CHAPTER – 8

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Findings:

The analysis of the data collected in this survey based study, has brought into the light many issues related to the HRD aspects of the libraries of higher education institutes (HEI) in North East (NE) India. Evaluation of the results shows that there is lack of HRD practices in majority of these HEI libraries. To find out the prospect of HRD especially in relation to the automation of the libraries it was decided to first, understand the status of automation of the HEI Libraries in NE India. Consequently in case of the libraries of HEI with automation data collected was analysed by statistical techniques. The major findings are discussed below:

The major findings of the present study are summarised below:

1. Data shows 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.

2. Majority of the libraries (82%) of the 89 HEIs included in the study are using SOUL package and Libsys is also becoming important. KOHA an open source software is also used.

3. Very few HEIs (19%) under the study have fully automated libraries. Majority of the libraries of HEIs in NE India under the study are only partially automated and the process is going on.

4. In case of automation of the Housekeeping operations, all the libraries of HEIs under the study have automated their Cataloguing function. In the area of networking 78% of the libraries have LAN and 88% have Internet connectivity.

5. Barcode system is another area of automation which has gained popularity among the libraries. The present study shows that 11% of the libraries of HEIs have barcode facilities. But interview with the library authority revealed that many more libraries are planning for it in the future.

6. RFID system is however present in only two of the HEI libraries of NE India under the study.
7. In the case of various categories of library staff working in these HEI libraries, it was found that 34% of them are professionals, and majority of them 66% are non-professionals. The ratio comes out to almost two nonprofessional staff against one professional staff.

8. With regards to qualifications of the library manpower working in these libraries it was found that majority of them were Graduates (G) and Post Graduates. The undergraduates constituted 44 per cent, as found under this study.

9. With regards to Professional qualifications of the library professionals it was found under the present study that majority of the library professionals have Master Degree in LIS. However very few of the library professionals have MPhil (6%), PhD (11%) or NET (6%) qualifications.

10. With regards to qualifications in information technology/ computer applications or others, it was found that only 7% has PGDCA/ PGDLAN qualifications.

11. A good HRD programme in any library presupposes the availability of plan or structure for updating skills of library manpower. But not a single HEI library of NE India under the study had a formal (Structured) HRD program or a separate HRD department to look after the training and development needs of the library manpower. However informal HRD activities do take place as found in the study but regarding this too only 2% of the Librarians admitted that there is very good provisions for updating skills of library manpower.

12. On the methods of training library professionals, majority of the librarians (62%) preferred both internal and external training methods.

13. Very often there is a view that the higher authorities of the higher educational institutions often neglect the necessity of keeping the library professionals up-to-date. This view has been found to be partially true as majority of the library professionals under the present study responded that only sometimes do the authorities respond to the training needs of the library staff. This implies that in most cases they neglect the training needs of the staff.

14. In order to support the HRD needs of the library staff it is necessary that the institution authorities should sponsor the library staff to attend training/continuing education activities. But the survey shows a mixed response from the library professionals. The majority (54%) responded that both self-sponsorship and institution sponsorship works within the HEIs. Only 21% of the professionals said that only institution sponsorship was present.

15. Library professionals training and development needs can be supported by sending them to training programs, workshops, conferences, seminars etc. Library professionals of higher educational institutions in north east India under the study were found to take part in such activities. Most of the professionals have attended workshops and conferences/seminars. Very few have attended online training programs like Web conferences and Webinars.
16. Library professionals working in the higher education Institutions of North East India under the study are very much keen on receiving training opportunities if provided to them.

17. With respect to methods of training, on the job training programs and off the job training programs have their own advantages and disadvantages. The survey reveals that majority (74%) of the library professionals under the present study prefer on-the-job training programs.

18. In an automated environment the library professionals need to be trained in many aspects. The survey successfully accessed these training needs. The survey shows that the library professionals working in the libraries of HEIs in NE India under the present study have strong training needs in the areas including Web Design, IT/Equipment maintenance, Operating Systems, Library housekeeping software, Basic Computer orientation, OPAC/WebOPAC, and Intranet.

19. Library professionals working in the higher education institutions showed keen interest on various training methods. “Workshop”, “Audio or Videotape presentation”, and “Online tutorials” were preferred methods of training by the library professionals of the HEI libraries in NE India.

20. Majority of the library professionals under this study felt that training is important for them because of two reasons - “to work towards job enrichment/efficiency”, and “For personal growth/greater job satisfaction”.

21. One of the chief aims of HRD in any organization is to improve the performance of the employees. Majority of the library professionals (61%) felt that the training activities had greatly improved their performance at workplace.

22. The three most important source of continuing education/training information for the library professionals are from professional publications (73%), from mailings and brochures (64%) and from co-workers and friends (62%).

23. It is often seen that library professionals could not attend training and other continuing education programs. For the library professionals working in the higher education institutions libraries in North East India, under the present study the two most common barriers expressed by them were “Lack of events at a convenient location”, “Lack of time”, and “Lack of support/permission from employers”. However majority of the library professionals preferred not to comment regarding the barriers they faced.

24. In majority of the HEI libraries included in this study, HRD activities like job rotation, rewarding staff and performance evaluation was not present.

Thus, the findings discussed above can help us to judge the hypotheses which were formulated in Chapter I.
Hypothesis 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.

This study shows that the graph of the automation activities in the libraries of HEI in North East India is increasing rapidly. The survey analysis shows that there is varying levels of training need among library manpower related to different aspect of automation in library. The statistical analysis shows that there are strong needs of training in areas like Web Design, IT/Equipment maintenance, Operating Systems, Library housekeeping software, Basic Computer orientation, OPAC/WebOPAC, and Intranet. This has been discussed in detail in section 7.2.9 of chapter 7. The above analysis shows that there obvious need for training in all the mentioned areas of library automation although the need level may vary from person to person and in individual areas of the library automation process. It is through HRD program that they can be trained and motivated for the successful implementation of the library automation. Thus the study vindicates the first hypothesis.

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

After receiving the Survey questionnaires from the 89 different libraries of HEIs in North East India and there subsequent analysis, it has been found as discussed in section 7.2.1 of chapter 7 that not a single HEI library of the North East region have any formal (Structured) HRD programs. The survey also found that none of these 89 HEI libraries had any person in charge of HRD of the library manpower. In the absence of any formal structured HRD programs the library managers find it difficult to get the library staff well trained and motivated to cooperate in the automation process. Thus this study proves the second hypothesis.

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

The study shows that there is lack of any formal HRD program in these libraries but the professionals of the libraries working in these HEI libraries do take part in various HRD activities either by themselves or sometimes through their parent institutions as discussed in section 7.2.4 and section 7.2.5 of the chapter 7. In spite of these there are varying levels of training needs in specific areas of library automation as revealed under the study in section 7.2.9 of chapter 7. At the same time the library manpower has shown great interest for participating in HRD training programs as discussed in section 7.2.7 and 7.2.10 of chapter 7. Further the study shows that majority of the library manpower wants to participate in HRD activities in order to improve their job performance as discussed in section 7.2.11 and 7.2.12 of chapter 7. Unfortunately there are no planned HRD programs in any of the HEI libraries of NE India included under the study. Thus these statistical analysis reveals that there is great necessary to improve the training and professional development of the library manpower of
the HEI in North East India. In majority of the HEI libraries included in this study, HRD activities like job rotation, rewarding staff and performance evaluation was not present. Therefore, the study proves the third hypothesis.

Given these findings, we can consider that this study will provide important insight into the prospects of HRD in the libraries of HEI of North East India with special reference to library automation. The strength of this research is that the sample has been selected to cover a wide variety of libraries of HEI spread across the eight North Eastern States. It has taken account of the opinions of both the librarian and the library staff and in addition the opinion of the librarian has been obtained from professional point of view as well. This rigorous methodology was employed to limit the possibility of bias in evaluation of the responses. The value of this research is further enhanced since the automation activities in HEI libraries in North East India is greatly accelerating during last few years. The present research tried to achieve as valid and reliable as possible within the given resources.

8.2 Conclusion:

It was found that the libraries of higher education institutions (HEIs) of North East India need HRD especially in context of automation of these libraries. This will help the library professionals working in these libraries to cope with the general information and brace up with high demands in information explosion of the 21st century. When automation is introduced in libraries, training in IT becomes necessary because librarians and his professional staff might be using them for the first time. More important is the fact that technology is changing fast and thus the library manpower needs to be continuously updated on the latest trend which can be ensured only through proper HRD. However, HRD is rarely found in the libraries of HEIs of NE India as revealed in the study. A planned or structured HRD program is not found any of the libraries of HEI under the present study. The study also found that the library staffs working in HEI libraries have different training levels in different aspects of automation. Most of the libraries in HEIs in NE India are new to library automation. Thus, initial training called the basic computer orientation is a very strong need among the librarians and staff in these libraries. In fact an important finding of this study was that, within these libraries, many staff has not received training in basic computer competence -- that is staff members lack basic training on how to operate their PCs.

The library professionals working in these libraries have shown great interest in training. As discussed previously both on -- the - job and off -- the - job training can be provided. But the library professionals have shown preference to on -- the - job training. This study has also thrown light on some of the barriers faced by librarians and the staff to pursue training and other continuing professional development activities. Although majority of the subjects refrained from responding to these barriers, the reason best known to them, but still one majority response was lack of events at a convenient location. An important aspect of the present study was to find out what motivates the working library professionals in these libraries to participate in training and other professional
activities. Majority of the respondent have agreed that the most important reasons for pursuing continuous education/training activities were to work towards job Enrichment/efficiency, and for personal growth/greater job satisfaction.

Another important issue on which the study throws light was regarding the perception or expectation of the library staff on the outcome of participation in training and professional development activities. Majority of the respondents has agreed that it would/have help/helped to improved performance greatly. From the overall analysis of the findings of the survey, we can conclude that there is tremendous prospect of HRD in the libraries of HEIs in NE India. HRD should thus be immediately adopted in the libraries of HEIs in NE India as the survey revealed that there is willingness and positive attitude on the part of the library professionals to undergo training and other professional developmental activities. The survey clearly reveals that there are no clearly defined policies and plan regarding HRD especially in the context of automation being introduced in these libraries. The support from the authorities of the higher education institutions regarding HRD activities in libraries was rarely found. Most of the library professionals have shown interest on the need for training in different aspects of automation. They have shown strong interest on Library housekeeping software, Web Design, Internet Searching, Intranet, IT/Equipment maintenance, OPAC/WebOPAC, Microsoft Access (database), Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, E-Mail, Operating Systems. One striking find of the study was that many of the professionals do not have the initial training called the basic computer training. This is very important for any successful automation because unless the professionals know how to operate the PCs it will be of no use to purchase costly hardware and software equipment for the library. The library professional of the HEI libraries have the willingness to take part in HRD activities and in fact has participated in a number of such activities. Their most favourite are workshops and conferences. The professionals view that HRD activities would help them to improve performance at work level and would help them in career development. Another conclusion of the study was that the professionals are not willing to respond wholeheartedly on the barriers to the HRD activities. Most respondents preferred not to respond to this query, the reason best known to them.

The present study thus revealed that according to the library professionals the training activities either had greatly improved their performance at workplace or they felt that training 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 important findings made in the present study. 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. The present study was able to successfully defend the hypotheses postulated at the beginning.
8.4 Recommendations:

In light of the above findings and conclusions we would like to put forward few suggestions which might be found suitable in the context of the present study. Since there is tremendous prospects for HRD in the HEI libraries of NE India especially in the context of library automation these suggestions are worth mentioning. However universal application of these suggestions may not be possible as the HRD problems, particularly related to library automation will definitely vary from place to place. These recommendations are as follows:

**HRD Policy:** A comprehensive HRD policy for the training and development of library staff of the HEIs needs to be formulated at national level. Lack of such a policy seems to be the main hindrance to the HRD in libraries of HEI in NE India. A National policy is bound to have its impact at remote places like NE India. Such a policy is the need of the hour as numerous technologies are being used in HEI libraries and the technologies keep on changing rapidly. Without a proper policy on HRD the individual HEI will have no guidance for training and developing its library staff. Because of lack of guidelines at national level regarding HRD we see that the HEIs don’t plan a necessary HRD program in their library. Way back in 1978 Prof. A. Neelameghan prepared on behalf of UNESCO the “Guidelines for formulating policy on education, training and development of library and information personnel”. (UNESCO,1978) These policy guidelines constitute a checklist of the factors to be taken into consideration while formulating policy on manpower training and development of library and information personnel. According to this report a National policy will facilitate the establishment of common goals and directions for the national information development programmes and activities and information manpower development programmes, in an optimally productive way, in the given social context. The report further suggest that any such National policy on manpower development and training must be flexible and adaptable enough for any future change in information organisation in particular in the context of expanding role of information technology (IT) – computers, telecommunication systems, printing and reproduction technology. The report further suggests that a national agency should be identified to implement the policy, and to guide the evaluation and monitoring of programmes.

**HRD Planning:** Individual HEI libraries can chalk out their own master plan for keeping the library staff well trained and developed. A well-written training plan makes clear the responsibilities of all vested parties. Training Plans should be drawn up to identify long term (4 years) objectives as well as short term plans. Training plans should consider the individual as well as overall technological competency levels of the library staff. An important consideration to make a HRD plan would be how to finance the proposed HRD program. Further a separate structure for planning and implementation of HRD policies can be built within the library or the parent institutions. An expert in HRD can be employed to look after the training needs of the library staff.

The level of professional training in library automation received by the professional library staff in the libraries of HEIs of North East India is generally inadequate as shown by the results of this research. Greater efforts must be
made therefore to provide adequate training programmes in information
technology and other related subjects of library automation for library staff,
especially professional staff, in order to make them relevant and adequate to
face the technological challenges of the twenty-first century.

Authorities must be convinced about role of HRD in libraries especially in light
of automation. In this case, the Librarians role is of outmost importance. He
should have the intellect and professional ethics to guide the concerned
authorities to support the HRD programme in the library and designing of an
appropriate training programme that is capable of preparing the Library staff to
cope with the different aspects of ICT.

Each of the Higher Education Institutions of NE India should therefore begin to
initiate its own staff development process in library which will involve among
other things, a definition of goals and objectives, an assessment of staff
strengths and weaknesses, a development of long- and short-range training
programmes, the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of the
programme. This is the hallmark of strategic HRD, which is one of the pillars of
success of any enterprise.

If the staff development process is well implemented, the issue of lack of
resources to sponsor staff to attend professional workshops, conferences and
seminars on information technology may no longer arise. This is because
priority attention will be put on the development of human resources;
consequently, the right funds will be provided.

Staff training and job enrichment, is based on the recognition that all staff
members need to be fully involved with planning for a change, if change is to be
accepted to lead to a better and more productive tomorrow.

The respondents in this study rated on the job training training as the most
preferred type of training. These preferences should be considered when
scheduling training.

The study also found that the highest preferred method of training includes
Workshops, Online Tutorials and audio/video presentations. So these must be
given due consideration while planning any HRD training programs.

Professional Development is a critical factor in the success of the Technology
rich libraries. Therefore there is urgent need to incorporate training on modern
automation technology at the basic Level which should be student-centered.

Educational technology has advanced to new levels. It is now possible to
provide online training courses to the library professionals. Web 2.0 tools such
as blogs and Wikis help foster participation and collaboration and the
development of 21st century skills.

Establish the needed level of support and provide, tools, documentation and
suitable trainers to give training to the library staff.

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To defray the cost of training, it is suggested that the training agencies look to the universities, technical colleges and communities to locate subject matter experts who believe in giving back to the community. A plan should be formulated to identify and then contact these potential volunteer trainers. Do not overlook the possibility that there are skilled staffs in positions within the non-profits that have expertise in those areas where training deficiencies exist.

All the university and college libraries in North East India should be furnished with at least a computer system which should be utilised for internal training of the staff. With the use of teach-yourself packages, everybody will have access to these systems. This will enhance their knowledge of the computer.

The HRD must be planned to respond to and satisfy the internal training needs of the library staff.

The library staff must be given competence based training. In competence based training, the emphasis is on the tasks which a person must be able to carry out and on the problem and practical situations in which a person must be able to act competently.

The curriculum content of library and information science courses of all our universities require through revision and also replacement from time to time in response to the changing information technology scenario. Some papers on traditional methods of computer application and other aspects of information technology may be upgraded to include latest developments in the field of library automation. It may also be suggested that a single standard syllabus may be devised to be followed by all the Universities which may be revised and updated from time to time. This task of preparing and updating this common syllabus can be vested on a particular organisation which has the manpower and expertise in the field of library and information science.

HRD training facilities for library professionals in North East India is very limited. Thus there is need to identify and establish some more training facilities urgently. In this case institutions with good automation infrastructure like IITs and some central universities should come forward for imparting basic and advanced training on library automation to the working library professionals of the colleges and other institutions of higher learning in North East India. If training facilities are locally available it will save money and time.

Since technology is fast changing, the frequency of training programs needs to be increased too.

The refresher courses which are organized by the Academic Staff colleges in Ne India must be up-to-date in curricula and more work based training modules must be introduced. At the same time these programs must be organised frequently and preferably within North East India.

It is also high time that the trainers should also be trained in respect of the technologies that are practiced in the libraries. It is often seen that the training programs are not successful because of the lack of adequate trainer to deal with
a particular subject of automation. This is especially important for the librarian who opts for in house training of the staff. Unless he is properly trained to deal with the subject he cannot give proper training to the staff.

To develop and update the computer knowledge and skill of the librarians and the information professionals, continuing education programmes (CEP) should be promoted vigorously. In this regard the role of the Library Associations needs to be more active like their counterparts in rest of the world. Summer schools, refresher courses and in-service training on computer application in library and information work should be conducted more frequently.

Internship program. This is also high time to introduce internship program in the library science schools like other professional schools. This will provide an opportunity to each and every student to expose themselves various management techniques of a library including ICT application in libraries. Further understanding the practical librarianship, each student can make a choice of his/her career path by developing knowledge and skills in the most emerging areas of LIS profession and demand from the national and global job market. The scheme allows you to bring on board a younger workforce and avoid skills shortages.

Apprenticeship Program: Individual libraries can also send their staff to do apprenticeship under an expert in library automation field in some well automated library environment. Apprenticeships ensure that your workforce has the practical skills and qualifications your organisation needs now and in the future. It also:

- **Reduce skills gaps:** Apprenticeships deliver skills designed around the needs of your organisation. They help you develop the specialist skills you need to keep pace with the latest technology and working practices in your sector.
- **Motivate the workforce:** Apprentices tend to be highly motivated and eager to learn, as well as being loyal to their employer.

Competence based training: The efficiency and effectiveness of library automation would depend on the competence of the staff. The availability of competent staff will depend on the status of the position and the facilities and environment provided for their work and development. So allowing higher pay scales and fixing sufficient qualifications and norms for recruitment of personnel are essential to maintain quality of automation in these libraries.

Teamwork: Team work is work performed by a group of people towards a common goal. Inculcating the Team work culture is highly recommended for the libraries of higher education institutions in North East India. Library authorities must realize that teamwork will help to cope with the changes brought about by technology in the overall library environment. Teamwork has become the mantra of modern strategic HRD.

Managing Change: ‘Managing change’ refers to the making of changes in a planned and managed or systematic fashion where the aim is to implement new methods and systems in an on-going organization in a more effective manner.
Library HRD planners in the HEIs of NE India must adopt "change management" managerial practices.

**Motivation:** The librarians and library authorities of the North East India should motivate library staff to support automation activities in the library. Through proper motivation, library staffs that resist technology change should be attracted towards learning new technology.

**Job Rotation:** The practice of job rotation must be adopted in every library. It allows the library professionals to operate in diverse roles and understand the different functions within the library.

I) It provides the employees with opportunities to broaden the horizon of knowledge, skills, and abilities by working in different departments, business units, functions, and countries;

II) Identification of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required;

III) It determines the areas where improvement is required;

IV) Assessment of the employees who have the potential and calibre for filling the position.

**Web based training** each library can develop web based professional development materials. Webminars, Wiki, Email etc. Since internet connectivity has improved in NE region, librarians can explore such opportunities.

**Reward systems:** Reward system is essential to recognize individual and team efforts, to re-enforce positive behaviours, to create a better working environment and to have a system that recognizes as many people as possible. It is not unusual to find that library staffs are unwilling to adopt new technology like automation wholeheartedly. Reward system can help remove such repulsive behaviours.

**Performance appraisal** is the process of evaluating the performance and assessing the development/training needs of an employee. Until and unless the deficiencies and requirements of the library staff is ascertained any HRD program will be fruitless. So PA needs to done in the HEI library periodically.

**Inflibnet** has done a wonderful job in promotion of library automation and networking in the libraries of North East India especially libraries of higher education institutions. The training programme must be made mandatory for librarians as well as other professional staff.

**Library staffs** who do not attend the training programmes must be penalised and at the same time it must be ensured that there is no discrimination in getting chances to attend the training programs.

**Training Evaluation:** Considering the importance of the INFLIBNET training programs, it is very much necessary to evaluate the training programs to understand their effects on the library staff especially from the NE India. Therefore from time to time the training programs needs to be evaluated for their effectiveness and they should be programmed in a suitable manner taking into
consideration the lack of computer knowledge of the library professionals of the
HEI libraries of NE India.

**PLANNER** i.e. Promotion of Library Automation and Networking in North
Eastern Region, an annual Convention organized by INFLIBNET can be
upgraded to an international convention to broaden the participation base and
providing greater interaction avenues for the library professionals working in the
libraries of higher education institutions in North East India.

**Workshops** with more hands on training sessions must be undertaken in every
state of the North East Region. In this regard INFLIBNET must give priority as
most of the HEI libraries are lagging far behind than their counterparts in rest of
India. The subject contents of such workshops should not be limited to the
Library Housekeeping software but should also include other aspects of library
automation and IT application in libraries.

The top administration of the HEIs should address the HRD problems more
seriously so the HEI libraries can be repositioned to its leading role in the
Higher Education system as the backbone of the higher teaching and research
activities in this digital era.