

Role of UGC in Human Resource Development Library Professionals

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Abstract

Defines the term human 'resource/manpower' from the managerial and general point of view. Highlights the role of human resource in achieving the goals of the library by effectively and efficiently utilizing the other physical resources. Discusses the importance and need of human resource development in the emerging context of ICT and LPG, especially in the LICs of higher education institutions. Also highlights the various aspects of training and development of LIS professionals to suit the today's changing requirements of the environment. Finally discusses the role of UGC and INFLIBNET in training and development of library staff. Further discusses the various bodies and committees constituted by the UGC to promote the quality of services of the LICs and their implication upon the human resource development in the LICs.

Introduction

Documents alone do not make a library. Similarly excellent collection of documents also is not enough to ensure the quality of service of library. The success of a library depends in large measure upon the library and information science professionals who are responsible for its use and fulfilling the broad objectives of the resource centre of the higher education institution.

Human resource/manpower is one of the most important and crucial inputs in the economic development of any nation. It is the sum total of knowledge, abilities and skills that the human resource possesses and the quality of work they are capable of carrying out by applying these skills. The term human resource in its real sense came to be used after the first industrial revolution, which brought about a revolution not only in the technology but also in personnel management and human relations. The nomenclature signified man being a source of physical power.

Human Resource and Development

The term human resource is defined by Megginson as the total knowledge, skills, creative

abilities, talents and aptitudes of an organization work force as well as the value, attitudes and beliefs of the individuals involved¹. According to Gingberg, human resource refers usually to human beings who work for wages and who earn income from the work they do². Also included are those out of work and seeking employment. The term is best interpreted to mean an aggregate of skilled categories, non-homogenous and therefore non-substitutable, broadly speaking specific and technical manpower categories constituting as it were the case of human capital. Manpower is a comprehensive term including all types of human being entering into the production process. In other words, the employees, officers or workers who fill various positions in an organization are collectively termed/referred to as personnel³.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English defines development as something that is growing into larger, fuller or more mature and organized one. According to Atkinson⁴, development means the progressive and continuous change growth, maturation etc.

Closely linked to development is training. The term training is concerned with imparting specific skills for particular purposes. Flippo has defined training as the act of increasing the knowledge and skills of an employee for doing a particular job⁵.

On the other hand, the term development refers broadly to the nature and direction of

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change induced in employees through the process of training and education. The term education is used in a broader sense involving the development of an individual socially, intellectually and physically⁶.

Training is mainly meant for the lower cadre with less intensive, but development is mainly meant for the managerial cadre with high intensive, though there are no such watertight compartmental differences between the two. The development training continuum can be represented as shown in figure 1.

Training-development continuum has manual training at one end and philosophy at the other end. The extreme left end denotes the manual training, which is given to operatives for performing specific jobs. Much of this training is job-oriented rather than being career-oriented.

As we go up in the hierarchy of the organization we find more emphasis on other points of the continuum. Managerial personnel have greater needs for conceptual and human relations skills as compared to job related skills. They require skills and competence for future managerial jobs besides their present jobs⁷.

Importance of human resource in libraries

The human resource , one of the primary subjects of library functional system on the line of Fifth Law of Library Science, that is, “A library is growing organism”. According to the fifth law, the small library of today will soon grow in documents, user and staff. Initially, it envisages growth in respect of staff in its numerical strength and second concurrently implies the advancement of professional change and development. This two dimensional change is effected through the factorial of functional

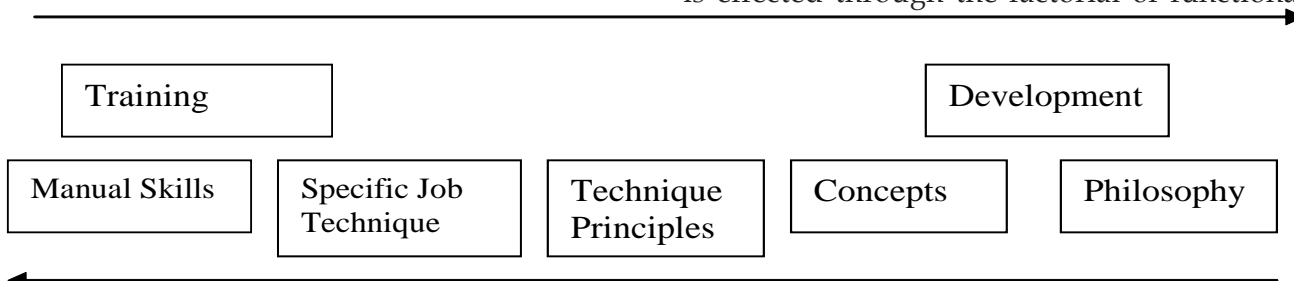


Figure 1: Development training continuum

manpower planning and development for the present and future needs of the organization and also in relation to the progressive development in the educational and professional training facilities and programmes.

The success of any library virtually depends upon the quality and effective functioning of the professionals working in that library. The nerve centre of any university library is human resource. The efficient administration and effective operation of the library depends on the quantity and quality of human resource appointed into various functional units of library. The quality of human resource distributed in both professionals and non-professionals in library would decide the effective utilization of the physical resources especially in changing organizational goals into action oriented programmes.

The ICT impact on library and information The ICT impact on library and information

The Council of American Library Association (ALA) on June 30, 1969 decided to recommend categories of library manpower, and levels of training and education appropriate to the preparation of personnel for these categories which will support the highest standards of library service for all kinds of libraries and the most effective use of the variety of manpower skills and qualifications needed to provide it⁸.

Human resource Development: The need of the hour in libraries

Human resource development is a very important aspect of library personnel management. Recruitment, training and staffing are the most important and ongoing functions of library management. To exist and grow, library and information science education must adopt itself to the changing environment, especially to the new development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its application to the library

operations. However, in its attempt to assimilate the “new” it must not forget its “cultural legacy”. It means LIS education must adopt latest and current programmes but without sacrificing its knowledge base, approaches, values, practices and tools that must be applied to new problem areas. In the light of this, we can say that LIS education programmes must be so designed as to (a) ensure the development of such personnel as are able to handle the present information environment and at the same time (b) provide necessary specializations which can be helpful to develop the libraries on modern lines during the foreseeable future⁹.

centers is causing radical change in library collections, organizations, structure, services, products, technique, methods – access retrieve store and disseminate the information. Library automation and networks have totally transformed the nature and functioning of Library and Information Centers (LICs). A process of reinvention of libraries is being done in place of traditional librarianship.

The professionals working in the library are considered most fundamental and valuable asset/resource of the library, particularly to meet the challenges posed by the ICT and Liberalization Privatization and Globalization (LPG). Human resource development is to transform the organization into a human system, to develop dedication and commitment among the employees and to integrate individual employees with the organization. The importance of human resource development gained importance with realization that effectiveness of an organization depends on the quality of workforce employed. The other resources like equipment, machinery and materials can be purchased/bought, but it is difficult to get motivated human resources. Without quality and motivated professionals the physical resources become neutral and desired goals may not be achieved.

Human resource development in the LIC is mainly concerned with knowledge, ICT skills, competencies, attitudes, commitment, values and the like, of the people of an organization and it is a people oriented concept. It is concerned with the development and acquisition of capabilities

that are needed to do the present job or prospective job in the library. It aims at overall development of human resources in order to contribute to the well being of professionals of the library and the user community at large¹⁰.

Human resource development programmes are aimed at enhancing the competencies in ICT and abilities of staff. These programmes would sharpen the skills, service orientation, keener understanding of the nature of information and its importance to the user community, greater insight into the political context in which the libraries operate etc. There are various methods of human resource development such as sabbatical leave programmes, professional development leaves, attending conferences, IT workshops, visiting consultant, lectureship programmes and internships, staff exchange, job orientation course and mentoring etc¹¹.

University Grants Commission (UGC) and human resource development

The appointment of University Education Commission in 1948 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Radhakrishnan was the most significant action of Government of India towards the development of higher education in India. It is only after the appointment of this Commission that the actual process of the development of the University Libraries in India took place. The Commission made recommendations that related to annual grants, open access system, working hours, organization of the library, staff, steps to make students book conscious and the need to give book grants to teachers to buy books. Various aspects regarding the manpower/staff were also mentioned. However, meaningful steps for staff development of libraries were taken up only after the establishment of UGC on December 29, 1953. The establishment of UGC is the landmark achievement in the history of Higher Education in India and the development of College and University Libraries¹².

UGC had appointed various committees for review and improvement of the library system in India. Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, the first Chairman of UGC(1956) while drawing an analogy between a university and the human body

remarked that the students form the body of the university, the administration is the head, the teachers are the soul and the library is the heart¹³.

As early as in the year 1957, a Library Committee was established by UGC under the Chairmanship of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan. The report of this Committee was published by the UGC in the year 1959 under the title Development of University & College Libraries. Library manpower was one very important aspect of the report. The report gave due importance to the pay scale and training of the staff so that they could meet the challenges. The Library Committee also recommended appointment of another committee to look into the standards of teaching, examination and research in library schools. The committee also observed that the status and the salary of the library staff should be same as that of the teaching and research staff. UGC accepted almost all the recommendation of Library Committee (1957). As a result, a staff formula for the university and college libraries was formulated and the status and salary of library staff were made at par with the academic staffs¹⁴.

A review committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan in the early 1960's. The committee submitted its report along with its recommendation relating to objectives, curricula, admission qualifications and minimum qualifications for teaching posts and other related areas for B.Lib.Sc. M.Lib.Sc. & Ph.D. courses. The report also emphasized that teachers of the library science should be treated at par with the administrative matters of the University.

UGC accepted almost all the recommendations and the report titled "Library Science in Indian Universities"¹⁵ was published by the UGC in the year 1965.

Again in 1964, the Government of India appointed Education Commission under the chairmanship of Prof. D.S. Kothari to evaluate the education system as well as the libraries. The Commission (1964-66) stated in the final report Nothing can be more damaging than to ignore its library and to give a low priority. The commission also pointed that the demands for

the library services have been growing constantly with the increasing number of users. Therefore, the library professionals have to cater to the diverse needs of the under-graduate and post-graduate students, research scholars and faculty members. Thus, the Committee gave due importance to the library staff. The implication was that staffs should be well trained and properly developed to cater the needs¹⁶.

The UGC appointed a Committee on December 24, 1983 under the chairmanship of Prof. R.C. Mehrotra to consider the revision of pay scales, career/professional development and service conditions of teachers in the universities and colleges. In October 1985, the UGC in consultation with the Government of India, requested the Mehrotra Committee to consider the revision of pay scales of librarians and directors of physical education too. The Committee submitted its report on revision of pay scales of librarians to the UGC on September 3, 1986. The committee recognized the importance of libraries and their manpower for imparting and disseminating of knowledge and recommended the revision of pay scale for the librarian and other staff. Other recommendations being mentioned were that the librarians should have promotional opportunities, adequate facilities to improve their qualifications or attend refresher and orientation courses to update their knowledge and new courses to impart instruction on ICT and other modern technological developments. The Committee also suggested for National Eligibility Test (NET) as the necessary requirement for lecturers, assistant librarians, documentation officers and college librarians so that the standard of new entrants could be improved. The Committee also suggested that librarians should be given duty leave to avail opportunities to attend summer schools, workshops seminars etc. to keep them abreast with modern developments. Henceforth, the government modified the requirement, qualifications and revised grade and pay scales of the library personnel.

The UGC in 1988 constituted a Committee on National Network System under the Chairmanship of Prof. Yash Pal, then UGC Chairman to suggest measures for networking

of LICs in Universities, institutions of national importance, UGC information centres, R & D institutions and colleges. The committee prepared project report for creation of Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) and in subsequent year, INFLIBNET came into existence. There was thus an imperative need for developing required human resources to handle such an initiative. After the initiation UGC-INFONET e-journals consortium in the year 2003, INFLIBNET has regularly organizing training programmes to the 150 university library professionals. It has extensively providing ICT based training programme in phased manner to the LIS professionals who are working in these 150 university libraries. INFLIBET will extend this support to all the remaining universities as well as to the colleges in the 11th plan period.

In September 1990, the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) on Library and Information Science (LIS) was constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. P.N. Kaula. The report of the committee was published by the UGC in the year 1992 as the Report of the Curriculum Development Committee on Library and Information Science. Among the various recommendations of CDC, revision of curriculum in LIS courses has been the main focus so that it can produce the required manpower suitable for the changing scenario in the country. UGC also constituted a subject panel on library and information science in the year 1997 with Prof. C.R. Karasiddappa as Convener. Discussions on issues were held followed by regional meetings. The panel felt the need of the immediate restructuring of the earlier CDC reports in the wake of rising impact of IT on libraries. Thereafter, UGC constituted 3 groups of expert to review the outcomes of various meeting and further sharpening of the modules and course contents etc. Thus the main focus of all these committee was training the manpower of libraries with the new technologies in order to enable them to face the new challenges¹⁹.

UGC from time to time has been constituting library review committees for reviewing various aspects of libraries so that necessary changes can be made. The Commission also imparts various types of training and developmental programme

for the library personnel in order to enable them to cope with the fast changing environment. One of the major programmes that UGC has launched was the establishment of the Academic Staff Colleges at various universities to organize orientation and refresher course. The university personnel thus get an opportunity to improve their knowledge, skills and learn new techniques.

UGC foresaw the need for professionalisation of education and development of skills among library personnel to enable them to work efficiently and effectively in an ICT environment. INFLIBNET has taken up various steps for development and training of library manpower/staffs and library professionals. Till 2003, INFLIBNET has organized nine Annual National /Conventions called CALIBER (Convention on Automation of Libraries in Education and Research Institution) in collaboration with the Universities/Educational institutions with relevant objectives and focus on emerging information technology. The Convention has been providing a regular forum for interaction and exchange of ideas, information and newer experiences among the libraries and computer professionals from academic institutions and others thereby enabling them to enrich their managerial skills and professional competencies. In pursuit of making INFLIBNET a world class organization with the innovative changes, from the year 2003, an annual convention as an international event has been started. Thus First International Convention, CALIBER 2003 was held at Ahmedabad in February 2003. Since then International Convention, CALIBER-2004, CALIBER 2005, CALIBER 2006, CALIBER 2006 are being organized and held regularly with different themes for each Convention²⁰.

UGC has initiated a special programme for the development of libraries and library manpower of the north eastern region. From the year 2003, a convention called PLANNER (Promotion of Library Automation and Networking in North-Eastern Region) is being organized by INFLIBNET (UGC) regularly. The first convention, PLANNER 2003 was held at North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, the second convention, PLANNER 2004 at Manipur University, Manipur and the third convention, PLANNER 2005 at Assam

University, Silchar, Assam, and the fourth convention, PLANNER 2006 was held in December 2006 at Mizoram University, Mizoram²¹.

Finally, it may be noted that recently UGC has constituted B.L. Mungekar Committee on Higher Education in India. The Committee has submitted its interim report to UGC with certain recommendations regarding qualifications for appointment of teachers and library personnel in universities, colleges etc²².

UGC also provides various orientation and training courses for the working staff in libraries through professional institutions like INFLIBNET, agencies and LIS departments of the universities. Beside these, efforts are being made by UGC to provide financial grants to the libraries of institutions of higher education, provision of flexible study leave such as Faculty Improvement Programme (FIP) provision for suitable physical environment and working hours, provision for vacation, health services and academic status, liberal retirement benefits good opportunities for promotion etc.

Conclusion

Human resource is a critical factor for library effectiveness. It is necessary to equip the library manpower with all the knowledge, skills and capabilities needed to handle library operations in the new digital and ICT environment. The authorities of libraries have to realize the need for upgradation of knowledge and skills of their staff by providing them all the facilities to acquire the relevant knowledge. In this area, the role of UGC deserves special mention.

At present there is a need to continue to teach the traditional and core subjects like organization, management, information sources and services, classification and cataloguing, etc. At the same time for the development of staff, certain measures should be adopted such as (a) curriculum development and pupation of LIS programmes in conformity with the current trends and information needs of the users, (b) making internships compulsory at all levels of LIS professionals, and (c) provision for attending training, orientation, conferences, workshops, and staff exchange programmes, etc.

In a good number of libraries, the human

resource is required to be trained in ICT along with the traditional skills. In other words, the new techniques and the old/traditional skills are the two sides of the same coin. Therefore the buzzword for developing human resource in the present context is change with continuity.

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