

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN THE MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

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From ancient Gurukula System in which knowledge was transmitted orally from teacher to student; education has changed to a process of interaction between learners and sources of information. This change has greatly influenced library management and services. The proliferation of scientific literature has necessitated a systematic and professional approach in the management of libraries. According to one estimate, the volume of information is increasing at the rate of 13 per cent, virtually doubling in every seven years. Electronic databases and database management systems has become popular in order to handle the flood of information. Moreover, the micro level information requirements of users coupled with multidisciplinary nature of information makes the process of information handling more complex. Human brain along with artificial intelligence and expert systems can solve the problem effectively. Whatever be the intelligence artificially employed through computer technologies, human element is the basic component of all these technologies. Hence, personnel employed in the field of information processing and management requires scientific attention and leadership which brings the most conducive atmosphere for the adoption of modern technologies. The phenomenon of surpassing of the number of workers in the information sector with that in production and other service sectors in some of the developed countries has evolved a scientific practice of personnel management in the field.

1. Information Technology in Education

The capacity and capability of librarians and information professionals in the present day context should be of the level required to guide the students and teachers. Information technology occupies a key role in the management of libraries and information centres. Management aspects like recruitment, induction, training, promotion, etc., are being affected considerably by these modern technologies. The renaming of libraries into information centres is an explicit example of this transformation. The modern equipments like computers, CD-ROM drives, printers, reprographic and other equipments, modem, V-SAT and other communication equipments, multimedia installations, barcode readers, etc., are completely revolutionised the practices and procedures followed in libraries.

In order to cop up with this situation, libraries have to adopt the scientific staff management practices for achieving effective utilization of resources, user satisfaction and staff motivation.

The study covers only selected universities which include agricultural universities also. Primary data have been collected from these universities and this data has been supplemented by details gathered by personal interviews, review of literature techniques, etc.

2. Involvement in Teaching and research

Education can be defined as a process of learning, understanding , applying and utilizing knowledge for betterment of oneself, other individuals and the society as a whole. It is a process of interaction between learners and information sources. Education is a process for thinking, cognition and acquisition of knowledge which is directly based on the knowledge already created, gathered, stored, and disseminated by the society through a variety of media.

Both teachers and library and information people measure and disseminate knowledge. A successful and growing teacher must have entered into companionship with the librarian. The law to be postulated is that no body can become and succeed as a faculty member without support of the librarian. In an academic team of teachers and librarians no one is actually superior to the other.

The Association of American Colleges and the Association of American University Professors have opined that, "Librarians perform a teaching and research role in as much they instruct student formally and informally and advise and assist faculty in their scholarly pursuits. The function of the librarian as participant in the process of teaching and research is the essential criterion of the faculty status". This definition underlines the role of a librarian as faculty member in the teaching -learning process. Even though the UGC and ICAR have issued directions to involve librarians in the active process of teaching and research, this aspect did not get due weightage in the higher education institutions in India. As compared to other universities, agricultural universities have better implemented the direction. They have included the topic 'Information Processing and Management' as part of their course curriculum.

3. Existing Staff Structure

The analysis of the existing staff position in various university libraries in India reveals that there is no uniformity or standards with regard to the library staff. The staff can be divided into four categories as follows:

- Professionals - UGC/ICAR Cadre
- Professionals - Non UGC/ICAR Cadre
- Administrative Staff
- Support Staff

There is to some extent uniformity in the qualifications, recruitment, promotion, scale of pay, etc., of the Professionals of UGC/ICAR Cadre. But for the remaining three categories there is no uniform pattern. Their qualifications, recruitment procedure and promotion policy are varies from university to university. All the Universities in Kerala State except Kerala Agricultural University are following a common staff policy. But, a scientific and common criteria to find the number of staff is not existing in these universities. As a result, some universities are having excess staff, while others are starving for adequate number of staff. A scientific ratio between the UGC/ICAR and Non UGC/ICAR Cadres of posts is totally absent in almost all universities. Some universities in India are following direct recruitment to the posts coming under UGC/ICAR schemes, but some others resort to their own policies in these aspects.

4. Semi - Academic Status

Considering the importance and nature of library and information services, most of the advanced countries consider these as academic and research activities. The Union Government, some State Governments and the institutions like UGC, ICAR, AICTE, etc., have categorised the library and information activities into academic and research work. UGC and ICAR have given directions to the State governments and universities to implement the UGC/ICAR scheme and pay packages for librarians along with those for teachers of the universities and colleges. Most of the universities have given pay packages prescribed by the UGC scheme. But as regards the provisions like academic status, recruitment and promotion patterns, faculty improvement schemes and superannuation remain to be enforced. This situation forces the librarians to move away from the main stream of education, research and extension processes.

5. Level of Technical Competency

The library and information field acknowledged a dynamic and explosive situation created by modern information technologies. In comparison with many other disciplines, the library and information science has completely revolutionised due to the emergence of computer and communication technologies and their application in information systems. Indian universities and institutions behind in offering the knowledge of advanced technologies to the library and information professionals. There are various reasons ranging from the lack of resources to the non-cooperation of staff which are responsible for this situation. The technical incapacity due to this lacuna is ultimately reflecting in the service efficiency of the information systems which is leading to dissatisfaction among professions and a stage of inertia in services.

6. Measures for Improvement

The personnel management policies and practices in university libraries in India need thorough restructuring in the present context in order to make fit the library professionals to the modern sophisticated environment and for sustainable development of library and information systems in universities. Constant reorganisation and systematization of libraries is inevitable to achieve better bibliographical control over documents and offer efficient services to the user community. The following aspects require immediate attention in this respect:

6.1. Atmosphere for Technology Adoption

It is felt that the process of adaptation of libraries to the highly dynamic information world poses several problems. Lack of resources and technical competency, the inertia created by the existing structure and procedures, unwillingness and non cooperation of the staff, lack of conviction on the part of the authorities and delay in decision making and changing the policies, etc., are the major contributing factors to the problem.

Convinced authorities, technically competent and confident professionals, better motivation and morale of staff, adequately educated users and enough publicity for the

technology oriented services can bring efficiency and service effectiveness. To create this atmosphere, strict orders of the government and the UGC/ICAR authorities are essential. Uniform and scientific recruitment and career advancement schemes comparable to those prevailing in other sectors should be implemented. These are necessary to attract capable persons into the library and information service sector.

6.2. Academic Status and Redesignation

Educational scientists consider that library is the heart of any teaching - learning process. They consider that librarian-student relation as equal to teacher-student relation and fix the position of librarian equal among faculty members. The Union Government and national educational bodies like UGC, ICAR, AICTE, etc. have assigned faculty status for librarians and issued orders providing full academic status. The recruitment policies and promotion schemes recommended were also at par with that of teachers. But, at the stage of implementation, many universities have diluted the orders according to their whims and fancies. Due to several reasons, the requests to implement the orders of the government and educational bodies have not been admitted in full by several universities. Redesignating the posts of library and information professionals in the UGC/ICAR Cadre as follows will be the better solution to this:

Existing Designation

Proposed Designation

In conventional Universities:-

Assistant Librarian	Lecturer(Infor. Proce.& Magmt.)
Deputy Librarian	Reader (Infor. Proce.& Mgmt.)
University Librarian	Director of Library and Infor. Services

In Agricultural Universities:-

Assistant Librarian	Assistant Professor(Infor. Proc.& Mgmt)
Deputy Librarian	Associate Professor(Infor. Proc.& Mgmt)
University Librarian	Director of Library and Infor. Services

6.3. Categories of Professionals

Two broad categories of professionals, viz., UGC Cadre and Non-UGC Cadre are required in a university library. In the UGC Cadre, the following existing categories of staff are essential:

Lecturer/Asst. Professor	Rs. 2200-4000
Lecturer/Asst. Professor Sr. Gr.	Rs. 3000-4500
Lecturer/Asst. Professor Sel.Gr. OR	
Reader/Associate Director	Rs. 3700-5000
Director of Library and Information Services	Rs. 4500-7300

In the Non-UGC Cadre, three categories of staff are required as follows:

Technical Assistant Grade I	Rs. 1400-2600
Technical Assistant Grade II	Rs. 1640-2900
Senior Technical Assistant	Rs. 2000-3500

7. Quantum of Professional Staff

The staffing policy should be framed with utmost care to ensure maximum productivity and job satisfaction. The number of staff members should be optimum. The smooth flow of work will be affected both by the under estimation and over estimation of staff. There were several contributing factors to arrive at the required number of staff, of which the number of users, documents and services are important. In the changed situation, it is better to give importance to the number and volume of activities and services in a library. There will be some essential services to be offered by a university library and so the following departments should be there in a university library:

- Acquisition
- Periodicals
- Technical Processing
- Database
- Maintenance
- Reference
- Circulation
- Documentation and Publication
- Inter Library Services
- Network and Online

Each department should be headed by a library faculty staff in the UGC Cadre. There should be adequate number of supporting professionals also for each department deployed on the basis of the services offered or programmes undertaken.

7.1. Staff Formula

It is better to frame a standard for calculating the total number of professionals. In the changed technological environment, it is found that adoption of the available standards and formulae for this purpose need to be revised. The publishing technology has completely revolutionised the earlier concept of the number of documents. Now, a single CD-ROM can occupy lakhs of pages of information. Hence, the calculation of quantum of staff based on the number of library documents has become irrelevant. A formula giving weightage to the components of users, documents and budget for calculating the total number of professional staff in a university library is given below:

$$S = U + D + B$$

where;

S = Total number of professional staff

U = User component

D = Document component

B = Budget component

$$U = \frac{(UG \times 1) + (PG \times 2) + (RS \times 3) + (OM \times 1) + (IM \times 10)}{100}$$

where;

UG = Under Graduate students

PG = Post Graduate students

RS = Research Scholars

OM = Other members including External Members

IM = Institutional Members

$$D = \frac{(PD \times 1) + (CD \times 50) + (MF \times 5)}{20,000}$$

where;

PD = Printed Documents

CD = CD-ROMs

MF = Micro Film/Fiche and other micro documents

$$B = \frac{\text{Library Budget excluding salary and inclusive of equipment budget}}{10,00,000}$$

The number of professional staff so arrived may be grouped into two categories, ie., UGC Cadre and Non-UGC Cadre. The number of staff needed in each category may be arrived at considering the qualifications, level of technical competency, experience, etc. required to perform the various functions in a university library. It is suggested that a minimum of 50 percent of the total professional staff may be in the UGC Cadre.

8. Recruitment Policy

The recruitment to the various cadres of posts can be done either by direct recruitment or by promotion. The following table shows the ration that may be adopted for placement of professionals by direct recruitment promotion to various cadres:

Designation	By Direct Recruitment	By Promotion
Non-UGC Cadre:-		
Technical Assistant Grade II (TA I) 100		Nil
Technical Assistant Grade I (TA II) Nil		100
Senior Technical Assistant (STA) Nil		100
UGC Cadre:-		
Lecturer/Asst. Professor (Infor. Processing and Mgmt.)	25	75
Reader/Assoc. Professor (Infor.Processing and Mgmt.) Nil		100
Director of Library and Information Services	100	Nil

9. Flexible Complimenting Scheme of Promotion

A Flexible Complementing Scheme (FCS) of promotion is advocated for the professional staff. The total number of professional posts both in UGC and Non-UGC Cadres may be calculated using the formula discussed earlier. The minimum number of posts in UGC Cadre is to be maintained as 50 per cent and the provision may be made to increase that temporarily according to the number of eligible persons who are to be promoted to this cadre. The direct recruitment to the posts of Technical Assistant Grade II and Assistant Librarian is to be done based on the ratio for direct recruitment on the vacancy generated due to retirement or such other reasons. The cadre and grade to which the appointment is to be made is based on the fundamental criterion that the excess number of posts after maintaining the minimum 50 per cent requirement of posts in the UGC-Cadre should be considered for direct recruitment in Technical Assistant Grade II.

The basic principle of the FCS is that the total number of professional posts, both in UGC and Non-UGC Cadres, is calculated by some scientific formula or criterion or work study and the promotion from the lowest cadre to the highest is made according to the qualification, experience, participation in inservice short term courses, annual confidential reports(ACR) and assessment. The persons who satisfy these requirements are to be assessed based on a promotion test and/or interview and his ACRs during the assessment period. In order to avoid the undue influence of ACR and test/interview in the hands of biased superiors, the weightage for these tools should be limited to delay the promotion only for one year in a particular grade. The assessment based on ACR may be graded in to four, ie., A-Excellent, B-Very good, C-Good and D-Average. The performance in the assessment interview also should be rated in the same manner, ie., A, B, C and D grades. The person obtained A, B and C ratings in ACR and interview is to be promoted to the next grade, if the other conditions are satisfactory. The persons who scored D rating either in ACR or interview or both may be disqualified for promotion for one year in that particular grade. There should be a practice to record the ratings in ACR of the professionals regularly. It is observed that the universities where the ratio promotion or vacancy dependent promotion pattern is implemented, the promotion is obtained only by luck.

10. Faculty Improvement Programme

A sound policy of technical training and faculty improvement programmes is to be framed to continuously induct the staff to the newly emerging technologies and methods. Participation in refresher courses, seminars, symposia, workshop, etc. will offer wide exposure which in turn will enhance the technical competency and efficiency of professionals. There should be a scientific human resources development policy in higher education sector to create an environment of regular technology updating in all institutions. Since library and information science is an area where explosive changes occur due to the emergence of new technologies, such a policy can provide greater effectiveness in information services.

11. Need for policy Change

A scientific policy on personnel is essential for the library and information professionals working in universities. It should facilitate recruitment, induction and promotion of staff and getting required quantum of staff. A continuous effective training scheme is essential to constantly update the technical knowledge and competency of the staff recruited. Instead of the vacancy dependent ratio or time bound promotion, a Flexible Complementing Scheme of promotion is advocated. Continuous evaluation of staff by superiors using ACRs and assessment interview/test are recommended in a limited manner to ensure smooth flow of work and increase productivity. The universities have to change their existing obsolete staffing policies to enable their sustainable development.

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