CHAPTER - III

MINTZBERG'S MANAGERIAL ROLE MODEL

The present approach to the management theory to attract the attention of the academicians and the practitioners alike is the managerial roles approach, popularised by Henry Mintzberg. Mintzberg\(^1\) conducted a direct observational study on the managerial activities of the five Chief Executives. He appropriately pointed out the weaknesses inherent in the traditional approach of listing abstract words to describe the functions of managers which does not explain what managers actually do. However, he demonstrated that they perform their functions differently than what the POSDCORB suggest.\(^2\) He observed that managers work at an unrelenting pace on a large variety of tasks and are frequently interrupted. The activities of managers, as compared with most non-managers, are characterised by brevity, variety and fragmentation.\(^3\)

He also observed that they prefer to work on specific and well-defined activities of current importance rather than on more general functions, which may be less certain and

2. Ibid., pp. 9-11.
3. Ibid., pp. 29-35.
whose immediate relevance is not clear. He noted that they favour verbal rather than written contact with others.⁴

Mintzberg's analysis led him to postulate that managerial activities could, in general, be divided into ten highly interrelated roles or activities (as shown in Figure 1). These roles could further be divided into three groups — (i) those primarily concerned with interpersonal relationships (i.e., Interpersonal roles); (ii) those with gathering and transferring of information (i.e., Informational roles); and, (iii) those especially involving decision-making (i.e., Decisional roles).⁵

The ten roles, divided into three groups, explain the behaviour of the managers which relate to managing in general. These roles cannot be isolated as they "form a gestalt — an integrated whole."⁶ In order to perform these roles, managers need eight basic skills — peer skill, leadership skill, conflict-resolution skill, information-processing skill, skill in decision-making under ambiguity, resource-allocation skill, entrepreneurial skill and skill of introspection.⁷ However, these eight skills vary in relative importance at different levels of hierarchy.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 38-44.
⁵ Ibid., p. 56.
⁶ Ibid., p. 58.
⁷ Ibid., pp. 188-93.
FIGURE 1

Managerial Roles

Interpersonal Roles
- Figurehead
- Leader
- Liaison

Informational Roles
- Monitor
- Disseminator
- Spokesman

Decisional Roles
- Entrepreneur
- Disturbance-Handler
- Resource Allocator
- Negotiator
The ten roles given by Mintzberg are as follows:

1. **INTERPERSONAL ROLES**

These roles are derived directly from the manager's formal authority. Formal authority provides the manager with status and status enables him to play the three Interpersonal roles. The purpose of these roles is the development of relationships between the manager and the other people. These help the manager keep the organisation running smoothly. Thus, although the duties associated with these roles are often routine, the manager can't ignore them. It is the interpersonal contact that is of key importance and not the passing of information or making a decision.

1.1 **Manager as Figurehead**

The first role of the manager is that of 'figurehead'. Mintzberg says "because of his formal authority, the manager is a symbol, obliged to perform a number of duties. Some of these are trite, others are of an inspirational nature; all involve interpersonal activity, but none involves significant information-processing or decision-making." As head of a unit, the manager acts as 'figurehead' and has to perform certain ceremonial duties, which include receiving visitors, signing contracts and legal documents, taking important customers to lunch or speaking at various functions, etc.

While these duties may not appear to be important, they are expected of managers as they symbolise management’s concern for employees, customers and the community he lives in.

1.2 Manager as Leader

The 'leader' role encompasses the managers' activities and interpersonal relationships with subordinates, i.e., with the people who constitute his own organisational unit. This role integrates the needs of an individual employee with the goals or purposes of the organisation. Being the formal head of an organisation, the manager is responsible for the work of the people in his unit so as to accomplish objectives of the organisation. He is, therefore, responsible for staffing, hiring, training, judging, promoting and dismissing his subordinates. Controlling the activities of subordinates and looking into the problems that need managerial attention also form part of the 'leader' role. Mintzberg says "Each time a manager encourages or criticizes a subordinate he is acting in his capacity as leader.... the manager's actions are screened by subordinates searching for leadership clues." As a leader he must command respect so that his subordinates follow his directions and guidelines with dedication.

1.3 Manager as Liaison Officer

In his 'liaison' role the manager has to weave a

10. Lorsch et al., op. cit., p. 225.
significant web of relationships with individuals and groups outside the organisation that he heads.\textsuperscript{31} Besides having sound rapport with his subordinates, he has to establish, maintain and extend such contacts as will provide information external to his own unit or organisation. This can be achieved by "joining external boards and performing public service work, by attending conferences and social events, by 'keeping in touch', by answering requests simply ... 'to keep the channels open'."\textsuperscript{32} As these contacts are very useful, most of the managers cultivate them and use them extensively. This enables them to gain support for the organisation from those outside the organisation and who can affect its success. While summing up the 'liaison' role of the manager, Mintzberg feels that by virtue of his authority and associated status, the manager is able to develop a special kind of external linkage system to further the intelligence and the position of his organisation.\textsuperscript{33}

2. INFORMATIONAL ROLES

The interpersonal contacts of the manager are not ends in themselves. One important use of these is for

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{} Ibid., p. 63.
\bibitem{} Ibid.
\bibitem{} Ibid., p. 65.
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gathering information. Because of his 'liaison' role, the manager has unique access to external information, hence he is the focal point in his organisation for such information and the "flow of nonroutine information in an organisation focuses on its manager."34 Due to his having such information, the manager acts as a news-centre. The three informational roles — 'monitor', 'disseminator' and 'spokesman' — relate to the reception and transmission of the information.

2.1 Manager as Monitor

The 'monitor' role usually enables the manager to be the best informed member of his or her group. He constantly monitors his environment, collects and studies information regarding his organisation and the outside environment affecting his organisation. This can be done by reading reports and periodicals and through personal contacts. "Just as a radar unit scans the environment, managers scan their environments for information that may affect their organization's performance."35 As such he remains alert for information, continually questioning outsiders and subordinates, and often receives a great deal

34. Lorsch et al., op. cit., p. 234.

of unsolicited information. He "seeks information in order to detect changes, to identify problems and opportunities, to build up knowledge about his milieu, to be informed when information must be disseminated and decisions made." It is rightly said that the "manager's productive output can be measured primarily in terms of verbally transmitted information." 

2.2 Manager as Disseminator

Dissemination involves sending external information into his organisation and internal information from one subordinate to another. In the 'liaison' role, the manager establishes contact with members of the board, which leads to his picking up the privileged information in the 'monitor' role, and sharing of this new information with an employee coming under the scope of 'disseminator' role. Managers transmit the information regarding change in policies or other matters to their subordinates, their peers and to other members of the organisation which would otherwise be inaccessible to them. This can be done through memos, phone calls or meetings. Passing information on to subordinates is

often difficult and time-consuming. Thus, the manager must decide which and how much information will be useful to subordinates. A significant function of the 'disseminator' role is to pass on the value statement to the subordinates for facilitating decisions on the spot.

2.3 **Manager as Spokesman**

The manager's role in the organisation's information system does not end with being a disseminator. Just as he must pass some of his information to employees, so also must he pass some of it to the people outside his organisation. As his organisation's formal authority and its nerve centre, the manager must serve as its official spokesman. "The manager must keep both groups — influencers and the general public — informed about the organization's plans, policies, and results ... to speak effectively for his organization and to gain respect of outsiders, the manager must demonstrate an up-to-the-minute knowledge of his organization and its environment."[^39] The information can be transmitted to outsiders by means of a meeting, a telephone call or a speech.

3. **DECISIONAL ROLES**

Authority, interpersonal contacts and information

[^39]: Ibid., p. 76.
alone does not serve the primary purpose of an organisation. Hence it is necessary to determine what actions are to be taken in the form of decisions. The manager's job is a natural flow — "authority leads to information, and both enable the manager to make decisions that in turn lead to organizational action." This set of roles involves "handling requests for authorization, scheduling his own time, holding meetings to make strategies and handle problems, and negotiating with other organizations."

3.1 Manager as Entrepreneur

In the 'entrepreneur' role, the manager acts as "initiator and designer of much of the controlled change in his organization." He formulates plans to improve the unit, to implement beneficial changes. The manager as supervisor of improvement projects is like a juggler who "has a number of balls in the air ... new balls wait on the side-lines and, at random intervals, old balls are discarded and new ones added."

The managers are constantly on the lookout for new

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40. Lorsch et al., op. cit., p. 245.
41. Mintzberg, op. cit., p. 77.
42. Ibid., p. 78.
43. Ibid., p. 81.
ideas for project improvement or project addition. "As part of his monitor role, the manager spends much of his time scanning his organization, looking for opportunities and for situations that may be considered problems." They initiate feasibility studies, arrange for capital and ask for suggestions to improve the organisation. This is achieved through suggestion boxes, holding strategy meetings with project manager and research and development personnel.

3.2 Manager as Disturbance-Handler

The 'entrepreneur' role focuses on "voluntary action by the manager to bring about controlled organizational change; the disturbance-handler role deals with involuntary situations and change that is partially beyond the managers' control." The manager, as a 'disturbance-handler', takes corrective action against unexpected pressures and changes. Subordinates take help of the manager in handling a difficult situation and the manager immediately takes the charge if some crisis is perceived. "Specialists do their specialized work; the manager, as generalist, must handle the general disturbance." All managers must spend a great part of

44. Ibid., p. 78.
45. Ibid., pp. 81-82.
46. Ibid., p. 82.
their time in handling such disturbed situations which "arise not only because 'poor' managers ignore situations until they reach crisis proportions but also because 'good' managers cannot anticipate the consequences of all actions taken by their organizations." This role is very significant because decisions taken at such times may set precedents that affect long-term strategy.

3.3 Manager as Resource Allocator

This role deals with as to how the resources of the organisation are allocated. "Resource allocation is the heart of the organization's strategy-making system ... as formal authority, the manager must oversee the system by which organizational resources are allocated." As a 'resource allocator', he designs his organisation's structure, allocates resources, namely its finances, equipment, personnel, etc., schedules his own time and assigns personnel to jobs. Since almost all organisations have limited resources, the allocation requires careful planning.

3.4 Manager as Negotiator

The final role of the manager is that of a

47. Lorsch et al., op. cit., p. 257.
'negotiator'. He must be a negotiator because "as figure-head his presence adds credibility to the proceedings and as spokesman he represents his organization's information and value systems to outsiders. But most important, as resource allocator, the manager has the authority to commit organizational resources. Negotiation is resource trading in real-time. It requires the presence of someone with enough authority to commit the quantity of resources at stake and do it quickly." Managers discuss and bargain with other units or organisations for obtaining advantages for their own unit and spend a large amount of time as negotiators because they alone have the authority and information which is required for negotiating.

These ten roles describe the work of managers from foreman to presidents. However, all managers do not give equal attention to all of these ten roles as their work is determined by the environment of the organisation and the level of management. However, these could not be isolated from one another, but form an integrated model of managerial behaviour.

MINTZBERG'S TEN MANAGERIAL ROLES
AS APPLIED TO THE LIBRARIANS

Complex organisations as the academic libraries are

49. Ibid., p. 91.
these days, these require sufficient staff for achieving the basic objective of supporting instruction and community service. The word "organisation" if applied specifically to libraries may be defined as "the means by which management channels and directs work flow through operating units; establishes lines of authority, supervision and controls; and coordinates relationships for the accomplishment of the goals for which the library exists." The libraries are, in the true sense, organisations which are growing larger and more complex all the time. Hence these require some form of management so that the set objectives are achieved.

Library management is a kind of relationship that can be planned, organised and coordinated by library managers to direct and evaluate library processes and services. It covers all those administrative and supervisory activities in which goals and policies are formulated for the organisation, or its subdivisions in which organisational plans are made and the work of others is


directed, monitored and corrected as needed. And, it is the Manager/Director of the library who is charged with the responsibility of its ultimate success or failure. Thus libraries not only require more managers but better managers who are skilled in managing and have a knowledge of management theory and practice.

With the onset of new technology and the enormous increase in the published material, the traditional concept of the librarian as a custodian of books has changed to that of a librarian as a Manager/Director who "stands at the vortex of a whole multitude of roles. These myriad roles carry varied and often contradictory requirements. Thus the academic library director is caught in the middle, among conflicting groups, persons, and factions." 53 As a result the academic librarians' responsibilities have shifted from production to management due to the nature of technology. The role of library-managers is becoming more complex as "professionals demand a greater voice in decision-making, funders ask for more specific accountability, and clients complain about officious and unresponsive service." 54

They spend their time attending meetings, talking on telephone, negotiating, gathering and disseminating information and handling disturbances. White has stated that management of libraries is no longer something scholars do in their spare time. The search is on for managers who understand about productivity, cost effectiveness, evaluation and monitoring and budgeting.\textsuperscript{55}

The Chief Academic Librarians may not be the Chief Executives in the industrial sense, but they do manage their respective libraries, i.e., they do demonstrate many of the characteristics common in business management. Hence they may be called managers and the ten managerial roles given by Mintzberg can also be applied to them.

1. INTERPERSONAL ROLES OF LIBRARIANS

1.1 Librarian as Figurehead

The academic librarian has a variety of social and ceremonial duties to perform because of his formal authority and status. This includes explaining the objectives and functions of the library to others, speaking at employees' functions, luncheons, signing important documents and bills, and presenting certificates, on completion of a course, to

employees. He keeps contacts within and outside the country by attending various seminars, conferences convened by the Library Associations or Departments of Library and Information Science. This helps him update his knowledge about his profession's development which is taking place all over the world.

1.2 Librarian as Leader

Establishment of good interpersonal relations with the subordinates in order to instil a sense of commitment in them to perform their duties well is a must for a librarian. It includes placement, training, motivation and evaluation of their work.

1.3 Librarian as Liaison Officer

Here the academic librarian has to create a network of contacts with the Vice-Chancellor (in case of a University) or the Principal (in case of a college) and outside his library as well, i.e., in addition to relationship, good rapport with members of the committees and sub-committees of the library.

2. INFORMATIONAL ROLES OF LIBRARIANS

2.1 Librarian as Monitor

The librarian keeps on receiving information from
outside the library through professional associations and activities and through verbal communication with colleagues in order to understand the library and its environment in a better way. This understanding allows the librarian "to predict changes and to plan responses to these changes." This includes asking other libraries about the top management decisions, trading gossip with book industry, contacts abroad and reading professional/trade journals.

2.2 Librarian as Disseminator

The librarian here shares and distributes information, received from outside, within the library through staff meetings and personal contacts. This includes forwarding relevant data, briefing a subordinate about a new assignment, introducing the subordinates to people with important information, etc.

2.3 Librarian as Spokesman

Spokesmanship involves distribution of the information amongst people outside the library and also informing outsiders of the progress made within the library. This comprises explaining the library to the Library Committee; lobbying with outside contacts and answering questions about...

the plans of the library; and, a community meeting.

3. DECISIONAL ROLES OF LIBRARIANS

3.1 Librarian as Entrepreneur

In this age of computers, the expanding frontiers of knowledge, particularly in our country which is still in a developing stage, compel the librarian to introduce changes within the library by developing and implementing new systems and programmes. The librarians do this through inviting suggestions from students, teachers and others and holding consultations and involving the staff afterwards for the same.

3.2 Librarian as Disturbance-Handler

Conflicts and crisis do develop within a library, but are rare. In case there is some unexpected disturbance, the librarian takes a corrective action. The success or failure of the librarian is decided "during those rare times of crisis when critical decisions have to be made." 38 This role includes supervising crash programmes to solve schedule delays, handling customers or users' complaints and resolving a dispute between two subordinates.

3.3 **Librarian as Resource Allocator**

Allocating funds, time, staff, materials and equipment for specific tasks within the library is also an important role of the librarian. This includes approving various authorisations, programming of subordinates work and scheduling his own time, i.e., signing purchase requisitions, assigning a subordinate to work on a new project and readjusting priorities.

3.4 **Librarian as Negotiator**

Negotiation is an important talent in a world of librarianship specially in this age of advanced technology. The librarian has to negotiate with the organisations or individuals outside the library for securing funds and for safeguarding the interests of the institution. This role involves three skills — "interviewing, search strategies and subject competence" and consists of making changes in delivery schedules, resolving workflows within other organisational units and determining payment schedules for contracts.

In sum, the manager of a business organisation and the librarian of an academic library perform the same

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fundamental functions of management. The only differences between them are in objectives and the amount of skill required to manage effectively.