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## DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES IN DIGITAL ERA : HOW MUCH EFFECTIVE AND HOW MUCH SUCCESSFUL?

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### Abstract

*Today, library and information centers are migrating into digital or so called paperless society, which has exerted force on their staff. The staff is expected to be trained in handling 21st century equipments in digital environment for providing information to its users. Various organizations and associations are imparting training to library professionals but this is not so much fruitful. This paper discusses some of the situations, which make this goal tough to achieve.*

**Keywords:** Human Resources; IT environment; Digital environment and Training

### 1. Introduction

Human being as a resource has been realized since time immemorial particularly during the last two decades. It has become a challenging task in each and every organization not only to maintain a workforce that is both content and predictive but also to recognize the workers' expectations of meaningful situation. It is needless to quote that people in an organization play a very crucial role. Making a comment on the importance of human resources, once Henry Ford said, 'take out my building, take out my machines, and all capital but leave my men with me, I will become Henry Ford again.'

Human Resource Development is a process of helping employees in an organization to acquire new skills and competence on a continuing basis (Dhiman and Rani, 2004). In developing human resources, employees of an organization are helped to acquire skills, knowledge and other capabilities required by the organization according to its standards in a planned process to meet the present and future expectations of the organizations on human side in a conducive environment with result orientations. This is the responsibility of the organization that he should provide to employees the facilities in a systematic and planned way to :

1. acquire and sharpen skills and capabilities to perform various tasks associated with their present and expected future roles.
2. develop their general capabilities, discover and exploit their inner potential for their own and/or organizational development purpose.
3. help to bring about an organizational culture in which collaboration among sub-units is strong and contributes to the supervisor – subordinate relationships, team-work and the professional well-being and pride of the employees.

4. facilitate upgrading of skills through mechanism and instruments; and
5. improve abilities by the introduction of strategic and operational HRD planning and its execution.

Human Resource Development or HRD is necessary for any type of the organization because of :

1. survival and stability;
2. growth and development;
3. change and diversification;
4. retuning the activities to become more effective;
5. providing highest quality in products and services;
6. playing a leadership role in the field and
7. obtaining a goodwill and reputation through customer satisfaction.

## **2. Digital Environment and Human Resources**

The last decade saw a good change in working environment of library & information centers, where the information is expected to be given in seconds of time. Though we are in transaction phase of development, but majority of the information are available in digital mode. Many of the libraries, especially the university libraries or the libraries of national importance have adopted the new technology and are working in electronic or digital environment. This helped a lot the libraries to increase their efficiency and effectiveness by providing information in all its dimensions and colours. A variety of tools like e-books, e-journals, CD-ROMs, DVDs, databases and online databases and networks are available, from which information can be retrieved quickly and efficiently. The library professionals are expected to be well acquainted in handling these devices; hence their role is being changed (Dhiman, 2001a). With the advent of www, the Internet has become a necessity for the libraries & information centers. Any thing you may find on Internet by simply go through the search engines like yahoo.com or the google.com, if you don't know the exact web address. Internet has opened up unimaginable opportunities for searching and offering information. Besides, there are emerging various types of consortia, which are the ultimate solution for accessing e-documents in digital environment (Dhiman, 2005). In digital environment, consortia-based library subscription is the best way of resource sharing also (Dhiman and Rani, 2006).

At one hand this change is providing a lot of opportunities to its readers in finding the relevant information in short time, but on another hand it is creating the challenges for existing staff. Library professionals need to change their attitudes now. They need specific training to understand the implications of new working conditions. Today's, the library staff is expected to be well acquainted with the skills and expertise not only in handling various library software but also having the knowledge of searching queries on the net using search engines and other techniques. So it is the necessity of library & information professionals to acquire, organize and disseminate right information to its users using various techniques and tools.

## **3. HRD in Libraries & Information Centers**

HRD may seem to be somewhat irrelevant to the conditions prevailing in Indian libraries & information centers. The large majority of libraries & information centers are small in terms of staff deployed and budgetary provisions. Of course, there are national library and information centers operating as

independent and separate institutions. Universities, institutes of technology and such other academic and research institutions have large libraries and information centers. But even in these larger institutions, the ideas of planned HRD are not very much operative. In most of the library & information centers, their parent bodies by and large, handle their personal aspects. The administrative department of these parent institutions deals with the personnel, mostly in relation to salary and allowances, discipline and control and training and deputation to conferences etc. Moreover, limited personnel development avenues are available only to certain levels of staff, seldom percolating to lower levels. No personnel/HRD departments seem to exclusively exist to take cares of all personnel aspects. Refresher courses, short-term courses, performance appraisal and motivation may be the ways for developing working environment (Dhiman, 2001b), but the right way of developing or preparing the human resources for digital environment is to make them trained. Various organizations like NISCAIR (earlier known as INSDOC), New Delhi; INFLIBNET, Ahmedabad; DRTC, Bangalore; IIM, Lucknow and the association like IASLIC and ILA, are playing major role in developing human resources. The main areas of training include bar-code technology, bibliometrics, computer applications, electronic commerce, electronic publishing, Internet for libraries, web designing, online information retrieval, library automation and resource sharing and working knowledge of the library softwares like WINSIS, SOUL etc.

According to Raina (2006), the contents of the training programme generally held in Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, thrust upon following areas:

- State of art in information technology and its application in Library & Information Centers.
- Strategic implementation of IT in Library & Information Centers through case study.
- Understanding of networking and Internet environment.
- Digital library development initiatives.
- Developing e-resources and consortia initiatives.
- Web and the world of librarianship.
- Copyright, human resource, policy considerations and management issues in the context of IT application in Library & Information Centers.

So due consideration is given in developing human resources in these training programmes.

If we take the case of INFLIBNET, it is doing well for the university libraries. It conducts various training programmes for the library professionals in the field of computerization. It not only conducts training programmes but also arranged various conferences and seminars for upgrading the skills of working people. Under its UGC-INFONET, it is also conducting user-orientation programme with collaboration of university libraries at the spot for e-access of the journals for faculties and the students. INFLIBNET is spending a lot of money in conducting these programmes, but there are many hurdles in achieving its goals and objectives at the university or user ends. The major drawbacks may be pointed out as under :

Many times, the library professionals who have undergone the training don't show much interest in working when goes back to their respective organization.

Many of the libraries don't have much staff devoted to computerization work. If some of the staff is sent for training, they finish their training just in formal way because they are sent just to fill up the formalities.

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Many times, senior professional tend to make pressure on the authorities to sponsor them for training being they senior, though they are not keen in making the use of training into practical. In this way, junior knowledgeable staff is deprived.

Sometimes, in the pressure of local authorities or the union's leaders, those people are sent for training, which don't want to work sitting on the computer or net. They take this opportunity just as the mean of enjoyment.

These are the practical instances, which work as major hurdles in making the environment IT oriented. We should be conscious in seeking the solution for them. Besides, the studies made on the part of user ends reveals that users are also not very encourageous to make use of electronic resources. A study by Premchand et al., (2005), points that users in North East region are not making full use of the electronic resources, which are being offered to them through UGC-INFONET consortium. Another study by Kannappanvar and Kumbargoudar (2005) conclude that there are the needs to design more effective training programmes for the professionals working in library & information centers. Further, the Indian users have not yet developed the habit of reading using networked computers. Another factor may be the lack of proper infrastructures besides, the less number of computer nodes in the libraries.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Nowadays, the libraries and information services at national level and higher education & research levels are growing in terms of collection, size, variety and services with computerization and networking. Personnel problems, not necessarily to deal with the large number of employees but some of the other aspects like designing appropriate instruments for performance appraisal, training to all levels of staff and development of organizational and work culture are sure to crop up. Stress should be on quality and value added services rather than to train merely the staff, to build up a cadre of highly competent professional staff.

Training is expected to be imparted for HR – reengineering by using ASK method & DARMA method as suggested by Balasubramanian et al., (2003). ASK stands for Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge and DARMA stands for Duties, Attitudes, Responsibilities, Motives and the Action. The conflict among library users can be overcome by using Myre Brigs Type Indicator and the personal type by caliber. The need is to maintain the rapport between them. Apart from this they should attend seminars, workshops like Human Relations and Transactional Analysis. They should empathize over library users so that problem can be solved effectively and efficiently. They should act as mentor by developing communicative and interpersonal skills. Besides, they should be motivated by MSR i.e., money, status and recognitions. By and large to cope up with the current IT environment, library professionals should have training both in computer and HRD areas.

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