CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Paradigm shift in the libraries of institutions of Higher Education:

In the context of the Institutions of Higher Education (HEI), a library is considered to be a vital sub-unit as a learning resource. In today's high-tech learning environment, the library as a learning resource is taking up increasingly more academic space and time in the life of a learner. So, the improvement of the library of a higher educational institution gets utmost importance for retrieving information. Moving up with the other parts of the world, the libraries of HEIs of North East (NE) India, within their limited capacity, are also trying their best to improve the library activities by adopting automation technologies and a qualified workforce.

The North Eastern part of India comprising of the eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim (the last to be included in the region) and Tripura, constitutes a land surface of 262,230 square kilometres where a population of 38.9 million belonging to different ethnic and cultural groups inhabits. Topographically the region is a mixture of hills and plains. While Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim are almost entirely hilly, about four fifths of Assam is plain. Manipur and Tripura have both plain areas and hilly tracts. The hills account for about 70 per cent area and accommodate about 30 per cent of population of the region and the plains constituting the remaining 30 per cent of area hold about 70 per cent of its population. Wide variation in altitude coupled with abundance of rainfall has given rise to wide variations in climatic conditions within the region which in turn has endowed the region with rich bio-diversity. The richness of bio-diversity of the region is almost matched by its ethnic diversity. The region is a meeting place of large number of races, creeds, cultures and languages.

As in the rest of India the growth of Higher education in NE India picked up only after independence. According to the UGC Annual report 2005-2006 there
are 13 Universities in North East India. Out of these 10 are Central Universities and 3 State Universities all located in Assam, and one Deemed University (NERIST). In numbers, Assam alone has 6 universities followed by Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh with 2 Universities and rest of the states have one University each. According to the list of colleges recognised by UGC and accessed on 09 December 2007 (http://www.ugc.ac.in/inside/ugc_recog_college.html), North East states have 338 UGC registered colleges. Among these, Assam has 212 Degree Colleges followed by Manipur (50), Tripura (16), Meghalaya (18), Mizoram (18), Nagaland (14), Arunachal Pradesh (7) and Sikkim (3). In addition there are 3 institution of national importance in NE India, i.e. 1 Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and 1 National Institute (NIT) in Assam, 1 Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Meghalaya, and also various Technical Colleges like Medical, Veterinary Colleges, Engineering Colleges and Polytechnic Institutions. The student enrolment in the states of the region per colleges is about 529 while it is 653 in case of India. The student enrolment in higher education in the states varies rather widely. The highest enrolment is in Assam followed by Manipur and Tripura. The states in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim have the least number of students enrolled in higher education. The participation in higher education is highest in Manipur (9.42%), which is remarkable when compared with the overall participation rate (6.9%) of the country.

However, the HEIs in the NE India do not have sufficiently strong Libraries which can meet the requirement of its readers. One of the major problems is the lack of properly trained library professionals which is supported by various studies such as Barman (2007), Barua and Barman (2008), Singh (2008), Sarmah (2008), Sinha, Chakraborty & Bhattachatjee (2007) and others. In the recent past, the Central Government had started to modernize these libraries primarily by initiating automation. But, due to lack of properly trained library professionals such initiatives have not achieved the desired goals. Therefore, the scenario in comparison with the HEI Libraries in the metropolitan cities of the country, the libraries in the NE India are lagging far behind.

These HEI libraries are by nature of academic type but they are also serving general public from the society besides serving their own academic community. The importance of these libraries in society is immense. As aptly commented by Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission of UGC as quoted by Dutta (2004) that “library is the heart of all university's work, directly so, as regards its research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work, which derives its life from research work. Scientific research needs a library as well as its laboratories, while for humanistic research the library is both library and laboratory in one”. So the transmission and progress of knowledge through teaching and research is not possible without the existence of adequately stocked libraries. However the human resources of these libraries are often a neglected lot which is hindering the process of automation and modernization of the libraries. Without a well-trained human workforce no library whatever technology they adopt, can give satisfaction to the user. Proper Human Resource Development (HRD) is prerequisite to counter the impact of automation and thus promote overall development of the organization.
Indian universities and other institutes of higher education and research today have made a significant contribution to transmission of knowledge and enquiry into frontiers of science and technology. In the field of traditional subjects of arts and humanities as well as in pure sciences, applied physics and chemistry, mathematics and in areas of technology, the universities and other HEIs have been playing a leading role to transform the country into a modern industrialized, technologically advanced state. The ushering of green revolution and tremendous progress in dairy development have made India a major food-producing country on one hand; on the other hand, its development of space technology, production and launching of indigenous satellites, development of peaceful nuclear energy have brought it into the forefront of technologically advanced nations to which a large number of developing countries looks for training and guidance. In this context the importance of libraries in the higher education process is even more significant.

Truman Commission of Higher Education as quoted by Dutta (2004) has stated that librarians are equal to the instructional staff in their importance for higher quality of instruction and research. It brings home the point that the usefulness of the librarian begins where that of the teacher ends in satisfying the individual's inquisitiveness for learning and research. There is a permanent relationship between development of research resources and the initiative of the researcher towards research projects. Without adequate research resources, which store the results of past and present research, the research workers are decidedly handicapped in planning new studies. It is the library that gathers research resources in response to the needs of current teaching and research.

In present time, there has been a continuous concern about the role and status of the academic library. Many authors have pointed out that academic libraries will have to change and the roles and responsibilities of librarians need reconceptualization.

During the last decade the discussion about change in academic libraries focuses most frequently on the automation of the library mainly Information and Communication Technology (ICT) developments, the implications of information in digital format, new learning and teaching concepts, new economic models and legal frameworks. Many authors discuss expectations for the academic library in today's information age, an array of new functions and partnerships for library staff that flow from changes in society and higher education, the implications that these changes within the library will have for all parts of the academy and what will the changes mean for students, faculty, academic administrators, technical staff, and library staff themselves. Several authors believe that these changes could catapult the library into a central role within the teaching/learning enterprise if appropriate adaptations are made; if not, they could further remove the library from the institutional center.

According to Li (2009) at the start or the 21st century, academic libraries explore service developments to support a series of new scenarios:

• new publication and scholarly communication scenarios;
• more intensive use and delivering of digital resources;
• serving increasingly heterogeneous student population;
• continuing high demand from students for traditional resources;
• new modes of study, including ICT-based and distance learning, with which libraries have had little involvement in the past;
• ever-reducing levels of resources, particularly in staffing, leading to enormous pressures on individual staff and a severe challenge to management.

It is believed that ICT offers librarians opportunities to redefine how information and associated instruction are communicated to students and faculty. As information systems increase in complexity and new resources continue to spring up, librarians are becoming indispensable counselors in the electronic environment. They are called upon to assist faculty and students in identifying and evaluating many sources, and to serve as true advisors and teachers independently of time and place rather than as custodians of collections. In ICT context, the university librarian will have to rethink and reassess information strategy, offering alternative modes of delivery. Many academic libraries are experimenting with online information literacy tutorials, courses and instruction. New roles for librarians in the learning and teaching context are discussed by many authors like McKnight (2010), including:

• partnering with discipline faculty and other specialists for delivery of information and instruction;
• designing instructional programs for information access;
• teaching students and faculty how to access information, whatever its format or location, and how to evaluate what they find;
• serving as consultants on information resources, issues, and problems;
• developing and implementing information policy;
• creating information access tools;
• selecting, organizing, and preserving information in all formats;
• serving as leaders and facilitators in introducing information technologies and ensuring their effective use.

A general belief is that the library staff’s changing role will benefit students, faculty, university administrators and librarians. Automation in the libraries of HEIs began slowly in India due to number of problems such as lack of infrastructure, trained manpower and finance. But lately automation has picked up in the academic libraries in India as the central government has pumped in huge money to revamp the entire higher education sector in India. With the setting up of the Information and library Network (INFLIBNET) under the University Grants Commission (UGC) began a new chapter in the networking and automation of the university and college libraries in India. Studies are abundant on the status of automation in the higher education libraries India. Although the rate of progress and adoption of new technologies depends upon several factors such as user acceptance, expertise, finance etc. But as Singh (2008) finds, the indications are that the technologies are making a forceful entry into the libraries of India including North East India. Adoption of technology has created new challenges before the manpower of these libraries and the administration as well.
Thus, human resource development (HRD) continues to be a leading concern of library management as the tools of information handling, from collection to its ultimate dissemination, continue to become high-tech. As demographic trends anticipate a growth in the proportion of workers for whom technology is new, training and maintaining a productive workforce will become an even more critical challenge.

Technology has impacted everyone, but it has become an especially challenging issue for organizations like the academic library particularly in context of its human resources. As Barman and Devchoudhury (2010) notes that information professional has multifarious roles in the modern library as a librarian, record manager, archivist, information manager, information adviser/instructor, information broker, and system and networking administrator. In the present digital environment the information professionals should have multiple competencies. At the same time since technology changes rapidly the skills of the information professionals needs to be updated continuously. Thus the solution lies in effective human resource development (HRD).

1.2 Problem Statement:

Managing people is definitely a challenge both at strategic or even organizational levels. Technology puts forth new challenges for library manpower and administrators alike. In North East India there are many Higher Education Institutions whose libraries are in the process of automation. Thus, human resources should be well managed and developed in alignment with the organizational goals and strategies. Unless the human workforce is regularly trained and motivated, no other mechanism like automation can bring efficiency in the library routine jobs. This very fact is reflected when we visit the libraries in many HEIs in the North East India. Although now sufficient funds and resources are available for automation yet the quality of services and the expertise of the library staff is lacking far behind compared to rest of India. Therefore, the prospects of HRD in these HEI libraries are worth studying. Defining improvement in human resource development effectiveness is to be cultivated in order to encounter the arisen issues that exist in Higher Education Institute (HEI) library of NE India as below:

Technology Challenges - Technology provides challenges to library manpower development. At present we see various housekeeping operations in the library being computerised. And at the same time computers are getting networked and connected to Internet. A whole lot of new issues are before the library professionals today starting from how we acquire information, store them and finally distribute to the users. At the same time as technology is fast changing in present situations, there is need for a flexible manpower development program in libraries attached to HEIs.

Shortages of skilled employees – Human resource (HR) are vital to all sectors of human development, including the library. Lack of skilled manpower to maintain the automated systems and to provide proper e-information service to the academic community is a main problem. As reported by Chandraiah (2003),
Suku and Pillai (2005) etc., there is a shortage of qualified manpower in the university libraries in India. The issue has become especially important in the higher education sector in recent years because there is a growing demand for modernization of the libraries attached to the HEIs to suit the changing environment in this sector. Barman (2007), Singh (2008), Sarmah (2008), Sinha, Chakarborty and Bhattacharjee (2007) et al. in their studies also found lack of trained manpower in IT as a constraint to automation in libraries attached to HEI particularly in NE India.

Continuing professional development (CPD) – CPD provides an alternative scope for development of the library professionals. The library professionals of the North East India pursue these but there is need to study about their roles. Sinha (2008) rightly concludes that the importance of skilled library and information professional workforce with the knowledge of computer has been rising in our country for extending ICT based computerised and digital library services. The rapid progress in the educational technologies, pattern of imparting education and in ICT posed major challenges before the professionals to enhance ICT skills and capability of LIS professionals to serve the library users effectively. Therefore proper HRD / Manpower policies should be framed for continuing education and for in-house training and hands on experience for the LIS professionals to use modern technologies and electronic gadgets and give ICT based computerised and digital library services to the end users in networked and digital library environment.

Lack of effective training and performance appraisal- The important factor in implementing human resources development in library is in need of effective training and ways in measuring the performance of their workers training. A system of performance measures is needed in order to monitor improvements among library professionals. Both these are utterly missing in the context of Indian libraries.

Worker Motivation - Employees are de-motivated when their work is not recognised and not feeling that their participation is important in making the institution successful. As Baker (2004) agreed that money is powerful motivator and claim well-designed reward system will lead to higher productivity for the employer and extra pay for the employees for their effort. When implementing new technology in the library such motivating techniques need to be applied. But they are seldom practised in the Indian libraries.

Management commitment and Leadership- For successful implementation of automation in libraries commitment and leadership on the part of management is much needed. Studies including by Barman and Singh (2007) show that there are cases where librarians have got training in automation but it is not practically reflected in the institutions they serve. The reluctant in taking initiative in planning and implementation of human resource development will lead to inefficiency which will affect productivity and performance.

The problems discussed above needs to be studied in detail as they are directly related to human resource of the Higher Education Institute libraries and use of technology in them. Keeping these issues in mind the present study is aimed at investigating the prevailing human resource development (HRD) scenario in the
libraries of the HEIs where automation has been done in the North east India. What is the state of automation in these institutions? How is the manpower prepared for working in these new environments? What is the attitude of the library manpower towards these new technologies? Is the library authority supportive of HRD of the library staff? These are the most pertinent questions if we think about human resource development in the HEI libraries of North East India. Should there be a different approach to HRD with regard to automation of the libraries? Or should we continue with the same age old practices? There can be obstacles for manpower development. These can be personal, institutional, financial or topological. What are the major obstacles? Only a detail study of the prevalent HRD practices in the HEI libraries can give proper answer to these problems. This study will also help to understand the best HRD practices that can suit automation of the HEI libraries in NE India.

1.3 Objectives:

Over the past years the libraries of HEIs in North East India has seen a surge in automation activities. As such the need for Human Resource Development (HRD) in these libraries has increased tremendously. The rapid change in technology has necessitated that the library manpower be kept regularly trained and up-to-date. Obviously there are many continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities available for the working library professionals but still the higher educational institutions cannot shy away from the responsibility of keeping the library manpower trained at their own cost.

Keeping in mind the importance of Human Resource Development in libraries with automation, the study is being carried out with the following objectives:

1. To understand the HRD needs of the library professionals working in the libraries of HEIs of NE India.

2. To understand the HRD practices prevalent and scope for improvement in context of automation of the HEI libraries of NE India.

3. To reveal the problems of HRD in the automated libraries attached to HEI of NE India.

4. To identify the methods and techniques in the HRD practice in the HEI libraries of NE India.

5. To suggest some important aspects of human resource development (HRD) for keeping the library manpower up-to-date and motivated in the automated libraries of institutions of higher education (HEI) in NE India.
1.4 Hypotheses:

Library automation has become a necessity in the present changing environment of higher education. Literature abounds on the automation of libraries of HEIs in India and NE India, but we will find very little on the human resource development in these libraries. On the above assumptions, the following descriptive hypotheses are formulated for verification under the study:

1. Although HRD is very important for keeping library manpower up-to-date, but in automated libraries of HEIs in North East India it is very much neglected.

2. There is no formal or structured HRD programs followed in the libraries of HEI in N.E. India.

3. There is need for improvement of HRD in the HEI libraries of North East India to support the library automation activities.

1.5 Scope:

The present study was undertaken to find out the status of HRD in the libraries of HEIs in NE India with specific interest on library automation. The study was undertaken to find out specifically the levels of computer literacy of library staff in these libraries and the mode of sponsorship for computer training programmes. The various aspects involved in staff training and development such as the need of training, methods of training, training attendance and their effects on the staff, and problems encountered in attending training programs were also studied. The study included the libraries of HEIs of North East India. This study was solely based on the information gathered from the Librarian and the library professional staff working in the selected libraries of HEIs through questionnaire. Survey was conducted during the year 2007 – 2010. Fourteen (14) University Libraries of NE India were involved in the study, out of which ten were Central universities, 3 were State-owned Universities, and one Deemed university. The study also included three (3) libraries of institutes of National importance, fifteen (15) libraries of technical colleges and almost one hundred forty one (141) “B-Grade” or above “B-Grade” degree colleges accredited by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) till year 2007, were taken up for the study. These colleges have good library infrastructure and library automation as accessed by NAAC. Questionnaires were sent to these 172 libraries of HEIs. However many of the HEI did not respond to the questionnaires. Again some of the college libraries of HEIs had not started automation, so they were not included in the study. Ultimately the final study was based on the 89 libraries of HEIs which had started automation and responded to the questionnaires (ANNEXURE III). The study did not include Private Institutions of higher education, nor does it include institutions purely set up to provide higher learning in distance mode.
1.6 Methodology:

The present study requires data to be collected from various HEIs. Under these circumstances the most appropriate method found to be suitable was the survey method. A library survey may be defined as a systematic collection of data concerning a library, its activities, operations, personnel working in the library and its users. Following techniques was used for data collection in the present study:

Questionnaire technique was very important in the context of the present study. Two sets of questionnaire were prepared - one set for (i) Librarian, and the other set for (ii) Library staff. Majority of the questions in both set were of close ended type and very few were open. Many of the questions are based on Likert Scaling method. The Likert Scale is a popular format of questionnaire that is used in educational research, especially in the field of special education. It was invented by Rensis Likert, an educator and psychologist, who advocated an employee-centered organization. Since the inception of this psychometric scale, there have been several versions based on the number of points in the scale. That is, the Likert scale can be four-point, five-point, six-point, and so on. The even-numbered scale usually forces a respondent to choose while the odd-numbered scale provides an option for indecision or neutrality. The responses are coded so that the strongly positive gets the highest score and a Likert scale is then constructed by taking those items the scores for which correlate most closely with the overall scores (Bruce & Yearley, 2006).

The questionnaires used for the present research uses 3 – point scale, 4- point and 5- point scales. A typical Likert 5 point scaling has following order of response:

1. No Need
2. Mild Need
3. Neutral
4. Strong Need
5. Very Strong Need

These questionnaires were distributed to the librarians and other professional staff through general post, Email and in some cases by hand as possible. In cases where the researcher could not visit the library personally questionnaires were sent and received by post and Email. Questionnaires were accompanied by a forwarding letter from guide and a self-addressed envelope. Observation technique was used especially to have a direct contact between the subjects and object involving intellectual processing of the subject or any part of it.

As and when, necessary interview technique was used for data collection. As many as 50 face – to - face interviews were conducted by the researcher with librarians and the library staff. Its importance arises from the necessity to come into contact with individuals to get access to facts and opinions.

Besides, observation, questionnaire and interview the researcher scanned documentary sources – primary, secondary, tertiary including micro and macro
literature for obtaining relevant information.

1.7 Limitations of the study:

The states in the North-East India have been distanced topographically by the nature. Considering the vastness of geographical coverage of NE India and its various HEIs spread across sometimes inhospitable terrain, a study of this kind is beset with many difficulties. Consequently the researcher is fully aware of its limitations. There are almost 338 degree colleges, 10 Central Universities, 3 State Universities, 1IIT, 1 IIM, 2 NITs, 1 Deemed university and 12 private universities in the entire North East India covering a total area of 262,230 square kilometers. These institutions are located wide apart and in difficult terrain. Due to financial, transportation and time constraints, it was not possible to cover the entire lot of institutions especially the degree college libraries in the entire North east India. From documentary and other sources it was assumed that till 2007 the automation of majority of college libraries in the NE India were not started or at the very early stage. The researcher therefore included only those colleges which were assessed and accredited with B grade or above by NAAC in 2007 in the first phase. However, the university libraries of NE India were in a more privileged position regarding automation and therefore covered under the study.

This study was purely based on the survey undertaken by the researcher. So, the inherent limitations of the survey method might effect on the outcome of the research work. To avoid such effects the researcher has tested and modified the questionnaire as far as possible. Also the responses were cross checked as much as possible. The researcher as and when possible has personally visited the libraries under study to get first-hand knowledge of the situations actually present in the libraries. These have added even more value to the present study.

1.8 Chapter Plan:


The first chapter provides an introduction to the study elaborating the problem, objectives and justification of the study, scope of the study, limitation, hypotheses of the study, and methodology adopted.

The second chapter discusses the review of the related literature in connection with the present study.

Chapter three deal with the institutions of higher education and the role of the library. This chapter also contains a detail discussion about the structure of
higher education system in India, the changes going on in this sector. It ends with an account of the impact of such changes on the library.

In chapter four, an account of library automation is discussed relating to its genesis, its necessity and application. The status of library automation in India has been discussed specifically automation of library in the HEIs. It finally ends with an account of the issues and specifically library manpower issues in automation.

In chapter five, a comprehensive discussion on the concept of Human Resource Development (HRD) has been made. This chapter also includes a theoretical discussion on the assumption, philosophy, features, objectives and subsystems of HRD. It has also discussion on the relation between human resource development (HRD) and human resource management (HRM).

In chapter six, a detail discussion of the role of HRD in HEI libraries has been made keeping in mind the various effects of automation on the library personals. This chapter also discusses the new roles and competencies of the library professionals necessitated by library automation and the challenges thereof before the library managers. The role of different organizations in HRD activities has been also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter seven presents the survey analysis and discussions on the findings. It also presents the survey data systematically in tabulated form. These are also well supplemented by graphical representations.

Chapter eight discusses the major findings of the present study systematically and provides overall conclusion and suggestions to be adopted so that the human resource development can be much more useful for the libraries of HEIs in the context of their automation.

The Bibliography and the Annexures are appended at the end of this work.