

# **Human Resource Management in the College Libraries of Assam, India**

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*Human resource management (HRM) concerned with the employees and their relationship with and within an organization. The purpose of HRM is to make efficient use of existing human resources in that organization including libraries. Libraries are always trying to adopt new technologies for effective utilization of its resources and provide user centric services. So, for smooth functioning of the library, it is essential to have well trained and extremely motivated employees with updated skills and competencies. This study attempts to examine issues related to human resource management in the college libraries of Assam. Questionnaire based survey method is used for this study. The results pointed out the staff pattern of the library, type of training provided to respondents, purpose of attending training programmes, barriers to pursuing different training activities, etc. This study provides an insight that maximum number of college libraries in Assam are running with lack of manpower and skilled staff. However, in recent times, there are many skill development programmes initiated, which have been proved beneficial for the professionals.*

**Keyword:** *Human Resource Management (HRM) in Libraries, Performance appraisal, Organizational culture, Training & Development, Job Satisfaction*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Of all the assets available in any organisation, the employees of that

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particular organisation are the most essential. These employees or the people who work for the gradual development of the particular organisation which might be an industry, a business farm, etc are defined as human resources. Each and every employee from the highest level to the lowest, related to the organisation comes under this category. Human resources have been called the “key ingredient to organizational success and failure” (Baron and Kreps, 1999).

Along with the employees that form the most vital part of an organization, Human Resource (HR) also defines the division or the department that is in charge of finding, screening, recruiting, and training job applicants, as well as implementing programs that benefit the employees. HR plays an important role in helping an organisation deal with a fast-changing environment and a greater demand for quality employees in the 21st century.

The term “Human Resource” was first coined by John R. Commons, an American institutional economist, in his book “The Distribution of Wealth,” published in 1893. However, HR departments in organisations came into existence with the beginning of the 19th century to work as an intervention between the employees and the employers and solve any problems associated with them. The rapid growth in technology, the emergence of organisations, the increase of labour unions and professional organizations, increasing government concern about the management and development of working class people, etc. resulted in the development of Human Resource departments in organisations.

## 2 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ITS NEED IN LIBRARIES

Human Resource Management can be defined as the practice of effective utilization of Human resources to obtain maximum benefits for an organization and to achieve the target goals collectively as an organization or as an individual. It is a strategic approach to achieve maximum performance from the employees to serve the objectives of the employers. Human resource management is a function of management, which deals with hiring, motivating and maintaining people in an organization. It focuses on strategies and schemes to maintain the people in the organization.

According to Decenzo and Robbins, “Human resource management is concerned with the people dimension in management. Since every organization is made up of people, acquiring their services, developing their skills, motivating them to higher levels of performance and ensuring that they continue to maintain their commitment to the organization is essential to achieve organizational objectives. This is true, regardless of the type of organization – government, business, education, health or social action” (Sharma, 2019).

In case of Libraries, manpower needs to be effectively employed for the optimum utilization of the available resources and to provide better library services to the users of the library. Maximizing the efforts of the employees and their contribution in the management of the library and information centres (LICs) is the main aim of HRM in the libraries. For proper functioning of an organization, every individual must contribute equally towards individual as well as collective development. Lack of proper knowledge about a particular system or situation leads to low contribution or disinterest amongst the employees, which in turn leads to low productivity in the institution, which in the case of libraries means low quality of service to the users. The main work of HRM is to appoint the right kind of employees, pay them appropriately, engage them and develop them to meet the current and upcoming targets of the organisation. The HR department should work on proper training and motivating the employees to make them interested in the works of the library.

### 3 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES

Nadler and Nadler (1970) defined HRD as "...a series of organised activities conducted within a specified time and designed to produce behavioral change" and the latest definition is that HRD is "a set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organisation to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands"

Developing Human resources is one of the most important aspects for the overall development of any organization. The development of all other resources depends on the efficiency of the employees. Human Resource development not only leads to a positive growth of the organisation as a whole but also leads to personal development. It provides the employees a better perspective to cope with the fast changing environment and prepare themselves for the fulfillment of the present and future needs of the organisation.

In recent times, there has been a continuous increase of the use of information technology in libraries which has necessitated the increasing importance of human resource development. As the chief work of the libraries is to provide information and resources to the masses, it is very important for the library staff to be well informed about the latest advancements so that they can give fast and accurate information to the users.

In the case of Assam, most of the college libraries are gradually shifting towards automation and many of the colleges have their own informational repository. Thus, the traditional manual libraries as seen in the past are more or less extinct. Also most of the documents are nowadays available in digital format and even users prefer electronic forms rather than the printed documents as these are easily accessible and stored. Thus, the library staff must be well

aware of the latest technologies utilized in the libraries.

The major factors that necessitize training and development of the library staff are:

1. Increasing use of Information technology in Libraries.
2. Satisfying user demands for latest information.
3. Increasing the quality of services provided to the customers.
4. Acquisition of new knowledge and skills.
5. Maximum utilization of the library professionals.
6. Overall growth of the Library
7. Personal development.

In India, UGC and Inflibnet are doing a commendable job in upgrading higher educational libraries from traditional to modern libraries. Inflibnet has introduced ICT in many college libraries along with providing training programmes to the library staff in handling the digital/hybrid libraries. For the development of North-East, INFLIBNET provides free digital library software, SOUL, free of cost and also the necessary training of the professionals. INFLIBNET is one of the major driving forces involved in promoting automation in college libraries and assisting them in this field.

#### 4 LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Human resource development was introduced by Leonard Nadler in 1984 in a conference organized by the American society for training and development. Nadler defines HRD as “Those learning experiences, which are organized for a specific time and designed to bring about possibility of behavioral change”(Ganigar & Nayak, 2011). Various studies were conducted on human resource practices and issues related to HRD in libraries such as:

Ramadevi (2017) focuses on the issues related to human resource management in the academic libraries in Amhara region, Ethiopia. Survey method is followed for this study and samples of 100 librarians and library professionals were selected from the above -mentioned area by using simple random sampling. The outcome of the study indicates the satisfaction and unhappiness with their work, working environment and their salary etc.

Barua and Barman (2015) focuses on the importance of continuing education/on service training programs to develop human resource in the libraries of higher education institutes. A group of 172 libraries of north East India Region were selected for the questionnaire based survey using Likert scaling method. The results pointed out that there is a lack of HRD practices in the libraries of the study area. Those professionals working in these libraries

need proper training in different aspects of library function, to implement the latest ICT based library services. The paper is also emphasizing the importance of HRD in libraries involved in library automation.

Mondal (2020) studies the concept of HRM and importance of human resources in libraries. He discusses the various functions of HRM in library administration. The author describes the different types of library staff, and the pay scale of all professionals according to their posts and their responsibilities. He concludes by stating the constant change in the library environment and the need of efficient workers accordingly.

Fischer (2018) surveyed different librarians with the help of a website to find out the functions of HRM in their respective libraries. The results were then analyzed to know the status of the library staff which includes recruiting, hiring, training, development, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits, and employee law. The budgets of the public libraries are also discussed along with its utilization. She also studied the challenges in HRM faced by the public libraries and their solutions as stated by the librarians of the surveyed libraries.

Baba (2020) tries to explore the benefits of imparting HRM practices in College libraries in the above mentioned area. He explores the satisfaction level of the employees in regard to their works in the library. The methodology he used was questionnaire method. He analyzed the impacts of HRM practices in different aspects of job satisfaction from the respondents' data and concluded with the positive impacts of HRM in relation to employees in the libraries.

Warriach and Ameen (2015) investigate the situation of HRM in University libraries of Punjab Province. He has discussed the role of HRs in the educational sectors along with the need and functions of HRM in the libraries of higher educational institutes. He utilized the method of questionnaires and interviews to gather information about the staffing, their training and development, the process to evaluate their performance, etc. He also discusses the different retention policy taken by the University librarians for retaining of competent professionals

## 5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study can be stated as:

1. To explore the staff pattern in the libraries.
2. To understand the different methods of training provided to library staff.
3. To understand the participation of library staff in continuing education/training programs.

4. To identify & understand barriers to pursuing different teaching activity for library professionals.
5. To determine effective utilization of human resources in the libraries.

## 6 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research methodology is considered as a device through which the purpose of the study is achieved. It is important to fulfill our research objectives and to obtain desired result. In this study researcher is going to use the survey – based research design to investigate the human resource management practices in the college libraries across the state of Assam. The use of a survey allows for the collection of quantitative data from a representative sample of library professionals, offering insights into the current state of human resource management in these institutions.

A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select library professionals from colleges across Assam. The population under these studies includes college librarians and asst. librarians who are responsible for managing human resources within their respective libraries. A sample size of 50 participants was deemed sufficient to achieve a representative sample. To gather primary data a structured questionnaire covering various aspects of human resource management practices in college libraries was developed and administered using Google Forms.

## 7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was able to provide answers to the research objectives, as discussed below.

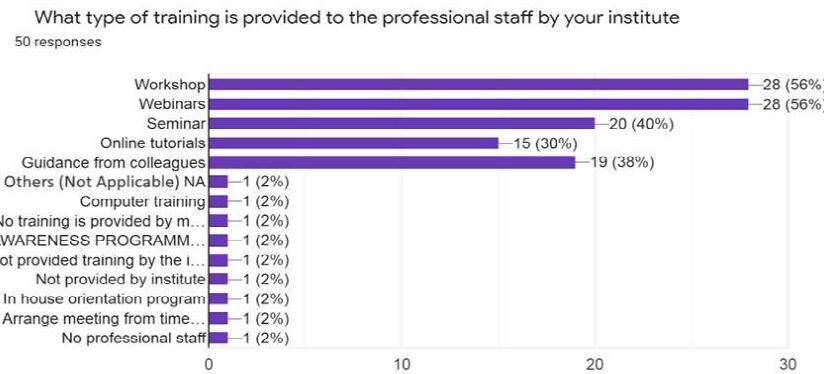
**7.1 Staff Pattern in the libraries:** College libraries have different levels of library staff like Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Library Assistant, Library Bearer etc. In this present study among the 50 (100%) respondents from 50 colleges across the state of Assam, 45 (90%) were librarians and remaining 5 (10%) were assistant librarians.

**Table 7.1: List of Colleges along with Staff Strength**

Sl. No	Name of the College	No of Professional Staff	No of Non-Professional Staff	Total no of Staff
1	A. L. C. College, Algapur	2	2	4
2	Arya Vidyapeeth College	2	2	4
3	B.H. College	1	4	5
4	Bahona College	4	0	4
5	Barbhag College	1	3	4
6	Bhawanipur Hastinapur Bijni College	2	2	4
7	Bilasipara College	1	3	4
8	Biswanath College	1	4	5
9	Cachar College Silchar	1	3	4
10	Chaiduar College	1	3	4
11	Dhing College	1	5	6
12	Digboi College	3	3	6
13	Golaghat Commerce College	3	2	5
14	Government Model College, Deithor	1	1	2
15	Government Model College, Kaziranga	1	2	3
16	H.C.D.G. College, Sivasagar.	2	1	3
17	Handique Girls' College	3	1	4
18	Janata College Serfanguri, Kokrajhar, Assam	2	2	4
19	Jorhat Kendriya Mahavidyalaya	1	2	3
20	Kaliabor College	1	3	4
21	Kampur College, Kampur, Nagaon	1	2	3
22	Kherajkhat College	2	2	4
23	L.T.K. Colleges	1	4	5
24	Lakhimpur keñdriya Mahavidya	1	1	2
25	M C Das College	1	2	3
26	M S Girls' College, Rangia	2	1	3
27	Moirabari College	1	1	2

28	Morigaon College	2	1	3
29	Nabajyoti College	1	1	2
30	Nabinchandra College, Badarpur	1	2	3
31	Nanda Nath Saikia college	3	2	5
32	Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya	1	2	3
33	Padmanath Gohain Baruah Govt Model College	1	2	3
34	Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Adarsha Mahavidyalaya, Goalpara	1	0	1
35	Paschim Barigog Anchalik Mahavidyalaya ,Baranghati,Assam	1	2	3
36	Patidarrang College	2	0	2
37	PDUAM, Tulungia	1	1	2
38	Pub Kamrup College	1	2	3
39	Radhamadhab College	1	2	3
40	Rangia College	2	5	7
41	Rupahi College	1	3	4
42	S B Deorah College	1	2	3
43	S.B.M.S. College, Sualkuchi	1	2	3
44	Sibasagar Girls' College	2	1	3
45	Sibsagar College Joysagar	2	3	5
46	Sibsagar Commerce College	1	1	2
47	Sibsagar Commerce College	1	2	3
48	Sipajhar College	1	2	3
49	Sonari College	2	4	6
50	Tihu College, Tihu	2	2	4

## 7.2 Different Methods of Training



**Fig 7.1: Methods of Training**

Different methods of training provided to library professional are indicating in fig 7.1. It is shown that majority numbers of library professionals attend webinars 29 (56.9%) followed by workshop 28(54.9%). 21(41.2%) agreed with seminar, 19(37.3%) were agreed with guidance from colleagues, 15 (29.4%) get online tutorials, 1(2%) professional getting computer training, in house orientation program etc. 2 (4%) library professional are not getting any kind of training program by their institute.

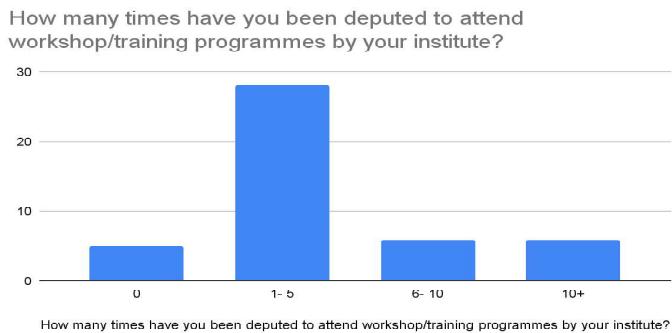
## 7.3 Participation of Library Staff in Continuing Education/Training Programs



**Fig 7.2: Reasons for Participating in Training Program**

As per the data provided by the professionals, 46 (92%) professionals pursued their training program to understand the latest advancements in library services, 41(82%) professionals pursued to provide better services to its user, 31(62%) professionals pursued for individual development, 24(48%) professionals pursued for service increment, 1(2%) professional pursued for

other reason.



**Fig 7.3: Library Professionals Deputed to Attend Training Program/Workshop**

Fig 7.3 indicate that a maximum no of professionals 28(62.2%) respondent have been deputed 1-5 times to attend workshop/training programmes by their institute, 6(13.3%) were deputed 6-10 times to attend training programmes, 6(13.3%) were deputed more than 10 times to attend training programmes, 5(11.1%) were never deputed any training programmes by their institute.

#### 7.4 Barriers to Pursuing Different Training Activity



**Fig 7.4 Reasons for not pursuing different Training Activity**

Fig 7.4 indicate different barriers to pursuing different training activity for library professionals. As per the data, 21(47.7%) professionals faced lack of time, 16(36.4%) professionals responded as lack of events at a convenient location, 9(20.5%) stated as a lack of support from higher authorities, 8(18.2%) responded as cost of training, a few respondent are not facing any problem for pursing different training activities/workshop.

### 7.5 Effective Utilization of Human Resources in the Library

**Table 7.2: Opportunity to Attend Training/Workshop outside their Institute**

Sl. No.	Opportunity to attend training outside their institute	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	46	92
2	No	4	8
3	Total	50	100

Table 7.2 indicates that 46(92%) professionals get the opportunity to attend training programmes/Workshops outside their institute, where 4(8%) respondent are not getting any opportunity to attend training programmes/workshops outside their institute.

**Table 7.3: Utilization of Skill Obtained from Training Program in Library related works**

Sl. No.	Utilization of Skill Obtained from Training	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	40	80
2	No	2	4
3	Maybe	8	16
4	Total	50	100

To find out the utilization of skills obtained from training program, workshop, seminars, etc, respondent were asked to this question. Table 7.3 indicate that most of respondents, 40(80%) are say yes, 8(16%) maybe and only remaining 2(4%) respondents response as a no.

## 8 FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. There are only a few colleges in Assam having the positions of Assistant Librarian. Additionally, many positions in the libraries have remained

vacant since many years. In few instances, the numbers of non professional staff are more than professional staff in the libraries.

2. The library staff have undertaken numerous training activities which include webinars and workshops (56%) followed by seminars (40%) and online tutorials (30%).
3. As stated by the professionals, they participate in the training programmes to understand the latest advancements in library services (92%), to provide better services to the users (82%), for service increment (48%) and for overall individual development.
4. The Library professionals stated that they are facing numerous problems in developing the libraries, the most important being the unskilled or less number of skilled professionals in the library. In Assam, library automation is a newer topic for a lot of libraries and the staff is unaware of the handling and functioning of the digital resources. Thus, there is an extensive need for training and development programmes in the college libraries.
5. Here are a few key suggestions as stated by the professionals:
  - Appointment of professional staff with ICT knowledge.
  - Better ICT tools and techniques.
  - More emphasis by the higher authority in better skill development programmes
  - Sufficient amount of funds for proper management
  - Opening up the library to newer ideas.

Of all the suggestions provided by the professionals, the most common implication is the requirement of professional staff in the libraries. They stated the problems faced by the unskilled staff in following the proper practice of utilizing the latest tools in libraries, As a result of which the libraries fail to attract the Users. Also there was a repetitive suggestion to increase better training programmes to keep the professionals updated with the latest trends.

## 9 CONCLUSION

Although HRM in the workplace has been present for hundreds of years, its popularity saw a steep increase since the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the growth of work culture and the increasing utilization of information technologies in the industries. The colleges in Assam have also seen rapid changes in this regard. The gradual shifting of the traditional libraries to digital libraries has made it necessary for the library professionals to learn and implement newer technologies in the libraries. In this era of information explosion, it is the duty of library professionals to provide the users with accurate information with least possible delay.

As seen from the data provided by the different levels of professionals from college libraries, it can be seen that although there are various development schemes for the professionals, the benefits of these are not fully absorbed by the library staff. One reason for this is the allocation of staff. Most of the staff in the college libraries are not fit enough for transformation of the libraries. Also, to implement the schemes, there needs to be adequate no. of professionals in the libraries. As it can be seen from the above discussion, there is a huge shortage of human resources or staff to work for the betterment of the libraries. A lot of professional posts in the libraries are either lying vacant or are filled with non-professional staff unaware of the basic tools and techniques. This has led to a huge problem in the development of the libraries. The non professional staff many a times is unaware or uninterested of the training programmes which lead to a wastage of time and training resources. All the above stated reasons have led to a poor work culture in the college libraries of Assam.

Recently, with the intervention of UGC and INFLIBNET, there have been vast changes in the college library scenarios of Assam. Various Skill development trainings are provided by INFLIBNET along with modern library management software. Also, there are many development programmes conducted by the Universities and Colleges for updating and increasing the knowledge about the latest technologies to be utilized by the libraries. The current situation of COVID-19 has necessitated the need to use newer methods of information provision to the staff. It has also led to an increasing number of online professional training such as webinars and other online courses which has been beneficial for the professionals with the problem of time or distance to attend a physical workshop or training programme. As stated by many professionals, both the offline and the online training programmes have had a huge impact on the working of the professionals and they are benefitted at both professional and personal levels. This in turn has also impacted their information distribution to the students to a better level.

Thus, from the above study, we understood the meaning and requirement of Human Resource Management in Libraries, the different modes of training taken or provided to the professional staff, the need of the constant development programmes and their utilization in the college libraries of Assam. The college libraries in Assam at this time are undergoing a shift from the traditional to the modern library system which has made it more important for the professionals to undergo training for better understanding of Information technology in libraries, thus, there are an increasing number of seminars and workshops to help them cope with the recent scenario.

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