



Nature Library: the Establishment and Analysis of the First Nature Library in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

One of the basic provisions of any kind of scientific survey and study is to have a specialization library as well as adopting the principle of obtaining a complete documentation, which, today, attaches more and more importance to the special libraries. In accordance with this increasing importance, it has been observed that new generation special libraries have been established with the aim of meeting the knowledge requirements of researchers studying in specific fields. Within the scope of this study, the foundation studies of Nature Library, the establishment of which started in 2018 and which began to render service in March 2020, have been discussed in order to provide the knowledge and documentation for subjects including particularly birds, endangered species, Key Biodiversity Areas /KBA, Important Bird Areas / IBA and Indigenous Production Landscapes /IPL as well as protection of the biodiversity, the culture of nature, the law of nature, the philosophy of nature, nature literacy and natural arts both in Anatolia and in different parts of the world. Besides, the actions to be improved and recommendations have been specified in detail with the intention of carrying out services better as a result of the evaluations.

Keywords: Special libraries, Library services, Role of special libraries, Nature library, Nature.

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I. Introduction

One of the basic principles of any scientific research and study is to have a well-organized specialized library and a complete documentation (Karayalçın, 1952, p. 2). Such libraries, which are called "special library" or "specialized library" in Turkish, "bibliothèque specialisee" in French, "spezialbibliothek" or "fachbibliothek" in German, "special library" in English (Çakın, 1991, p. 49) have been included to the scope of the study as special libraries.

It is impossible to give a common definition about special libraries because researchers who are interested in special libraries generally give their own definition about it. Considering the main reasons of this situation, it can be said that the expectations have changed depending on the characteristics of the main structure of the library since they are established by different organizations. Even if the libraries that serve the private sector and public institutions in terms of commercial, economic, cultural, professional, industrial, technological and scientific purposes are considered as special libraries, libraries

established by central and local governments are considered as special libraries (Çakın, 1991, p. 49). However, not only the above-mentioned genres, but also art, music and nature libraries maintain to serve within the scope of special libraries together with the changing paradigm.

Together with the variations in the definitions of special libraries, it is possible to list some definitions about the libraries in the literature as follows. While the definition of traditional library in the Oxford English Dictionary (2020) is "it is a place where some collections of books, newspapers, films and recorded music collections are included for people who want to read, study or borrow", The American Library Association (ALA) Library and Information Science Dictionary is defined as it is a place that is established, supported and managed by a commercial firm, private company, association, government agency, or other special interest group to meet the needs of knowledge (Levine-Clark and Carter, 2013).

Except for the classical definition, the author Michael H. Harris (1995) defines the special library as a content-oriented and private unit that have special users in terms

of information needs, but he has detailed that one of the main differences between traditional libraries and special libraries is to adapt the new technologies and services easier than classical libraries.

It is noteworthy that some prominent scientists and writers have made some definitions about special libraries since the foundation of the Special Libraries Association in 1906. John Cotton Dana who is known as the founder of the Special Libraries Association, has said that special libraries are special collections that include different materials and collections and he has added that no definition would be satisfactory anymore. It is clear to see that there are attempts to make the definition more specific than before. While some suggestions have been made to increase the knowledge and skills of special librarians and libraries in this process, an effective service is expressed as an important key for special libraries by Herman H. Henke in the 1950s (Choudhury, 2002).

Nowadays, it is possible to define special libraries from different standpoints. When the special libraries are examined in terms of the resources they have; it is possible to say that they are libraries that complement, guide and support each other on the related issues. Since they specialize in a certain area, their collections are expanded to meet the needs of information of the researcher group that they serve in the field they specialize in (Atilgan, 2010, p. 18-19). For instance, a special library includes music collections like musical notes, academic and current publications related to music, while the nature library includes nature-oriented materials.

Considering the special libraries on the basis of user groups, they are considered as libraries that meet the needs of researchers for a specific field, and they provide services to the users who cannot find materials or access these materials in other libraries (Atilgan, 2010, p. 19).

II. Paradigm Change in Special Libraries

Special libraries are faced with at least three major paradigm that are occurred as a result of global competition, new computing and communication technologies, and the desired need to measure the productivity of information and service workers. It is possible to list these paradigms as follows (Singh, 2006, p. 521; Bender, 1988, p.199):

- The first change is the transition from paper to electronic media as the most desired form of information storage and access. Together with this transition; the using of text, graphic and multimedia resources continues increasingly.
- The second change is about shrinking financial resources and increasing demand for accountability, focusing on the users, performance measurement, benchmarking and continuous improvement.
- The third change is about the new work areas such as teamwork, job sharing, telework, outsourcing, destaffing and big data which their existence increases day by day.

Taking into consideration these paradigm changes, it is possible to state the purposes and functions of special libraries as follows (Special library Association, 1964, p.

672-680; Choudhury, p. 173; Çakın, 1991, p. 49-50; Ashikuzzaman, 2013):

- Special libraries are thought as main information centers of both the institution they serve and researchers who are interested in the related field.
- Special libraries should provide and submit materials which are suitable for the characteristics of the institutions and arrange them within the framework of universal librarianship principles.
- The classification and cataloging procedures should be carried out within the framework of universal principles so as to access the printed materials in the library easily.
- It must provide both printed and electronic magazine subscriptions related to the field that it serves.
- It should try to provide indexing and summarizing services to save users' time.
- It should provide reference service to users by phone, e-mail or online.
- It should provide awareness to the users about past and present services.
- It should provide Selective Dissemination of Information services to users in accordance with their interests and needs.
- It should make an effort to issue a weekly / bi-weekly / monthly library bulletin to keep up to date the latest information for the users.
- It should provide accurate information regarding the relevant field on time.
- It should try to keep all information about the field that it serves.
- It should give new ideas and inspiration for new projects to the users.
- It should communicate and cooperate with the relevant special libraries in other countries so as to access the literature on the latest developments around the world.
- It should allow users to borrow something between libraries.
- Translation services should be provided to present the requested information to the users in the appropriate language.
- It should also provide an opportunity for internet access to access the library collection and catalog from the users' desktop.

III. The Role of Special Libraries and Their Requirements

The role of a special library can vary depending on the structure of the main organization in where the library is located. However, such libraries should actively participate in developing special collections to provide different types of personalized services, such as current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, indexing and summarizing, document distribution, online search services, except for other services. However, the library professionals need to improve their hybrid skills to perform their work on the basis of changing environment, and the increasing

expectations (Singh, 2006, p.522). These skills can be listed as follows:

- Evaluating the users' information needs.
- Determining the need-based information resources.
- Working as a content manager in order to analyze, evaluate and organize the information content of various resource categories.
- Adapting new information products and services to "custom style " by combining and bringing the information together.
- Developing the skills to obtain, distribute and maintain the useful information via intranet.
- Training the users about using of information resources, products and services, including the Internet and Intranet.
- Negotiating agreements by using information providers with adequate information on licensing and other legal regulations for access to digital resources and their implementation.

All these processes require that library professionals should have skills / competencies in order to adapt to this new environment. It is required to arrange how the information is used, how the employees of the organization manage their business, and how value-added information is produced. The librarian is responsible for contributing to the success of the main institution together with task-oriented information distribution. That's why; he/she must know and perceive both mission and vision of the organization, so the library can be an integral part of the main institution.

IV. Special Library Services

Special libraries need to make some different practices in terms of material, user and service in order to separate themselves from other libraries on the basis of their nature. These practices (Ashikuzzaman, 2018) are detailed as follows.

- **Material:** The printed, electronic, audio-visual materials are one of the most important resources of these libraries. The distinctive feature of a special library is to have small, compact, comprehensive and current collection. It should have a smaller collection in terms of extension, but have larger collection in terms of intention so they can be more selective than others.
- **User:** A special library has specialized users who have common interests. It means that all interests and needs turn around achieving the goals and objectives which are set under the written policy statements by the organization.
- **Service:** The special library provides two types of information services. The first one includes responding to the information request, reference and research services. The second is the information service which is provided on the basis of the needs. It includes the services conducted to inform users of the library for new and current information as existing awareness services.

Special libraries serve their users in terms of various services such as activities and services performed by a

special library in the form of information storage and access. Considering the documentation activities; these libraries include summary services, indexing services, bibliography service, examination preparation, latest publications, translation, current awareness services, selective publication services; on the other hand, they include literature analysis, preparation of reading lists, and licensing the process of the status of the document, the provision of documents, and the access of electronic resources on the basis of literature analysis activities. The tendency to develop libraries and documentation centers has now increased because the information sources in any country are now considered as important as other sources. The provision, organization and dissemination of these information sources provide a fundamental basis for the socio-economic development of a nation as a whole (Choudhury, 2002, p. 175). Special libraries play a key role in the information system, so they should provide the following services to their readers (Choudhury, 2002, p.175-780; Ashikuzzaman, 2018; Current Awareness Service, 2013; Ferguson and Hebels, 2003; White, 1973; Ahrensfield, Christianson and King, 1986).

Summary service: The summary is a basic and accurate representation of a document. Summaries are thought as a vital guide in document selection and information gathering. Moreover, they are important to avoid the repetition and delay of ongoing work.

Indexing service: The index is a systematic list of documents which are prepared by an author. It provides systematic arrangement for the information so as to access them easily and fast. It is a regular guide to the intellectual context and physical status of information records. It is just a pointer and therefore it generally does not provide the requested information itself. However, it uses a set of certain identifiers, subtopics and their modification or derived words which separate the information. The user is directed to the ideas and topics that are expressed by the authors in the information records via indexing service. Except for the printed indexes, indexes that serve online not only provide guidance, but also have become an important tool within the scope of license agreements in order to reach full-text publication.

Bibliography Service: Bibliographies are the most important information source for both special and research libraries because they provide information about the topic, author and period. They contain any published material, regardless of its availability in a certain library. Therefore, the bibliography that is arranged by special libraries will be beneficial for academics and any other users who are interested in certain information.

Current Awareness Services: The current awareness service is defined as the dissemination of resources that will keep up to date the information on related issues and interests of the users. It is a system for getting information about the latest developments and special interest of the individual. Special libraries develop many different activities to give new and current developments to their users. Organizing current publications is one of the most common functions of the special library. The library regularly researches which publications should be seen by

the users and then the issue is conveyed to the researcher when the publications are reached to the library. Purchasing journals are another common service. The journal can be a simple list of new material and it can contain annotations or summaries. The subject-based abstract journal, which brings the different information together from various sources such as books, articles, brochures, reports, news and abstracts, are some of the Current Awareness Services used by the special library.

Selective Publication Services: The selective dissemination of information is considered as an important value-added service because it is a tool that enables librarians to give some information about the latest literature on specific areas to the users by helping them stay on top of the information explosion. In fact, it is a service that librarians can keep up-to-date themselves. Selective dissemination service has been greatly facilitated by computerization. It is based on user profiles consisting of data such as topics, related keywords, and some sample citations for literature, and search strategies of users are recorded in order to receive updates. When new publications are entered into the system, they are automatically transmitted to the relevant people via registered e-mail. These are conducted together with the lists created in accordance with the interests of the users within the framework of classical librarianship. Brief information about the new publications is arranged and delivered to the relevant user.

Translation Service: Services such as summary, indexing and selective publication have drawn the attention of many scientists who have written many publications in different languages. The production of information in both electronic and physical media continues to increase day by day. It is estimated that the volume of this information reduplicates every two years. It is required to access fully so as to provide comprehensive information on any subject. In this context, translation services have an importance. Therefore, many special libraries find this service inevitable to help their expert readers in order to help them accessing to necessary information (regardless of language).

Resource Sharing: Our libraries aim to obtain all the resources that are necessary to meet the needs of their users. Despite rising costs, the decreasing of library budgets has caused the librarians to seek new solutions. Therefore, resource sharing has become inevitable necessity and the only realistic way to provide a complete library and information services. For this reason, it is necessary to give importance to the special libraries in terms of logical and regional.

Qualified personnel are needed to undertake the above-mentioned services performed by a special library. The personnel must be qualified and efficient to manage the library and must have the basic knowledge on related issues. S/he must have knowledge about the nature of the work and be competent in providing an effective reference service. The personnel must be fully equipped with sufficient materials to perform the different types of documentation services. The effectiveness and efficiency

of the documentation service base on the knowledge of documentation specialist about reader's interest.

Even if the functions of Special Libraries are similar to other libraries, their importance increases day by day because of the mass and the related works. On the basis of this, Nature Library, which is unique in our country, is essential so as to create the awareness for increasing environmental consciousness. In this part of the study, some evaluations about the Nature Library, which is the first and only in our country, have been discussed.

V. The Studies on the Establishment of Nature Library

Doga Association was established in 2002 as an understanding based on the integrity and diversity of natural life by perceiving the principle of producing constructive and appropriate solutions for the issues on nature. The association maintains its activities in order to understand and protect the unique diversity of life since the day it was established (Hikayemiz, 2020).

Doga Association, which conducts some studies such as nature culture, natural law, natural philosophy, nature literacy, natural arts, and protection of biological diversity that is included birds, endangered species, Key Biodiversity Areas, Important Bird Areas, and Indigenous Production Landscapes in both Anatolia and different areas of the World, has created an archive by determining some information sources. The private collections of Tansu Gürpınar, Güven Eken and Özcan Yüksek have been also included in the archive over time.

On the basis of the increasing collections and demands from stakeholders, it was decided to establish a library within Doga School research building of Doga Association in Seferihisar in 2018, in order to organize information sources such as books, magazines, reports, articles, brochures, gray publications, posters, maps, photographs, videos, documentaries that are emerged as a result of the activities of Doga Association and material from private donations and to carry out studies on nature protection and nature culture and to meet the information needs of all segments in their works. The main aim of this library is to meet the information needs of researchers working on nature protection and nature culture, and the studies have been arranged in this direction.

Although the idea which has been created by considering the needs of in-house employees and limited some researchers has strong influence, it has been evaluated that the current collection has had a rare but diversity content during the classification of the collection. Together with this evaluation, the idea that establishing a thematic library in accordance with international standards shall be more effective method in creating awareness towards nature has come to the fore.

As a first step, it has been decided to employ a librarian who is leading expert so as to establish a thematic library, and then such a librarian has been appointed to manage the process. Following the employment of the librarian, it has been decided to establish the Koha automation program because it is open source and has a technical infrastructure suitable for development after evaluating different automation programs.

After the establishment of the automation program, intensive classification and cataloging studies have been conducted. In this process, 5,250 books and periodical copyright pages have been transferred to the system. The printed forms of publications, reports etc. produced by the institution during its studies have been transferred to the automation system. Moreover, the open access to the resources that their copyright belongs to the institution in the electronic base has been provided via links through library automation.

Necessary correspondence has been done with ULAKBIM in order to access the catalog records by all researchers and TO-KAT National Collective Catalog integration of Nature Library has been ensured. In accordance with the copyright law, the access to the resources such as photos and videos has been closed even if they have been uploaded to the virtual server.

Nature Library is located in the research building of the Nature School, in Orhanlı, Seferihisar. Researchers who want to benefit from the Nature Library do not have to be a member of the library. The Nature Library is open to all researchers who have some studies on preserving biological diversity, defending the nature rights and keeping the nature culture alive. While researchers cannot borrow printed sources (books, magazines, reports, etc.), they can make photocopies or use information sources digitally. The users in Nature Library are asked to use all information and information resources under the intellectual property rights and to respect the rights of the owners.

Doga Association, conduct its activities with imece culture together with its employees, members and volunteers (İmece, 2021). The establishment studies of Nature Library have been carried out with limited possibilities until today. Nowadays, both collection development studies and transferring the existing digital collection to the system continue in the line with available possibilities.

VI. Result and Recommendations

Nature Library fills an essential gap and is the first thematic subject library specialized on nature conservation in our country because it aims to arrange the information resources within the scope of nature conservation studies in the world and in Turkey. Its unique collections attract the attention of researchers. The access and meeting the needs for resource have been provided by classification and cataloging of resources and their transfer to the system. Considering the above-mentioned principles, it will be useful for the following points in order to provide better services of Nature Library.

- The process of developing the Nature Library collection requires a special effort in terms of the nature of the resources. That's why, the employment of librarians should be ensured in order to maintain library collection development and librarianship activities regularly.
- The continuous communication should be created between nature protectors, researchers and other users so as to develop the collection, and the

required permission should be obtained for the materials donated to the library, especially for those who are sensitive to copyright.

- Training programs should be created at regular intervals to increase the awareness of children and young people for the protection of nature, and some studies should be conducted to develop the collection on the basis of this purpose.
- Considering the core values of Doga Association, both material and moral support should be ensured for the development of the Nature Library.

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