INTRODUCTION

Meena.V “Human relations in university libraries in Kerala”  
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INTRODUCTION
1.0 Introduction

Society consists of organizations with different purposes and functions. The organizations, which make up the society comprise large, small, formal, informal, primary, secondary, religious, economic, educational, governmental, social, military and political units. Organizations are social systems which have made possible many of the major advances in civilization.

In the words of Toffler\(^1\) (67, 1), 'an organization, after all, is nothing more than a collection of human objectives, expectations, and obligations. It is, in other words, a structure of roles filled by humans'.

An organization is actually a group of people who have been brought together to achieve human goals. The need of an organization is for rules and customs which indeed will specify the ways in which the individuals could relate with each other.

The modern organizations have been greatly instrumental in bringing in the era of technological advancement, revolutionizing all forms of social life and modes of thinking, overhauling and renovating our economic, educational and military systems\(^2\) (Khanna 1).

An organization comes into being when

1. there are individuals able to communicate with one another,
2. who are willing to act together
3. to accomplish a common purpose

These are the three basic elements necessary for an organization, and all are equally important for the effective functioning of the organization\(^3\) (Halloran 58).

Organization is a system consisting of social, technical and economic elements and purports to co-ordinate human and material resources to attain multiple objectives. These may include
> to make a profit,
> to provide good products and good services
> to go ahead in competition
> to provide for the welfare of employees
> to grow, and
> to be efficient

This system converts numerous inputs into several outputs that become products and services for the society\(^4\) (Dwivedi 7).

In the modern world most of what is commonly called work is done within the context of one form or another of organization. This means that people have found that their efforts are more productive and rewarding when done cooperatively with others.

An organization is a planned coordination of a number of people and their activities for the achievement of some specific goals through division of labour, and hierarchy of authority\(^5\) (Aswathappa 444).

An organization’s greatest asset is its people or human resource. The effectiveness of an organization depends to a considerable extent upon the physical and mental efforts and abilities of those who manage and perform the productive operations. Without human energies, skill and knowledge, natural resources are inert and of little value\(^6\) (Saksena 271).

When all resources depreciate, human resources appreciate. It has come to the realization of the managements that human resources alone is capable of bringing about the best of other resources as far as an organization is concerned. The employees of an organization are vital as they influence the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.
The unique feature of human resource is that its contribution can be
enlarged considerably through the process of development. Human resource
plays an important role in shaping the organization as all the other natural
resources can be better utilized by motivated human resources only.
Moreover the organization can prosper and progress only through the creative
efforts and competencies of their human resources. And of all the resources
we have, it is our human resources that are least efficiently used7 (Hepner 4).

It is an established fact that it is the people who make an organization a
success or a failure. It is in this context that the management should be
responsible to create conditions for maximizing the productivity of people.

In business, government and non-profit organizations, human resources
are the most neglected category, which are often not used effectively. The
optimization of human resources calls for a conducive managerial climate
based on human relations.

1.1 Human relations

Human relations is the art of using systematic knowledge about human
behaviour to improve personal, job, and career effectiveness. It begins with
self-understanding.

Human relations, in its broadest sense covers all types of interactions
among people- their conflicts, cooperative efforts, and group relationships. It
is the study of why our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours sometimes cause
inter-personal conflict in our personal lives and in work-related situations8
(Reece and Brandt 5).

All the members in an organization have a responsibility for
developing successful human relations. The interaction among people
influences the quality of human relationships. Skill in human relations has
increasingly become an essential ingredient for effective management.
Our religious books such as Ramayana, Upanishads, Gita and Mahabharata emphasize the importance of good human relations. In the context of human relations the Isopanishad says that the wise man who realizes all beings as not distinct from his own self as the self of all beings does not by virtue of that perception, hate any one.9 (Ahuja 169).

Although human behaviour and their relationships have existed since the beginning of the civilization, the art and science of trying to deal with them in complex organizations is relatively new. Human relations is something that takes place between people. It takes place between a man and his boss, between one worker and another, between a staff specialist and a line supervisor, and between a manager and superior10 (Bittel 24).

According to Davis11 (6, 11), ‘human relations is motivating people in organizations to develop teamwork which effectively fulfills their needs and achieves organizational objectives.’ It is the study of human behaviour at work and an effort to take action in operating situations in order to produce better results. The definition given by Davis projects the following aspects of human relations:

- The focus is on people rather than on economic or mechanics
- People are in an organizational environment rather than in an unorganized social set-up
- The key activity in human relations is motivating persons
- The direction of motivation is toward teamwork, which requires both coordination of the work and cooperation of the persons involved
- Human relations through teamwork seeks both need fulfillment and organizational objectives, rather than one or the other
- Both a person and an organization seek results effectively with minimum inputs in relation to outputs.
Human relations tend to provide maximum output for the organization as well as optimal individual satisfaction and adjustment, all at the same time. Human relations in an organization is the humanization of relations in it, that is, humane relations between human beings in an organization. Human relations can be defined as the cordial atmosphere in an organization with which people practice the art of living in such a way that they communicate, act, interact and transact in a cordial manner recognizing each others' needs, views, values and temperaments, so that every interaction or transaction which takes place in an organization would have a concern for each other's interests and feelings leading to better motivation and morale of people at all levels in the organisation (Michael 451).

Human relations is a force which brings maximum cooperation and coordination among the components and finally helps smooth functioning of the organization. This is just like a lubricating oil which reduces friction among the parts of a machine and helps smooth functioning of the whole machine.

Human relations is the study of the interactions that exist between people. These relationships occur at work in an organization and in all aspects of our personal lives.

Human relations can be either a formal interaction that takes place, such as between workers and their supervisors, or an informal interaction (De Cenzo 5).

The process of human relations involves more than just ‘getting along’ with others. Even though ‘getting along’ well with others is important, meaningful human relations involve qualities like genuine care, concern and understanding.

Human relations refers to the ‘processes of effective motivation of individuals in a given situation’ so as to achieve greater human satisfaction.
and also help to achieve defined goals. Motivation means act(s) of inducement. Inducement to act can be done by offering recognition, appreciation, sense of participation, improved working condition, etc.\textsuperscript{14} (Ranganathan 137).

Human relations emphasizes people rather than money, materials or machines and implies that people interact better in an organized setting rather than in a haphazard social contact. Moreover the ‘motivating’ activity possesses great significance in human relations indicating that managers are no longer the pushing or driving forces, but their role is to help release and guide the inner drives of human beings who alone are capable of producing an output greater than the sum of their inputs if properly motivated\textsuperscript{15} (Dwivedi 15).

Human relations means relationship that should exist and be cultivated and practiced by management. The goals of human relations are:

- To gain better understanding of one’s self
- To broaden and sharpen sensitivity to the feelings of others, and
- To develop respect for others\textsuperscript{16} (Ahuja 516).

The study of human relations in the world of work is the study of practical attempts to achieve two separate goals:

- greater productivity at work, and
- greater human satisfaction within the organization\textsuperscript{17} (Benton and Halloran 4).

Human relations means relationship that should exist and be cultivated and practiced by management. It stands for the development of an effective organization. It is based on the recognition of human feelings and aspirations in the organization. It works in organizations where positive attitudes and ample understanding of the human side of organizations exist.
According to Subba Rao\textsuperscript{18} (441, 18), it definitely contributes to the improvement of human relations when all other functions of human resource management are performed effectively. The following are the measures to promote and maintain human relations:

(i) By promoting honesty among the individuals

(ii) By being frank to oneself and appreciating the frankness of others (Frankness clears misunderstanding and restores good relations)

(iii) By maintaining effective communication (Disputes can be effectively handled only when the manager is effective in his communication)

(iv) By developing sensitivity to others’ feelings and an ability to appreciate others’ ideas

(v) By becoming a good leader and thereby bringing cohesion in the group one leads (This can contribute to the improvement of human relations)

(vi) By speaking about your own mistakes before criticizing the others

(vii) By requesting the others instead of issuing direct orders

(viii) By praising the subordinates publicly even for the slight improvement

(ix) By making the other people happy about doing the thing you suggest

(x) By winning the people to your way of thinking by means of showing respect for the other man’s opinions and ideas

(xi) By making one’s home and personal life happier (this will help in a long way in maintaining harmonious human relations with others as he would be in the life position of ‘I am OK’ to some extent)
(xii) By treating the subordinates with dignity and respect

(xiii) By understanding all the human needs and giving due weightage in satisfying them

(xiv) By helping the people in the team performing their duties.

The study of human relations will not enable us to change problem persons by means of clever techniques but it will develop awareness of factors, positive as well as negative, to which we can adapt ourselves and our programs. Human relations means working with people, not doing things to them.\(^9\) (Hepner 13).

We need to have meaningful human relationships with people in our work situation, in our social lives, and in our home and family circles. When one is able to achieve this, one’s life will be a warm, secure harbor where he can drop anchor and be ‘at home’\(^{20}\) (Ellenson 294).

Recent years have witnessed a significant development in the concept of human relations and importance of its skills in almost every type of work setting.

1.1.1 Human relations in Libraries

In a service organization like library most of the job requirements are centred around people. Therefore, in the context of a library, human relations means a systematic development of skills for knowledge handling and effective utilization of the resources for growth and advancement.

Libraries and information units have become increasingly involved in management practices, as pressures from their parent bodies (local authorities, educational institutions, industrial and professional firms) impel them to justify their services in relation to user needs as they adopt more systematic approaches to management\(^{21}\) (Jordan 1).
Human relations is the essence of productivity in librarianship. It forms the basis of interaction between the user and the staff, senior librarian and subordinates and professionals and library systems\textsuperscript{22} (Thamaraiselvi 333).

Creation of an understanding and maintaining cordial relationship with all the members of the community from the part of a library could be termed as human relations as far as a library is concerned.

Libraries are people centred. Human resource development is one of its principal focus. It is the quality of human resource performance, which decides the quality of the library service. The root problem towards this approach is the lack of appreciation for the human system as the power source of creativity. It is from the same human system, organization can derive energy for effective organizational change\textsuperscript{23} (Meera 155).

Human relations are very important to achieve the goals of the library for which high morale has to be built among the staff. The staff should develop capabilities towards understanding, appreciation and solution of problems.

In order to create excellent human relations, Abdul Majid Baba\textsuperscript{24} (25, 24) advocates the following measures to be adopted:

(i) Improve working conditions

(ii) Provide facilities for health of the staff and their recreation

(iii) Form staff associations to look after interests of the employees

(iv) Provide employee participation in decision making

(v) Use democratic approach in staff organization, keeping in view the sense of participation

(vi) Hold regular staff meetings at different levels

(vii) Provide facilities and encouragement for continuing education
(viii) Provide incentives and encouragement

(ix) Show understanding of the individual difficulties and problems as well as try

(x) To solve these on the basis of understanding of the human relations. (This is for chief librarians and senior administrators only)

The great success of library service basically depends on the ‘human relations’ with the superordinates, equals, subordinates and finally with the readers. A standard conduct based on courtesy, honour and ethics which guides the practitioner in his human relations with clients and colleagues. A library professional owes certain obligations to the library’s public, its books, the professional organizations and to himself.\(^{(25)}\) (Kanthimathi 74).

Libraries being service organizations, maintenance of healthy and harmonious human relations is very essential for the achievement of the goals of the institution. Human relations constitute various factors which are part and parcel of the activities carried out in the library and experienced by the library personnel.

According to Vijayasudha\(^{(26)}\) (2, 26) human relations within the library could mean working with:

(i) Professionals and others;

(ii) Grouped into different departments of the library;

(iii) Motivating them to put in their best;

(iv) Work together to achieve specific objectives set for them from time to time;

(v) Encouraging them to work cooperatively as a team;

(vi) Effectively coordinating the work of several departments;

(vii) Ensuring achievement of the ultimate objective of the library;
(viii) At the same time, consciously obtain for the subordinates the satisfaction of their needs.

In this context the importance of the nature of librarian as told by Tagore\(^{27}\) (1, 27) is very significant. 'That library alone can be called hospitable which shows an eagerness to invite readers to the feast at its disposal- it is such hospitality that makes a library big, not its size. That the readers make the library, is not the whole truth; the library likewise makes the readers'.

Much depends upon the service provided by the library staff as majority of the readers expect good and cordial behaviour from the staff while providing service. The library staff should display service-mindedness. The library professionals should have the following human relations qualities\(^{28}\) (Johry 111):

- clarity in instruction
- accepting superior's directions without hesitation
- rapport to superiors
- ability to project good things to superiors
- good interdepartmental relations
- effective communicator
- direct approach with other departments for information
- informing superiors of his decisions, and
- understanding the stages and skills of negotiation and compromise.

As far as a library is concerned the librarian should have qualities of leadership. He should be able to lead and inspire his subordinates. Among equals there should be fellow feeling. With regard to the subordinate
members of staff, each member should be responsible and feel that his work is also essential for the working of the total system.

The most difficult aspect of running an organization, be it a library or a company, is the human aspect. Modern management technique or technology cannot work successfully unless the people involved are first respected as individuals. Treating the employees humanely and respecting their individuality will win the dedication and loyalty of the employees.

The creed of respecting individuals must start from the top but must flow down to each and every supervisor and manager. Such an environment, in turn, fosters a spirit of camaraderie among the employees. The friendly atmosphere will minimize conflicts and tensions at the workplace. Quality of human interactions is what life is about. Human potential has a good chance of flowering to its best when interaction is free and good (Murthy 18).

According to Ranganathan (26, 30) the staff should remember that library service is social service. Their joy should be derived from the joy blossoming on the faces of readers served to their satisfaction. The stuff of which the staff is made, the relation among the staff, and the staff atmosphere, will affect very intimately the service of the library. If these relations are bad, neither good buildings, nor good collections, nor efficient methods will be of use. The members of the staff should be on the most cordial terms among themselves.

Prompt and efficient service which is carried out cheerfully will establish and maintain good relationship. This indeed will bring popularity, prominence and prestige to a library. The efficiency and effectiveness of a library will be measured by the service rendered to its users. An optimistic approach and thinking among the library staff towards one another should be able to release to their energy and to raise spirit to render the library service with a sense of responsibility and social obligation.
Libraries have become useful for all in general and are considered to be indispensable for universities as the standards of study, teaching and research heavily depend on the services rendered by the university libraries.

University libraries have always developed in association with scholars and researchers in advancing the cause of higher education and research. Good scholars need libraries and good libraries attract good scholars. This interaction is the dominant theme in the development of academic libraries. Therefore it is usual with scholars and academicians to speak of the library as the central organization of a University.\(^{31}\) (Jacobkutty A-53).

A university library having better human resource policies backed by human relations, would be able to attract people with greater capability and achievement motivation. Thus there will be an overall improvement in the human resource practices and human relations in libraries. The relation between the university and its library is just analogous to the relationship of human body and the heart.

The basic fact is that the efficiency of a library depends on the performance of its staff members. And the performance of the library staff is dependent on many factors. Some of these factors contribute towards positive performance, and some of them towards negative. The positive factors ensure better output and the negative ones minimize it. If the output of staff is to be maximized, the negative factors will have to be eliminated and the positive factors will have to be strengthened\(^{32}\) (Prasher 133).

According to Prasher\(^{33}\) (136, 33), there is no alternative to better human material. A good librarian should possess “adaptability, awareness, common sense, courtesy, discrimination, enthusiasm, imagination, initiative, judgement, leadership, maturity, originality, responsibility, tact, understanding, willingness, vitality and zeal; a feeling of cooperation, experimentation, innovation and participation; and ability to be constructive,
creative, decisive, expressive and receptive; and a truly professional point of view.

1.2 User perception in university libraries

A library exists only at the moment when the three components of its trinity—the reader, the books and the staff—are in purposive contact with one another. The three components should relate to one another. But the most significant component of the trinity is the user.

The attitude and interest of the user regarding the services provided by the library form the base of a library system. Users are the backbone of the library as the system will not exist without them.

Behavioural research in librarianship reflects and reports the way libraries are currently designed and operated, the way librarians currently interact with patrons, and the way the community currently uses—or does not use—libraries. It does not deal with the essence of library service, the way human beings process and use information (Kawatra 37).

In the context of the library, user should be the king and everything should revolve around him. Users are the most important factor without which information system loses its whole purpose. The user of the system puts the system to its purpose.

Particularly in the library set up, it is extremely important to understand who the users are, what their needs are and how those needs can be satisfied by the library. If people are not using the library enough, it is probably because they are not being taken care of enough. The user has been the much-neglected element in the whole information business. It is only recently that emphasis on the user has been laid through the various user studies conducted (Laloo 23).
In a library or an information centre the users are the last link or the recipient of the information in the communication cycle (Devarajan 18). The success of any information system depends considerably on how best the system design is based on a close and accurate understanding of the users (Sridhar 7).

The enhanced importance of the User is causing Libraries to reappraise their roles and the services that they provide. Such a re-appraisal will lead to a more user-oriented, more outgoing direction with importance attached to service (Sampath 163).

Ranganathan advocates that the user should be treated by the library as if he/she were the God visiting the library as a guest. According to him the reader-guest is supreme to you (Gupta 124).

In order to maintain good human relations with library users, the library staff need to make use of good communication channels. The staff should possess effective communication skills in order to interact well with each other and with users in order to understand their requirements and expectations so that they are able to fulfil the same.

The people who use the library make it great. The information centre and libraries are known less for the collection they house than for the quality of access they provide to their users (Heera Kapasi 250).

In today’s world much depends upon the service provided to the library users. Their perception with regard to the facilities, services, working of different sections and arrangement of collection can be assessed whereby improvements can be made in the library system.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The problem for the present study has been stated as ‘Human Relations in University Libraries in Kerala’.
1.4 Definition of key terms

Human Relations

World Book Encyclopedia\textsuperscript{41} defines human relations as the field of study that deals with group behaviour and interactions between people.

In the present study human relations refers to the art of getting along well with people in order to promote individual efficiency while achieving the organizational goals.

University Libraries:

ALA Glossary of Library Terms\textsuperscript{42} (Thompson 146) defines university library as a library or a system of libraries, established and maintained by a university to meet the needs of its students and faculty.

In the present study university library refers to the central library of the university which satisfies the intellectual needs of the users.

Kerala

The southern most state in India.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1. To study the human relations among the library staff in university libraries in Kerala.

2. To assess the user perception regarding the functioning of university libraries in Kerala.

3. To examine the contribution of the factors of human relations towards the performance of the staff.

4. To ascertain the factors which contribute towards the functioning of the university libraries from the perception of library users.

5. To identify the weak areas in the functioning of the university libraries.
6. To provide suggestions to improve the human relations among library staff members and perception of users regarding the functioning of university libraries.

1.6 Hypotheses of the study

1. Human relations in university libraries will be identical
2. User perception will not be identical in the university libraries
3. The contribution of the factor working conditions will be significant to the human relations in all the University libraries.
4. The contribution of the factor library services will be significant in all the University libraries towards user perception.

1.7 Need and significance of the study

The effectiveness of management in organizations has a direct impact on the quality of life of human beings. Managing human resources is a central concern of every manager in any organization. Of late, it has been realized as a resource which cannot have a substitute. The personal needs of the employees can have significant effects on the organizations themselves.

Motivation theories of human relations school argue that concern for output and concern for people go hand in hand, and that a satisfied staff will be a high-performing staff.

The university library can achieve its goals and objectives with effective human relations which in turn will result in the successful functioning of the same.

In a university library system, where the professionals have the task of imparting information for study and research, performance of the staff is of utmost importance.
Researchers have observed frequently that employees who are happy with their jobs are the most likely to satisfy customers. Treating employees well puts them in a better frame of mind to treat their customers well.

The satisfaction of the library users depends upon the factors like availability of resources and cordial relations exhibited by the staff. User satisfaction being the ultimate goal of library services, compromise on aspects in this front cannot be justified.

This is an attempt to study the human relations existing among the library staff in the four major university libraries in Kerala. The performance of the staff is assessed by measuring various aspects related to their work. As the users of the library are the recipients of the services provided by the staff members, their perception with regard to the functioning of the libraries have been assessed. Moreover the contribution of the factors which comprise human relations of staff and perception of the users as far as a university library is concerned has been ascertained. The attitude of the university librarians regarding various aspects related to the day to day management of libraries also has been taken into consideration.

1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

The present study tries to assess the human relations of library staff and perception of users with regard to university libraries in Kerala. The study finds out the perception of the library staff with regard to the human relations which exists in the university libraries. The perception of the library users with regard to the functioning of libraries is also being assessed. The perceptions of the personnel and users are being considered for drawing conclusions about the university libraries of Kerala. The scope of the study is limited to the major university libraries of Kerala state namely, Calicut University Library, Cochin University of Science & Technology Library, Kochi, Kerala University Library, Thiruvananthapuram and Mahatma Gandhi University Library,
Kottayam. The remaining university libraries have been excluded owing to their difference in administrative set-up and short structure (less number of staff).

One section of the study deals with the human relations of the library staff. This concept has been measured by carrying out a survey on a sample of the library staff members who work in the central libraries of the four major university libraries. The university library system consists of the central library and other department libraries. But the present study has not included the staff in the departmental libraries as their supervisory authority will be the head of the department who will not be a library professional. Moreover the department library will have only one or two staff members. The data gathered from them will differ from those responses of staff members who are part of a central organization.

The second section deals with the user perception of functioning of university libraries. In order to assess the library user perception the users of the four major university libraries have been taken into account. The study does not take other types of libraries into consideration. The study is being undertaken in university libraries as the user community of university libraries is entirely different from that of other libraries from an intellectual point of view. The present study has included students, research scholars, teachers and the non-library staff members of the university in the sample. The above groups of members of the university library are mature human beings who have qualifications of graduation and more. Hence they will be having a clear perception regarding their choices and the ideal concept. Apart from this, they are more academically oriented than any other user group as they are part of the higher education and research wherein the role of the university library is vital.

The present study is limited to the major university libraries of Kerala State. Being a qualitative study, the limitations of any qualitative study is
applicable to this study also. The study does not take into account the other environmental aspects or matters related to the infrastructure of the university libraries.

1.9 Organisation of the report

The report is presented in eight chapters. The first chapter comprises introduction, problem of the study, definition of key terms, objectives and hypotheses, need and significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study and organization of the report.

The second chapter presents a profile of the four major university libraries taken up for study.

The third chapter reviews related literature of the problem under study.

The fourth chapter describes the methodology of the study. It consists of variables of the study, sample used for the study, sources of data, tools used for the study, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

The fifth chapter presents the analysis of the questionnaire for library staff.

The sixth chapter presents the analysis of the interview schedule for university librarians.

The seventh chapter gives the analysis of questionnaire for library users.

The eighth chapter presents the findings of the study, tenability of hypotheses, suggestions for improvement, suggestions from the library users and suggestions for further research.
References


