ABSTRACT

Automation has brought revolutionizing changes in the libraries of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) throughout the world. In fact the use of technology and especially Information Technology is so overwhelming that it has necessitated library managers to rethink their management strategies. Of particular concern to library management is the very important aspect of Human Resource Development or HRD. It has been an established fact that the human resources constitutes the most vital resources of any organization be it profit or non-profit. In today's knowledge society, the human knowledge is regarded as the real power. Thus the human resource of the HEI libraries needs to be nourished and developed properly for bringing maximum profit to the organization. Unless the human workforce is regularly trained and motivated, no other mechanism like automation can bring efficiency in the library routine jobs.

Automation of libraries in Higher Education Institutions is also going on in the North East region of India. However based on many studies conducted in NE India, it is felt that the automation activity is not going on smoothly due to lack of trained manpower. The core competencies and skills needed to work in the automation environment in libraries are quite different than the traditional skills. Therefore skill up gradation and development of library manpower of these HEIs can be achieved by HRD. Thus the present study was undertaken with the aim at finding some key issues regarding the prospects of HRD in the libraries of HEIs of North East India with special reference to library automation.

Taking consideration of the above objectives, a survey was undertaken covering 89 libraries of institutions of higher education (HEI) spread across the eight states of North East (NE) India viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The HEI covered in this study included Universities – both State Universities and Central Universities, Institutions of National importance like IIT, NIT and IIM, Technical Colleges and Degree Colleges. The study is based on the information collected from 125 library professionals of the HEIs libraries included in the study, which includes the Librarian and his professional staff. Questionnaire method was chiefly used for data collection. As and when possible, information was also collected through personal interviews with the librarian and library professional staff of the HEIs included in the study.

Data thus collected was analyzed through various statistical techniques. Analyzed data was tabulated and represented by suitable graphs. Data shows that automation activity has shot up during the last decade but majority of the HEI libraries of NE India under the study are still at the early stage of automation. The study showed that HRD is rarely found in the libraries of HEIs of NE India under the study. The study also established the fact that the professionals working in the HEI libraries under the present study have obvious need for training in many areas of library automation like Web Design,
IT/Equipment maintenance, Operating Systems, Library Housekeeping software, Basic Computer orientation, OPAC/WebOPAC, and Intranet. The present study thus concludes that no formal HRD programs are followed in the libraries of HEI in N.E. India included in the study. Also, in the present study it was found that the library professionals are very much willing to participate in various training and continuing education activities. Majority of the library professionals felt that the training activities had/would greatly improve their performance at workplace. The fact that HRD is very important for keeping library manpower up-to-date on technology and that there is need for improvement of HRD in the automated libraries were some other observations made in the present study. The present study was able to successfully defend the hypotheses postulated for the study.

Apparently, the study suggested numerous methods by which the prospect of HRD in the HEI libraries can be fulfilled with special reference to automation. The study result also indicates that through enhancing practicality in the HR Planning and Development in the HEI libraries of NE India would contribute significant positive impact towards not only improving performance and skill of the library manpower but also tremendously helping in boosting moral and motivation level of the library manpower.

*Keywords: Information: Library Automation, Higher Education, Human Resource Development, Training, Organizational Development.*