

# Challenges in Manpower Building and Re-Engineering of Academic Libraries in Tamil Nadu: A Scholastic View

Mercy lydia D, Stephen Thangaraj  
PGDLIS, Vellalar College for Women  
Erode, Tamil Nadu  
India



**ABSTRACT:** *Transforming libraries into Knowledge Resource Centres and keeping up to date with changes in education is important for all of us but especially for those of us working in academic libraries. Growing interest in active learning, new media and information formats; and technology rich collaborative spaces within the higher education environment are said to be the future of teaching and learning process. This paper discusses the need to analyze the pivotal role to be played by the library personnel's in academic libraries in disseminating information.*

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## 1. Introduction

“We must move from being a passive store house of information to an active disseminator of it.....”

- James Billington, Library of congress.

Library and information services are highly essential for the development of a democratic intellectual society. In fact, the density of libraries and information centres could be an indicator of the maturity of a society that places high importance to development of human capital. The libraries have undergone tremendous changes in the way they acquire, process and disseminate information. The recent developments in the field of computers and communication technology have heralded a new era for knowledge resource centres. Users are also in a position to access their required information without any intermediaries.

Being a service oriented profession, the libraries has always tried to meet the demands of users, and they have updated and upgraded their knowledge and skill base by adapting new technology from other field as well. Now, we find that there is a gap between demand and supply in information .The user’s needs may not be satisfied in time if there is demand for manpower.

## 2. Manpower Building

Manpower plays a vital role in providing right kind of service at the right place in right time for the achievement of goals of

the organization. Libraries are non-profit organisations and it's not just the resources but the total knowledge, abilities and skills that the workforce possesses would only provide quality services to the clientele. Though there is a fact that Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and the process of re-engineering have changed the face of libraries but only the Human relations which has brought revolution in this field.

### **3. Challenges in LIS Field**

The paramount concern of the library profession is the library workforce including the issues such as professional training, salaries and recruitment. The following are some of the challenges in Library and Information Science field:

- Technological Phobia
- Quality Information Service
- Library Management System.
- Upgradation & Updating.

#### **3.1 Technological Phobia**

Library professionals who feel incompetent to handle the intricacies of new hardware options, sophisticated software, complex search strategies and controlling vast electronic data efficiently, usually creates technological phobias. This is because of the feeling that they may lose their job or their reluctance to adopt new technology.

#### **3.2 Quality Information Service**

Quality information service is basically user oriented. Libraries are known as non-profit organisation, but now we are in the race of providing quality service to satisfy the demands of the target audience. In addition to that, there has been a paradigm shift from manual information service to mechanised information services in the libraries. The emergence of variety of new technologies capable of rendering qualitative and timely information to users would pave way for this quality information services in libraries.

#### **3.3 Library Management System**

Computers and communication technology has brought tremendous changes in library administration. Administration compulsion often becomes a source for development of staff in a functional library. Factors like, change in management policies, problems in introducing new services to the users, inappropriate release of grants to library for modernization/ not allotting fund for upgrading self-financing institution, attitude of the parent body in man power recruitment, shortage of qualified library personnel's etc. are eventually affecting the proper functioning of library management system.

#### **3.4 Upgradation & Updating**

Information explosions, publication deluge, digitization, growing desire for internet access have compelled the library professional's to improve their knowledge and skill in the present paperless society. It is really a difficult task for the Library professionals to update their knowledge unless they are encouraged by the parent body. Library administration if provides moral and financial support to (SINGH 2006) participate in the conferences, training programmes, orientation courses etc., from time to time might enable them towards professional upgradation.

### **4. The Contemporary Scene in Tamil Nadu**

We should thank Dr. S. R. RANGANATHAN, Father of Indian Library and Information Science for his great contribution towards development of LIS profession and library movement in India. It is his contribution which has laid foundation in this field without which we would have not seen such advancements in LIS today. But the sad fact is that we are still struggling to move even one step ahead. We need to accept that all our remarkable achievements and growth in this field are not just possible by our efforts but time that compels us to go forward. Even in the present era of internet and information globalization, quite a good chunk of libraries still are custodian of traditional services and some libraries functions even without telephone connectivity, photocopier etc. It's high time for the LIS professionals to realise the magnitude of the technological change for the following reasons:

- Fiscal Constraints.
- Inadequate Knowledge in Modern Technology.
- Inefficient Leadership
- Inability to bear Psychological Stress.
- Ineffective Administrative Support and Abuse of Proper Infrastructure.
- Shortage of Manpower in Libraries.

## **5. Skills Needed for Library Personnel in the Process of Reengineering**

The following are the necessary skills for library personnel's in the context of re-engineering of libraries:

- Knowledge of Library Philosophy.
- Knowledge of Library History and Socio Economic Contents.
- Knowledge in General Reference Manuals.
- Human Relation Skill.
- Managerial Skill.
- Statistical Skill.
- Knowledge in Computer Programming.

## **6. Essential for Digital Librarians**

- Knowledge in Automation.
- Online Retrieval Skill(Data Mining)
- Document Reproduction Ability
- Knowledge Conservation Methods
- Teaching and Research Skill.

In a nutshell, librarians need to have three expertises in order to remain competitive. They are:

### **6.1 Business Expertise**

Change should be looked upon as an exciting thing — as a positive thing. Since information is treated as commodity and it has value, so the library personnel need to develop their library marketing and information marketing skills.

### **6.2 Information Expertise**

Acquisition, organization, processing and transferring of data, information and knowledge is highly needed for knowledge creation in libraries.

### **6.3 Technology Expertise**

Integrating technology for effective data management and its subsequent delivery on time, efficiently and globally makes one expert in technology.

## **7. Schools of Library Science**

Library education today is more than a century old. W.A. Borden initiated a training programme in librarianship in 1911 at Baroda. From 1911 to 2016 we have achieved remarkably in LIS education. Most of the Indian universities are offering courses right from certificate course to Ph. D programmes. As a result of these schools, we are getting qualified library

professionals to manage libraries. Problems like technological phobia and other managerial skills are met by them. We are managing libraries at par with international standards... but still we have problem in recruitment and establishing libraries in schools causing lack of interest in acquiring reading habit among student. Because of these the libraries are not used properly, so parent body is of the opinion that library is very expensive and librarians are not capable of converting non-readers to readers.

## **8. Staff Pattern and Academic Libraries**

According to Sarbjit Singh Pawar in his book “University Grants Commission and Development of Libraries”, he has mentioned the staff pattern in university libraries: Librarian, Documentationist, Reference Librarian, Chief Classifier, Chief Cataloguer, Maintenance Librarian, Periodical Librarian, Circulation Librarian, Senior Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Junior Assistants etc. shows that we need a good team to maintain libraries. Now a days in the name of technology staff recruitment for the vacant positions are not filled. But in reality, we need more person to process information such as creating local host to disseminate information for the particular institute and others. Most of the parent body of the academic institutions are of the opinion that digital libraries are only “computers with internet facility”.

TRULY Speaking, technology has not reduced our job; it’s only helping us to provide better services with promptness and good quality within limited time. Many of the self-financing, Autonomous and private colleges are not encouraging proper manpower ratio in their libraries. They prefer non library science professionals than qualified library science graduates. It is really a big challenge for library science professionals in India...we need to educate the stake holders otherwise we may lost our recognition in the society.

## **9. Conclusion**

Man power is essential for any other transformation or change initiative.

Most of the academic libraries are under re-engineering processes which really accelerate change in LIS field. But to achieve the real purpose of the libraries (i.e., providing better services to the users) for which we need personnel’s with deep knowledge in subject, emerging trends in technology, good communication skills etc. Most of the time we fail to identify information needs of the users. For example, if cloud and mobile skills are important, then we need to attend trade conferences to learn about best practices is vital. I think that any kind of systematic improvement effort applied to libraries may eventually bring improvement, no matter the type of applied framework. But the central role is always: the human resources and its management.

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