Changes of Activities in Academic Library System in India

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Abstract
There is a common observation that the academic libraries are changing faster than their respective parent institutions. Essentially everything in and around the library is changing such as services, technologies, organizational constructs, etc. Most of the academic libraries in India have been facing financial as well as technological constraints. With the advent of computers, the nature of academic libraries has changed dramatically. Computers are being used in libraries to process, store, retrieve and disseminate information. As a result, the traditional concept of academic libraries are being redefined from a place to access books to one which houses the most advanced media including CD-ROM, Internet, and remote access to a wide range of resources. This can be overcome easily with the help of change management in the activities of libraries and give better services to the users.

Keywords: Academic Library System, Change Management, ICT.

Introduction
Education aims, among other things, to impart knowledge and make good citizens. Libraries are the repositories of knowledge and form an integral part of this process. Academic libraries are an integral part of a college, university, or other institution of postsecondary education, mandated to meet the information and research needs of its students, faculty, and staff.

Academic libraries are considered to be the nerve centres of academic institutions and must support teaching, research, and other academic programmes. The situation in academic libraries of India is the same as that of academic libraries the world over; however, Indian libraries are constrained to provide maximum information with limited resources.

With the advent of computers, the nature of libraries has changed dramatically. Computers are being used in libraries to process, store, retrieve and disseminate information. As a result, the traditional concept of library is being redefined from a place to access books to the one which houses the most advanced media including CD-ROM, Internet, and remote access to a wide range of resources. Libraries have now metamorphosed into digital institutions. Gone are the days when a library was judged by its quantitative resources. Today, libraries are surrounded by networked data that is connected to a vast ocean of Internet-based service. Moreover, electronic resources relevant to the professions are developing at an unprecedented pace.

Change management is a systematic approach to deal with change, both from the perspective of an organization, i.e. academic library, in and on the individual level. A somewhat ambiguous term, change management has at least three different connotations, including: adapting to change, controlling to change, and effecting to change. A proactive approach in dealing with change is at the core of all three aspects. For a library and information centres, change management means defining and implementing procedures and/or technologies to deal with changes in the library environment and to provide better services to clientele with changing opportunities.

Management and Change
The effective management of change is fundamental to a successful and productive organisation. Yet the inherent unpredictability of the change dynamics often confounds management and it may be the greatest challenge a manager may face. It has been suggested that the changes we are experiencing as we reach the 21st Century are altogether more radical than those we have been used to, so that instead of incremental change we are experiencing discontinuous change.

Handy (1991) suggests that the changes we encounter will not require just a shift in attitude, but will demand a whole new perspective. In such a time of continuous
change, development and growing uncertainty, organizations must be receptive and responsive to their environment if they are to transform the intrinsic threats of change into opportunities. If this is the case now, then it will increasingly be so as we enter the next century. The openness and ability to adapt that is necessary for such radical transformation lies not only in the nature and structure of the organisation, but crucially, in the people who are involved. Without staff cooperation at all levels, a manager’s attempt to initiate change will be difficult, painful, and quite probably, futile. Indeed, “research indicates that 90 per cent of change initiatives that fail do so because human factors were not taken adequately into account” (Goulding, 1996).

Although management theories tend to be generalised, and may be applicable to any organisation, some approaches are more appropriate for certain organisations than others. The way in which a management structure relates to the nature and tasks of an organisation is vital in determining the suitability of any given theory of management.

Dougherty and Heinritz (1985) argue that libraries’ work and output should be systematically quantified using scientific management theory in order to be efficient, and to satisfy demands for accountability. Several other writers, however, including Jones and Lynch, classify libraries as bureaucracies, resulting from the highly structured and routine nature of much of their work, such as cataloguing, classifying and indexing. The application of rules, regulations and codification characterise a bureaucratized profession and “emerge from the library’s attempt to ensure its efficiency and its competency and from its attempt to minimise the impact of outside influences” (Lynch, 1985).

The problem for the present and future management of libraries, in an increasingly changing profession, is whether libraries can adopt a more appropriate approach to deal with the consequences of organisational change. The first step towards effective management of change in libraries is the acknowledgement and understanding of the human element in organisations. This is emphasised by Thapisa (1993) who suggests that “structures, by themselves, are neither efficient nor able to create effective organizations. It is people who achieve this, and it is they who should be more efficient and effective.”

Issues surrounding the motivation, deployment and job satisfaction of employees are vital in this context. Job dissatisfaction and lack of motivation are identified by Srinath (1993) as vital organisational factors which must be addressed effectively by personnel management in libraries today if they are to develop an appropriate organizational climate which is open, dynamic and adaptable to change. If motivation is an issue in day to day work, then in times of organisational change – which require increased physical, psychological and emotional effort on the part of employees – it is absolutely essential.

A strategy for the management of organizational change must appreciate the influence of organisational structure and management style on the change process. Successful change will be facilitated by the serious consideration by managerial staff of certain human resource management concerns, such as communication, staff involvement, training and development and job design. It is these issues which must be addressed if staffs are to be encouraged to accept change, for without their acceptance, any change attempt may be futile.

Changes in Academic Libraries

Academic librarianship is purported to have changed more over the last few decades than in its entire previous history, and it is suggested that the academic librarians in India have to redefine their roles, and indeed to refine their understanding of what they were trying to do in this decade.

The economic forces faced by academic libraries are not only some of the greatest concerns in this sector, but also compound the problems posed by other forces. Diminishing or stagnant library funding has led to a greater demand for accountability in library spending and the advocating of quality audits and performance measurement as tools to increase efficiency. In addition, libraries are increasingly looking to other sources of income and fund-raising activities such as charging for certain services to alleviate this problem. The increasing costs of books and journals has fuelled the “access” versus “holdings” debate, and led to increasing reliance on inter-library loans and collaborative and co-operative arrangements.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has enormously increased the capabilities of library services, creating options for networking to provide access to vast stores of electronic information, for more sophisticated library housekeeping systems, and for greater bibliographic access through services such as IndCat (This service is offered by Inflibnet and any one can access it in http://indcat.inflibnet.ac.in/). However, technology can also create further pressures and drains on a library’s resources simultaneous for delivering a vastly advanced service. Problems of
obsolescence and compatibility of hardware and software can be costly, and the demands for training, both of staff and library users, are great.

A significant challenge posed by IT for both library and information staff and users is the sheer volume of information available electronically, leading to a sense of “information overload” for users (Deekle and de Klerk, 1992). A further problem is the greater levels of bibliographic access, which puts pressure on library holdings and inter-library loans, raises students’ expectations, thus highlighting the library’s shortcomings, and creates “a greater awareness among students of the services and facilities which libraries can, in principle, provide” (Feather and Marriott, 1993). Thus library users become more demanding and dissatisfied with the level of service that they receive.

Higher education in the India has experienced massive changes over the last decades in terms of student numbers, teaching and learning patterns and funding levels. In this changing situation, the library’s function in supporting the learning process is unquestioned. It is directly affected by the educational changes and issues. Higher Education in India is one of the largest and oldest systems of higher education found anywhere in the world. As of now there are 320 Universities, of which nearly 131 are affiliating universities. Besides, there are deemed universities, institutions of national importance, institutes and over 15500 colleges. Together they offer a wide range of degree and diploma programs across the length and breadth of the country.

While universities, deemed universities and institutions of national importance are largely autonomous institutions entitled by law to design, develop and offer programs which they consider relevant and appropriate for the national needs, the colleges and institutes are expected to be regulated by the universities with which they are affiliated or associated with.

Given the wide reach and variety of institutions and programs of higher education, a number of professional, coordinative and regulatory bodies and councils have also been established to ensure balanced and healthy growth of higher education in the country. Developments in the organisational and political sphere of higher education can also heavily influence the workings of the library service. Changes in management and in organizational structure in response to changing needs of users affect the roles and responsibilities of staff who are expected provide a more consumer-centred service. The pressures of other factors outlined above may lead to resource-sharing between libraries and the development of networkings such as INFLIBNET, DELNET, CALIBNET, NICNET, INDest etc. and cooperative consortia i.e. UGC-INFONET and INDest Consortium etc.

Changes of Function of Academic Library from past to present can be represented by the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Library System</td>
<td>Provided MARC, patron, and circulation records</td>
<td>Web-based: meta-data; resource links; cross data-base searching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information available</td>
<td>The print collection; Inter-Library Loan for anything else; CD Abstracts &amp; Indexes</td>
<td>Print collection plus online data- bases; Document Delivery; extensive E-resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>Walk-in to OPAC, PC’s, stacks</td>
<td>Remote, wireless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study space</td>
<td>Quiet areas</td>
<td>Group study areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Instruction</td>
<td>Bibliographic Instruction, by instructor request</td>
<td>Information Literacy; hands-on &quot;learning&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information printouts</td>
<td>Dot matrix printer</td>
<td>Laser printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Bureaucratic; functional; hierarchical</td>
<td>Services oriented; Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Regional, consortia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer access</td>
<td>OPAC; Online access to DBs</td>
<td>Information Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Parent dependent</td>
<td>Participate in fundraising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortia</td>
<td>Test and buy databases</td>
<td>Negotiate special DB’s</td>
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</tbody>
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**Achieving the Change**

Now-a-days, it is difficult for academic library in India to successfully achieve the desired changes. Change being a continuous process, has to be handle carefully for smooth running of library as well as to provide better services to users. Following factors may be considered to achieve “changes” at different levels. These are the followings:

*Achieving change requires change readiness:*

Administrator, the library personnel and the patrons
have to be mentally prepared for the change. It is important that there is readiness for change at both individual and whole-of-organisation level. Otherwise it is difficult to face the changes.

**Proper planning:** Changes in Library and Information Centres (LICs) is a complex and long-term task. So, planning is crucial factors to success. Without proper planning it is difficult to achieve change. A change management plan can work in a variety of ways:
- mapping how the organisation is to move from its current state to a desired future state
- linking together disparate parts of a change process, establishing priorities, timelines,
- mechanisms for review and (where necessary) revision, and engaging people in the process; and
- communicating about the changes – informing employees and others what is to happen, when and why.

**Leadership:** Effective change requires good and sustained leadership. Commitment, vision and direction from the top of the LIC is critical with clear articulation of vision, goals, timelines, expected achievements and review points. Change messages must be realistic and genuine.

**Management and support:** Clear management focus is important: ensuring that the change objectives, and progress towards them, are kept at the forefront of the organisational agenda, both literally and metaphorically. Change managers must watch for and counter change stalling.

Basic infrastructure and support for the change process is important too. Adequate staffing, money, time and other needed resources must be in the right places at the right time. Organisational systems must be properly aligned with the needs of the change schedule. Human resources systems, in particular recruitment and performance management processes, have an important role to play in achieving and embedding change as do training and development programmes. Training in new job skills and knowledge as well as programs designed to assist people to work through the impact of changes are required.

**Effective communication:** Communication is critical in achieving successful and persisting change. Employees are more likely to commit to change when they have full and clear information about the nature of changes and the reasons for change, what has been achieved, and what is still to be done.

There are some basic rules which can be effectively applied to good organizational communication. These are:

i) Recognise that organisations vary and communicate accordingly

ii) Listen – don’t just talk

iii) Demonstrate commitment to genuine and open communication at all levels of management and involve all managers in the process of communicating about change.

iv) Make communication regular, timely, honest, clear, interactive and easy to understand.

v) Take sufficient time to communicate

**Recognition and response to resistance:** Change resistance is natural and an expected part of any organisational change. Understanding why and how opposition to change occurs, and developing the ability to respond effectively, is thus crucial to the success or failure of change efforts. Change resistance manifests in many different ways and in different degrees – from mild expressions of reservation, through to active hostility and attempts to delay, subvert, or stop change.

**Achieving change that persists requires follow through, evaluation and learning:** Achieving sustained organisational change is a long-range task. The process of change does not stop when the most visible parts of a change programme have been completed. Many failed change efforts fail at precisely that point – changes being overturned by either organisational inertia, a desire by some to return to old ways, or a combination of both factors.

**Users are the key factor:** The “Users” element in organisational change underlies any and all change efforts and holds the key to success or failure. Change happens only when users make it happen; other than in exceptional circumstances, change cannot simply be imposed. Attending to and handling well the human factor in any change process can be the key to success. Conversely, poor handling of the user’s element may be the biggest hurdle to achieving change and may exacerbate all of the other common causes of change failure.

**Conclusion**
Academic library system is the heart of the higher education systems in India. As the time is passing, nature of different administrative task and housekeeping operation in library and information centres is changing. Library professionals should be equipped for the advent of different technologies and provide better services to uses. It is possible with the help of change management.

**References**


