. Undoubtedly, the publishing industry is the most important culture-related industry in any country, because its growth or recession affect all creative and research activities. Due to the openness of cultural space and accessibility to new technologies, the publishing industry in IRAN has undergone extensive changes and also has facilitated the development of information resources production.

National libraries in any country are doing their roles and tasks as the mother library. Tasks and activities of national libraries involve a wide range, from acquisition, organizing, dissemination, education and research to publication of specialized and professional resources and standard texts. This paper aims to explore the role of National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the publishing field and to study the objectives and dimensions of its activities in order to introduce this organization as a dynamic model of a publisher library.

Keywords: National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, library publisher

1. Introduction

With the invention of script, human being tried to codify and register their knowledge and experiences. The need for transfer and dissemination of this knowledge caused the publishing industry. Undoubtedly, the publishing industry is the most important culture-related industry in any country, because its growth and recession affect all creative and research activities. No creation or research is meaningful without audience and if the publishing industry of a country fails to establish a link between creators of cultural and research works and the audience, exchange between the productive minds of society will be seriously damaged. By contrast, a publishing industry that is active and is able to promote its cultural products to the society or manages to attract new and newer readers and audiences can provoke new requirements and needs directly affecting the creation and production of cultural works (Enayat tabar, Montazer, 2007, p.260).

In the ancient period and then during the period of Islamic civilization's boom, Iran has a great cultural background. However, despite the long history of books and libraries in this country, the modern approach of book production and publishing just gradually started to come to existence after the Constitution Movement and the emergence of new ideas and thoughts (Mowlavi, 1989, P.34).

Since printing technology started to be at the service of publishing activities and copying a work in any number became possible, a great barrier to the transmission of human thought and feeling has been removed and humans managed to overcome three elements of place, time, and language, which were previously considered as impassable barriers. In fact, it can be stated that the phenomenon of globalization, that is now one of current discussion in intellectual circles, has started from the Reissuance and after the advent of printing and publishing (Enayat tabar & Montazer, 2007, p.260).

Due to the openness of cultural space and accessibility of new technologies, the publishing industry in IRAN has undergone extensive changes and also has facilitated the development of information resources production.

Undoubtedly, libraries have been also affected by these developments and have been faced with a variety of information resources. In this regard, librarians have played a decisive role in the acquisition, organizing, and dissemination of information resources. The high diversity of different fields of human sciences has caused resources to be diverse and broad and has led to the establishment of different types of libraries over history. The scientific and intellectual developments in the field of library and information science and new education and trainings have caused the development of scientific resources in this field to grow increasingly. Doubtless, libraries and librarians have played a prominent role in the development and evolution of this scientific field. As a result, libraries started writing and compiling the specialized literatures and texts of library and information science. On the other hand, the position of libraries in human societies as cultural and educational institutions has always encouraged them to produce and publish different types of texts and books. This has created a new role for libraries, which is known as "libraries as publishers". National libraries in any country are doing their roles and tasks as the mother library. Tasks and activities of national libraries involve a wide range, from acquisition, organizing, dissemination, education and research to publication of specialized and professional resources and standards texts. This paper aims to explore the role of National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of

Iran in the publishing field and to study the objectives and dimensions of its activities in order to introduce this organization as a dynamic model of a publisher library.

“Library publishing” is a growing subfield of publishing. It has been defined (broadly) as “the set of activities led by college and university libraries to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and/or educational works.” (Library Publishing Coalition website, 2013) As Karla Hahn noted in 2008, “library-based publishing programs are pragmatic responses to evident needs, not services in search of clients.” Even so, as publishers, libraries engage in the same fundamental production activities as the broader field does, from acquisition to dissemination (including both digital and printed works)

According to the definition of library publishers and the position of libraries in this field, the role of National library cannot be ignored in this area.

As part of the National Library of Australia, NLA Publishing has been producing books since 1995. Collaboration with Australia's leading writers, designers and illustrators, NLA publishing produces over 20 publications a year (About NLA Publishing, 2015)

The Library of Congress Publishing Office (LCPO) is the center of the Library's General Publishing Program, which has the broad mission of sharing the Library's collections and activities—as well as the knowledge of its specialists—with scholars, researchers, the legal community, and the general public. To fulfill this mandate, LCPO produces a wide variety of materials, releasing more than 20 new publications each year. LCPO publications include:

- Institutional publications and series, including resource guides to LC holdings and collections, as well as works on the Library's history, art and architecture;
- Scholarly works and “trade” books (the latter being books published for a general audience and distributed through booksellers), including books to accompany LC exhibitions;
- Consumer products such as calendars, postcard books, notecards, and posters based on items from the Library's collections.

LCPO's writers, editors, and researchers work in collaboration with curators, reference librarians, subject specialists, and others throughout the Library in producing accurate, authoritative works. For some projects, the staff also consults with outside specialists. (The Library of Congress General Publishing Program, 2015)

2. The necessity of publishing activities of the National Library and Archives of I.R. of IRAN (NLAI)

National Libraries and Archives in any country are the leading authority in the field of library and information science and archives. By performing the missions and duties assigned by governments, these libraries play a very important role in the governance, policy-making, and determining the general policies of library and archive information services for all libraries of a country. The NLAI has officially started its activities since 1932. According to the statutes of this organization, the six main areas of activity of this organization include collection and acquisition, organizing, dissemination, education, research, and publication in the field of

library and information science and archives. Bearing in mind that publishing activities has been included in the major duties of this organization, the reasons for defining such a duty for the NLAI will be discussed and analyzed here:

a) In three articles (1, 2, and 3) of the statutes of the NLAI, this organization is responsible for dissemination of works (printed, manuscript, and non-printed) in Iran or Iranians abroad; works of Islamic and Iran studies, especially the Islamic Revolution. Dissemination of these works can be achieved through publishing of digital or printed bibliographies of them. The NLAI informs the public about the release of the latest scientific and cultural achievements by printing and publishing national bibliography and also regional and topic-based bibliographies.

b) Research and scientific planning of Library and Information Science and participation in international research and scientific activities have been also mentioned as the duties of this organization in two articles of the statute. Conducting and managing the scientific research and studies would be more effective with the release of the results and findings. Therefore, dissemination of these findings by the NLAI can dramatically increase the effectiveness and accessibility of these achievements.

c) Development of specialized and applied standards, guidelines, and manuals in the field of library, information, and archive is another major duty of the NLAI. Localization of international standards, subject headings, and Congress or Dewey classifications and development of specialized manuals of library processes are of the most important activities of specialized offices and professional groups in the organization. Dissemination of these resources leads to harmony and coordination in providing library service in all libraries of the country.

d) The NLAI, as a scientific and research institute, enjoys a strong body of experts and professors of library, archives, and information technology, and other related fields. These professionals carry out research activities in order to improve the scientific power of the organization and their own profession. The NLAI can play a decisive role in achieving this goal by dissemination of the findings of research and studies.

e) The role of the NLAI in the field of culture necessitates printing and publishing of fine cultural, historical and national works. Fortunately, this organization has done remarkable activities.

f) Publication of specialized journals and magazines on library, archives, and Iran and Islam studies is another activity of this organization which is aimed at providing information and dissemination of the scientific productions.

g) By gathering, selection, translation, and publication of selected papers of international conferences, particularly the IFLA, the NLAI tries to reflect these results and findings of this event to the society.

h) One of the major departments of the NLAI of Iran is the Office of Research and Education which manages the Press office as one of its subsidiaries. According to the document of objectives and tasks of the organization, the Office of Research and

Education is responsible for favorable printing and publishing of written and developed works as a library publishing model and printing and publishing of a variety of tools necessary for library and information sciences and the documents that can well justify the necessity of publishing activities of the National Library and Archives organization.

i) As an organization affiliated to the government, the NLAI uses its budget and facilities for dissemination of national and cultural values in order to develop and promote the culture of society.

j) The organization can earn income from the publishing activities and spend it on accomplishing its essential missions and objectives.

The results of reviewing and analyzing the reasons for publishing activities of the NLAI well indicate the capabilities and potentials of this organization for playing the role of a publisher library and as it has been explained in the duties of this organization, this governmental institute tries to be introduced as a model of publisher library through appropriate publishing of written works.

3. Objectives and duties of the Press Office of the organization:

3-1. Printing and publishing works in the field of Iran and Islam studies, information and knowledge, and archives.

3-2. Publishing fine works in humanities.

3-3. Publishing cultural works that can make considerable changes in the culture of a society, especially in the field of books and reading.

3-4. Developing and publishing encyclopedias, specialized thesaurus, and references.

3-5. Printing and publishing of the works of eminent specialists and pioneers in different fields of study.

3-6. Appropriate distribution of publications.

3-7. Improving the quality of printing and publishing of works.

All works referred to the NLAI for publication should be investigated and reviewed in the Press Council and after judgment and final approval, they can be printed and published with the name and logo of the NLAI. Press Council members include the Vice Presidents and the Director of Research and Education Office, headed by the President of NLAI.

This council is responsible for several tasks such as selection of appropriate works for publishing, policymaking and planning for printing of books, investigation of the works offered to the Press Office or other departments for printing and publishing, investigating and determining the required scientific topics and subjects for the organization through regular contact with other institutions and domestic or foreign scientific publishers, ordering the codification and translation of the required scientific works for the organization or other

relevant fields, policymaking on book donation, organizing the publication of scientific and research achievements, planning for national and international cooperation in printing and publishing of works, development and approval of strategic plans for economic viability, policymaking for and monitoring the outsourcing of part of the activities of Press Office, development of procedures including the appointment of referees and the process of reviewing the works for publishing, policymaking for improving the qualitative and quantitative improvement of works, determining the guidelines for the process of printing the works, determining the remuneration of referees, determining the discount rate for selling the published works, and making decision about unsold works.

Through partnership with the works' owners or domestic and foreign institutions and publishers and according to a contract approved by the Press Council, the Press Office publishes some works and should mention the information on the NLAI and also the partners on the cover of books.

This office, with the permission of Press Council, can donate some copies of its publications to political or scientific figures, organizations, and authorities and prestigious libraries and centers of scientific and cultural research within or outside the country in order to introduce and promote the publishing activities of the organization and develop the relations and cultural and scientific interactions and cooperation. In addition, as a way of promoting its books, the press Office can donate a copy of its works to the IRIB, newspapers, magazines, and other media.

4. The variety and range of publications of the NLAI

Publications of the National Library and Archives of Iran are presented in the forms of books, magazines, and CDs. Printed books have a wide variety of subjects such as library and information sciences, social sciences, applied sciences, history, geography, literature, natural sciences, art, religion, philosophy, psychology, etc. Over 741 books and magazines have been published by this organization during the past 30 years. The publications are available to researchers and those interested in either printed and digital publications. Currently, the organization publishes three scientific-research journals (*Journal of National Studies on Librarianship and Information Organization* and *Journal of Treasures of Documents* and *The Literature of Iran and Islam*). In addition, The National Bibliography of IRAN CD and National Index of IRAN CD are annually developed and published. Moreover, the digital version of some number of titles published are available to the audience via the website of the organization.

5. The release of organization's publications

Publications of the National Library and Archives of Iran are presented to the audience in different ways:

5-1. Continuous supply:

- a) Selling the publications in the Press Store of the organization: This store directly supplies the printed and digital publication of the organization to buyers.

b) Internet sales: The virtual store of the National Library and Archives of Iran (<http://bookshop.nlai.ir>) provides the possibility for audience and buyers to easily search and find their desired books and order them at any place and time.

5-2. Supply of publications at different time's periods:

a) Nationwide and worldwide: The Press Office of the organization actively participate in Tehran International Book Fair every year and presents and supplies the latest publications of the National Library and Archives of Iran to the visitors and audience.

b) Occasional and regional fairs: The Press Office annually participate in Press Exhibition, provincial exhibitions, and occasional exhibitions such as the Holy Quran Exhibition.

6. Publishing programs of the National library and Archives of Iran:

Any publishing firm requires planning and updating of the annual programs in order to improve the quality and quantity of its activities. The Press Office of the National library and Archives of Iran develops and pursues a variety of programs and strategies in order to achieve the objectives of the organization. Some of the most important programs and strategies of this office are as follows:

6-1. Thematic expansion and development of the most updated scientific and technical works on library and information sciences and Iran and Islamic studies archive.

6-2. Collaboration with other relevant organizations and institutions in developing, printing, and publishing joint works based on signing joint agreements.

6-3. Printing and publishing the exquisite manuscripts of the fine works of literature and history of Iran and Islam.

6-4. Development of s business plan for the Press Office of the organization in order to increase the profitability of publishing activities.

Business skills cover a wide range of competencies related to planning, project management, product development, marketing, leadership, copyright knowledge, and other aspects of coordinating a successful and sustainable publishing program.

Particularly in libraries, where an operating budget covers many of the associated costs, publishers are “shielded from resource allocation issues” for the time being. However, libraries have been encouraged to begin developing the necessary knowledge to plan for other funding scenarios in the future. (Skinner , Lippincott , Speer & Walters, 2014)

7. Conclusion:

The nature of libraries as publisher is a complement to the informational role of these cultural and service institutes. Undoubtedly, publishing activities of libraries and information centers that are released based on identifying the informational demands of the audience and ordering the writing of books to authors enrich the collections of libraries and facilitate the process of printing, publishing, and providing of books and references for libraries. In addition, the quantity and quality of technical publications in the field of library and information science can help libraries and information centers to achieve a sustainable development and play their role more effectively. Publishing activities of the NLAI of Iran both improve the scientific and cultural development of a society and enrich the collection of references and sources of this organization. On the other hand, by releasing the resources required for specialized communities based on governmental supports, this organization will have a significant impact on reducing the cost of access to these resources. Finally, it should be stated that the NLAI of Iran has managed to introduce itself as a dynamic model of a publisher library by conducting publishing activities.

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