CHAPTER: V

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

IN ASSAM: AN ANALYSIS

Every institution has a set of goal to achieve something. For this, an organizational structure is raised, administrative machinery is created and management authority is appointed. The basic policies of organizations are laid down and management staff is appointed by the administrative machinery for achieving the desired goals. The main concerned of administration is the translation of policies in to action.

An ideal educational system, an academic library is the centre of academic life. A library is the strength of any educational institute and without proper libraries there can be no real progress in education. A library is the fountainhead from which flows the water of knowledge. Education comprises of two essential elements, namely teachers and books. An ideal library provides valuable support to education. At the same time a sound educational system is dependent on good libraries. Any form of educational work without libraries become meaningless. A library attached to any educational institution is known as academic libraries. The primary characteristics of a good academic library are to make complete identification with its own institution. Of course, a library with a collection of documents i.e. a store house of documents can’t achieve the goal of the institutions. A proper management of the library is necessary to provide optimum benefit of the library to the parent institutions as well as its users. The quality of the resources and services of the library are depending
upon how these are managed. Now-a-days information is considered as essential commodities for development of a nation. Therefore libraries and information centers are getting much importance. UGC, Govt. is giving funds for the development of academic libraries. But still users claim that libraries are not adequate to satisfy their needs. At the same time, it is seen that university and college libraries are being less used than their capacity. Therefore, library professional should think some alternatives to utilize the existing resources and services. A strategic plan and thinking should be prepared to secure maximum utilization of the resources acquired by the libraries.

5.1 Strategic management

A strategy is the answer to the question, ‘How?’ Strategies are simply set of actions that enable an organization to achieve results. Strategy is a way of comparing organization’s strengths with the changing environment in order to get an idea of how best to complete or serve client needs.

Strategic management consists of the analysis, decisions, actions and organization undertakes in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the institutions or organizations. It can be used to determine mission, vision, goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities, etc of the organization. Strategic management is adaptive and keeps an organization relevant.
The key attributes of strategic management are-

a) Directs the organization towards overall goal and objectives,

b) Needs to incorporate short terms planning (perspectives).

Of course, it is impossible to do everything that needs to be done in this world. A short term strategic planning is needed which helps an organization to choice some organizational decisions and actions which are more important than others and that much of the strategy lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important to achieving success.

5.2 Need of Strategic Management

Management of an organization is a universal process which is applied in every type of organization as well as in the libraries. Without proper management, organizations like library become handicap and can’t fulfill the goal of the parent institutions. Being no profit organization, libraries are facing various problems such as providing services to user’s, fulfillment of user needs, management of staff and resources, technical difficulties, shortage of budget, etc. To find out the solutions and to outline the problems faced by the library, strategic management is necessary which is nothing but the study of finding out the reason of out performs. Following are some needs of strategic management in libraries-
i) To help the library/ organization to do better job.

ii) To help in identification of the problem.

iii) Development of alternative solution.

v) Implementation of decision.

vi) Determination of objectives and goals in the light of the future.

A common assumption has emerged in the non profit sector that the environment is indeed changeable, often in unpredictable ways. As we know, library is a growing organism; it is also changeable in terms of technologies, resources and techniques and unpredictable changes of user needs. So, in that case, strategic planning, then stress the importance of making decisions that will ensure the organization's ability to successfully respond to changes in the environment. Academic libraries have own goals and objectives. As the strategic management directs organizations towards overall goal and objectives, so it should be applied in academic libraries. Due to the advent of new techniques and technology, the earlier system may not meet the goal of the libraries. Therefore, alternative strategy is essential with some new perspectives which can meet the user needs. In case of Assam, though libraries having good resources, still these are less used than their capacity.
5.3 Application of TQM in Libraries

Total quality management is a philosophy not a technique. It is based on two basic concepts: quality control and employee participation. The concept has gradually evolved from the management theories such as MBO, Quality Circles, Strategic planning, etc.

TQM is "a system of continuous improvement employing participative management and centered on the needs of customers". Libraries can benefit from TQM in three ways: breaking down interdepartmental barriers; redefining the beneficiaries of library services as internal customers (staff) and external customers (Patrons); and reaching a state of continuous improvement. (Jurow and Barnard: 1993)

Libraries are ideal places to implement TQM. They are service organizations dedicated to their customers, the patrons. By formulating a strategic plan and following it with a commitment to continuous quality improvement, library managers can transform and improve their organizations. Rigg (1992) summarizes the notable principles of TQM-

1) **Manage by fact**: - Make library decisions after careful analysis of data gathered with tools such as check sheets, histograms, etc.

2) **Eliminate rework**: - Library work is often labour intensive- simplify it and make sure it is done properly the first time.
3) **Respect people and ideas:** Staff are the library's most valuable resources and they should be encouraged to point out problems without fear of management and

4) **Empower people:** Trust library staff to act responsibly and give them the appropriate authority to make decisions that can improve the quality of work they do.

Of course, there are some problems for adoption of TQM. Jurow and Barnard (1993) identify four barriers of TQM in libraries:

1) **Vocabulary:** Objections to terms such as "total", "quality", and "management" which imply that high students are not already being met.

2) **Commitment:** TQM takes several years to implement and requires a long term commitment by library managers.

3) **Process:** Our culture tends to be impatient and we try to solve problems quickly, contrary to TQM's careful process analysis.

4) **Professionalization:** Professional staff can be resistant to turning over their practices and services to what they perceive as the "uninformed whims of the customer".
5.4 Goals and Objectives of Academic Library

5.4.1 College Library

Every college has a well organized library and it is considered as the backbone of the institution. Mainly teachers and students depend upon this library during his reading or teaching period. The objectives and the functions of the college libraries are same with the school libraries but the scope and the area of the college library is vast. The basic function of the college library is to assist its parent body to carry out its program. It must provide the information which is not covered in the class. The following some short cut objectives-

1. To assist its parent body to carry out its programme.

2. To serves the needs and requirements of the teachers and students in reading study and research.

3. To preserve the human knowledge and keep them up to date with growing needs and requirements of the users.

4. To remind the faculty members of the various opportunities for using library resources in teaching.

5. To facilitate individuals and a group of the readers in the use of library resources with practical demonstrations on how to seek the information.
6. To provide necessary resources for staff and students.

7. To assist teaching staff in organizing the synthetic methods of teaching.

8. To bring the documents to the notice of the students and the teachers for their personal growth and development.

In most of the colleges, library hours are same as the college opening hours. This prevents the majority of students to use the libraries, as they would be attending the classes during the working hours. The main service in a college library is book lending. In various colleges, books can be borrowed on a particular day in week and the other six days including Sunday they could not take the privilege of borrowing books. Maximum colleges mainly in Assam do not use Open Access System in their libraries due to fear of theft of books by users. Reference service is not at all provided due to lack of basic reference books and sufficient professional staff. It is also reported that most of the students are ignorant of an effective use of the collection aids and tools available in the library. Both teachers and students are user of the college libraries but sometimes books purchased as per the requirements of the teachers and no considerations is given to the needs of the students. Some teachers feel a proprietary right of borrowing the books in the library to monopolies as far as possible.
5.4.2 Educative Services of the College Libraries

The college library serves its users as follows-

1. To make the materials easily accessible physically through open shelves, orientation or other efficient means and bibliographically through catalogue, indexes and bibliographies, etc.

2. To make the materials available for library use and home use allowing reasonable loan period.

3. It gives formal and informal instructions in the use of library.

4. It encourages wide reading through easy accessibility of materials, reader's guidance, displays and book discussions.

5. It provides bibliographical information and special materials for the faculty.

6. It borrows required materials on inter-library loan from other libraries and provided them to its users.

7. It also promotes cultural activities to the college community, academic and cultural affairs.
In India, the UGC has provided funds to reference books and textbooks as well as building grants and sponsored the College Humanities and Social Science Improvement Program (COHSSIP) and College Science Improvement Program (COSIP) to supplement the classroom teaching to library use. (Dhiman and Sinha: 2002:47)

5.4.3 University Library

The university library is the heart of the university and it is a centre of learning for higher education. The quality of education, faculty, teaching and research largely depend on the quality of university library. To quote Radhakrishnan report on university education (India), ‘The 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 humanities research, the library is both library and laboratory in one.’ (Mangla: 1981:2)

Barry Banes (1985), writing in his book entitled about science says, the library ‘is one of the institutions of science. Libraries buying, spreading and storing books and journals are an integral part of the system of communication, rewarding and quality control in science.’ It is seen that the mission of the university library has changed with the times. Universities had been in existence since ancient times in the east. Nalanda and Taxila universities were world famous in their times. The mission of their libraries was not only to provide literature but also copy it. In the west, ‘the growing thirst for …knowledge appeared in the middle ages and which led to those remarkable gatherings of hungry minds, universities.’ H G Wells put it. (Navalani: 1996:35)
According to Thompson (1980), 'Only in the present age, indeed, only in the last four or five decades have they blossomed'. From the history of most of the university libraries, it appears that they were very small before twentieth century and mainly served the faculty. But later on, with their growth they were opened to students also and thus their mission was able to show the change. (Navalani: 1996:36)

Raffle and Shishko (1960) spell out two principal mission, 'the first to provide materials for students course work; their assigned reading as well as reference and background reading for essay, term papers and research projects... the second principal mission is to provide material in general support of research'. (Navalani :1996:36)

There are three functions of university library: conservation of knowledge, extension of knowledge and transmission of knowledge. Some of the functions of university library are given below-

1. To acquire and preserve various types of documents to meet the needs of different levels of users.

2. To guide research scholar and provide them to resources useful in enhancement of research projects.

3. To keep the faculty members informed of the latest thought developed in their field of specialization.
4. To cultivate users reading habit for their personality development, self-reliance, pleasure and making intellectual curiosity more acute and strong.

5.5 Evaluation of Resources and Services

Evaluation of any service, process or activity in management usually refers to “determining its worth” or “assessment valuation, appraisal, criticism, review, calculation, measurement” or need to know closely the utility. It is a way to determine how well objectives or performance expectations are being fulfilled and to determine the reasons for success and failures. It also explores alternatives and techniques for increasing programme effectiveness.

As mentioned earlier, it is not possible to do everything that needs to be done for the betterment of the organization. Libraries are already maintained some long term planning for providing services to user. But still the data shows they are out performing mainly in Assam. Strategic management analyses the earlier plan and implies some new short term important strategies that can overcome the problems.

The title of the study demands only the strategic management of resources and services of college and university libraries. Therefore, it does cover not all the aspects of managements. Here a few aspects based on the questionnaire distributed to various institutions and users are discussed which are most important to manage in such a way so that a library can face the multidimensional query of users. The population of the study i.e. table of distribution of questionnaires are given in chapter 6 for the convenient of the study.
5.6 Library Budget

A library budget is an estimate of expected income and expenditure of library for the coming year. The library budgetary provision may be treated as a mirror of the library holdings. A systematic budget preparation is very much essential for every step of library services. All university libraries have a budget committee to allot funds to every aspect of library services. But in college level no such systems are found. Most of the colleges except a few colleges of urban area; the college authority allots a lump sum budget for the library which is not a healthy practice for a library. A huge amount has been spent for purchasing books and journals but there is no budgetary provision for other items. The responses found regarding the budgetary provisions for different items are given in tabular form in Table 5.01.

Table 5.01 Budgetary Provision for Different items of libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of Libraries (n=131)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books &amp; Journals</td>
<td>131(100%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking/Resource Sharing</td>
<td>5(5%)</td>
<td>82(63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Education Programme</td>
<td>3(2%)</td>
<td>107(82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprography service</td>
<td>86(66%)</td>
<td>43(33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>97(74%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number given in parenthesis represents the percentage.
Of course, a few institutions have given the amount spent for the items whereas most of them did not respond. From the above table it is noticed that all institutions have the budgetary provision for procurement of books and journals while 5% and 2% of institutions have spent fund for networking and U E programme separately. Again, 86% of them are having budgetary provision for reprography service. The budget for various services is very much essential because libraries are service oriented organization, without which utilization of the library will be decreased. Since, library is a non profit organization, obviously fund is limited. Therefore we have to find out such a strategy that by spending fewer amounts we can satisfy our customers with quality services. For example, if we think about the resource sharing provision among a few colleges then repeated purchasing of duplicate information resources may be stopped. This way a number of users of other institutions can use the same resources or information which is available in one library.

5.7 Collection Development and Evaluation

College libraries have sometimes been treated as miniature research libraries similar to university libraries. In college libraries, librarians are usually responsible for collection, while acknowledge a role for teaching faculty in making collection development policy. Because the college library collection is usually centered on the curriculum and it is important that librarians and faculty work together. Of course, most of the college libraries in Assam, the library staff acts as purchasing and processing agent for faculty and principal, who do most of the selection. This will create an unwanted collection of documents which leads to decrease the standards of the library.
Collection development is very important function of a library which should be given the most careful attention. The usefulness of a library would depend upon the quality of its collection as determined by its relevance to the library's purpose. Library users will be happy and satisfied if the books that look for in a library are available and their confidence in the library will consequently, be enhanced. If, on the other hand, books which are naturally expected to form part of the library's collection are absent, users' confidence in the library will be diminished. If such experience of the non availability of wanted books occurs frequently, the library will naturally be rated poorly and will tend to be decreasingly used.

Before collection development is planned it is necessary first of all to identify the types of documents that are to be kept in a college or university library. It is seen that in modern times information may be available not only in the form of conventional documents but also in other form. The majority of college library collection is books and periodicals. The college libraries don't have very good collection of non book materials. In college libraries, documents are mainly textbooks, reference books and journals, etc. these are the important sources which are to be managed and processed technically so that these can be located easily.

There should be a standard selection policy in college libraries. The librarian should invite the requisition of books from the head of the departments announcing the amount allotted to them and provide them various book selection tools such as catalogue, reviews, trade journals, subject bibliographies, syllabus, etc for selecting books. A book selection committee is essential to review the requisitions and demands from the students and approved in the book selection committee meeting.
Though university libraries are very large library, there may be no department or librarian with designated responsibility for collection development, but departmental and reference librarians may be heavily responsible in selection and evaluation parts of the collection. Of course in university library, faculty participation in collection development is likely to be less than in college libraries. But whatever it may be, faculty involvement is most important in collection development in following way-

a) The faculty and librarians can share the responsibility, or

b) The librarian can have total responsibility with aid and advice from faculty.

All responsibilities should not be given to the faculty. It also leads the unwanted storage of books.

The university library provides the information sources to the needs of its users like post graduates, research scholars and faculty members. So the collection of the university library has to cater the diverse needs of its users.

The collection of university libraries are both book materials and non book materials. They include books of common interest of the students/staffs such as those prescribed in the curriculum of text books and supplementary reading; books for research and development; teaching and research. The responses found regarding library collection (Printed Documents) available in libraries of Assam are tabulated in Table 5.02(a)
Table 5.02(a) Library Collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.s of Books</th>
<th>No.s of Libraries (n=131)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 50 thousand</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50 thousand</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5.02(a), it is clear that 97% of institutions have below 50 thousand printed collections and only 3% have above 50 thousand. College libraries including Tezpur university library has the collection of below 50 thousand. Again all universities including cotton college library has the collection of above 50 thousand. Quite a good number of collections are stored in the libraries. In case of university libraries, the quality of the library depends upon the availability of the important national and international level journals. In Assam, university libraries have a good number of subscriptions of journals which is reflected in Table 5.02(b).
Table 5.02(b) Journal Collection in University Libraries of Assam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAUL</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUL</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNBL</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKHL</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUL</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is our duty to observe whether these are used by the right reader or not. We have to maintain statistics of the use of these journals. If these are not properly utilized then amount spent on it is meaningless. It is necessary to give importance about the user demands regarding the subscription to the journals.

The whole work of any library or information centre resolves around the collection. Following are the major approaches to collection evaluation:

1) **Quantitative**

   a) By size of the collection

   b) By size of the collection by various methods of categorization

   c) By current growth rate

   d) Size in relation to other variables (includes number of volumes per capita and number of volumes per item circulated).
e) Expenditure on collection (includes per capita expenditure and expenditure on collection in relation to total budget).

2) Qualitative

a) Analysis of collection use.

b) Circulation statistics.

c) In-library use.

5.8 Library Services Provided by Academic libraries of Assam

Earlier the staff, books and readers make up the fundamental trinity of a library. Nowadays Information Technology (IT) is one of the important components of the library service. The success of a library largely depends upon the persons who are responsible for the effective use of a good collection of books in the hands of the reader. A library having good collections can’t render best services to its readers without efficient and trained personnel. The basic aim of the library staff should be to place the right book in the hands of right readers at right time. They should ensure that no reader who requires help either in the choice of books or in getting information from documents should go without it.
Collection of any type of library reflects the types of services offered by the library to its reader. A balance collection selected on a judicious basis of printed and non printed forms are must to offer the appropriate services by the library.

Table 5.03 Library services provided by academic libraries in Assam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Number (n=131)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Service</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic Services</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Bank</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS/SDI</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprographic service</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPAC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Searching</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other online Service</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5.03, it is seen that 100% of libraries offers circulation service. 8% and 9% libraries offers reference and bibliographic services respectively while 37% libraries having book bank facilities. CAS/SDI services are offered only 2% of the libraries. 66% of libraries are providing reprography service. 27% of libraries are proving OPAC and internet services. And only 3% of libraries are providing other online services.

For evaluation of services, direct assessment is a good way of knowing success or failure of a service while dealing with particular users. This is very helpful in knowing the
adequacy of a reference service. This has the advantage i.e. if a user wants to know something, he/she comes to the library and either gets a correct and useful answer or doesn’t. Of course, the success or failure is determined by a variety of factors— the scope of the library resources, the quality of the resources and the skill of the staff in knowing the user’s needs and in searching, etc. It is therefore, a genuine test of the totality of the service.

5.9 Strategic Management and User Education

All users of academic libraries have a right to expect library services to be up to date and commensurate with their needs provided by competent librarians and funded on adequate collection. As a resources center it should play a great role in the learning process. Ajayi (1999) expressed that any student without access to supplementary reading materials as provided for in library will be seriously handicapped: his academic success will be based largely on his liability to memorize his lecture note. On the other hand however any student with access to a good library can learn and be judged on his own skill in classifying a problem, collection information relating to its solution and formulating conclusions. (Salaam: 2003:32).

Therefore, library should prepare itself to play role to attract the student community and increase the reading habit among students by offering user education programme. To offer user education programme, library must be well planned, well organized and needs some infrastructure. Documents available in the library should be systematically placed, arrangement should be scientific, technical arrangement and services, rules and regulations should be understandable easily by user. Because, in user education programme we are going
to teach them how to lay out a library, how systematically libraries are arranged, what rules and regulations they have to follow in the library and most of all in this programme users are taught to be a good, life long reader and systematic searcher. If the library itself is unmanaged without taking importance in management of aforesaid matter then that library has no right to offer user education programme.