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Change Management in Academic Libraries: An Experience

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Abstract: Change is so fundamental to all things in the world that it is the most important obstacle to overcome in a game of survival of the fittest. Change management in the world entails most importantly both human and equipment. Change Management is vital for the survival and development of any organization. Libraries and information services face many challenges from rapidly changes in the information environment. This paper explains the model of change levers in the library management. Academic libraries are facing various aspects of challenges both externally and internally. Observes that change in quality, marketing, technology and costs are much visible and change in strategy, structure, human resource management and leadership are less visible. Conclude that change in management of libraries is inevitable.

KEYWORDS: Change Management, Structural Change, Marketing, and Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are passing through a crucial phase. Information society is changing at an unimaginable speed and keeping pace with it is becoming more and more difficult. The single most important issue today for all libraries is managing change and as libraries has been facing the internal and external change pressure from many years and now it has become vital to adopt changes for the survival of its identity. Managing change is critical factor for development in any field of life as it minimizes the risks to diminish and optimizes the opportunities to survive.

Change management is an approach to get into desired state from existing situation. Academic excellence cannot be achieved by ignoring the libraries and educational institutions. For this purpose strategic vision and strong leadership is required to bring change. This is why we have selected top management as a sample of the study. A strong and positive leadership is also essential to influence and motivate people to achieve organizational objectives as well as to create, admit and carry out the shared vision. The objective of this research is to identify the response of library leaders towards understanding of change management, the resistance factors, kinds of change (planned or unplanned) they managed and approaches used to deal with change.

A change is nothing but more so as it involves management resources, process and emotions simultaneously and therefore many people find it unpleasant and stressful. Academic (private) libraries is accruing more quickly because the acclimatization of new information technologies is

much higher compare to any other type of libraries. When one learns to acquire new ways of thinking and gives up old ones, learns to cope with dynamic world and processes and modifies or gives up traditional tools, techniques, methods and processes and be alert to problems, pitfalls, choices and opportunities can definitely deal with change positively. Thus, a combination of right values, right information and right action at the right time leads to productive change.

In these libraries change not only include the information technology, resources and services, culture and values but also strategic planning, decision making, translating vision into achievable targets and operations and evaluation. In these academic libraries, librarians are working in bureaucratic structural organizations where's centralized decision making and strict hierarchy encourages standards and dogmatic rules while discourage creativity and innovation as well. Nevertheless Public sector library heads emphasize on continuing education and on training & development of their staff that can produce a positive impact on operations and overall performance of libraries. In literature mostly studies on change management process in libraries include the areas of information communication technology, virtual reference & research services, performance management, digital libraries, organizational culture and structure, career orientation and human resource management.

REVIEW of RELATED LITERATUR

Managing change is vital for the survival and development of any organization. Change is a transition of current state to desire state and

management of that transition stage is called management of change.

Van da Ven and Poole (1995) described change as “an empirical observation of difference in quality of state over time”. (Pritchett, 1996) that compelled organizations to learn the process of managing and coping with change. Literature has proved the positive relation of change and organization development.

Porras and Robertson (1987) and Woodman (1989) talked about two theories namely implementation theory and change process theory that lead to organizational development. Implementation theory deals with coping planned change activities while process change theory involved the activities needed to handle change after its implementation. Both theories are important to consider while planning bringing change in organization.

Swift pace of internal and external environmental change pressure not only impacts the individuals, governments, economies, education, businesses but also libraries to redesign and redefine their activities while forecasting the future trends. Libraries adaptation towards change is also required for the existence of library. Ameen (2011) states that libraries may further lose their already neglected status unless they devise better offerings for their communities than mere collectors and organizers of information resources.

Siddiqui (2003) expressed his views that the amount, diversity and speed of information available through state-of-the-art technological developments have forced academic libraries to change the mode of library services and operations for the benefit of library users.

Appleton, Stevenson and Boden (2011) also highlighted the need of change in learning spaces development to become academic libraries more responsiveness to changing demands of students and faculty members, marking trends and benchmarking against comparative institution.

Farley, Broady-Preston and Hayward (1998) considered organizational structure and human capital as main concerns for devising organizational change strategy. Further they also explained that involvement of employees in decision making, effective training and development and providing knowledge essential for change environment can streamline the process of change management.

Leong (2008) also discussed important factors to face change such as creating awareness of change, formulating goals and training needs for operational plan, alignment between organizational and personal goals, targeted skill developing and participative management style.

Malhan (2006) said that “because of globalization, growing competition in the higher education sector and external pressure of market forces, the

universities are undergoing change to stay current and competitive in their areas of operation.” Further he explains that skilled library personnel are equally important in current information environment and increasingly changing work requirement.

Honea (1997) also expresses the importance of specialized knowledge increasing responsiveness to the environment and effectiveness in coping with change.

Feldmann, V. Level and Liu (2013) showed great concern in the case of Colorado State University Libraries towards leadership training and development opportunities for library administrators in the changing environment.

Gill (2003, p. 307) describes the relationship between change and leadership: “While change must be well managed—it must be planned, organized, directed and controlled—it also requires effective leadership to introduce change successfully.

WHY NEED CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE LIBRARIES

Change management is the only feasible solution to overcome all the difficulties and problems created in ever changing environment for the overall development and progress. Change management has remained with the corporate world for a long time; it will remain so for so much longer. It is obvious that change management conceived and conducted outside of the employee is bound to fail. Leadership during change management period also has to be persuasive just as much as it should be focused. It must be driven by a clear definition of employees’ commitment to new goals in terms that everyone could understand and act on. Without such leadership, employees will remain skeptical of the vision for change and distrustful of management, and management will likewise be frustrated and stymied by employees’ resistance.

FACTOR IN CHANGING

There are two types of factors leading to change (a) internal and (b) external. In case of libraries, internal factors can be introduction of new product or new service, library automation, change in accounting system, book purchase policy, marketing strategy, relationship between staff members etc. While, external factors are outside the libraries but influence libraries are in a large way. Such changes arise due to political and economic environment, social environment, legal and government policies, policies of the parent organization, technological advancements, and change in information needs of users, authority attitude and understanding of IT applications, etc.

Irrespective of the fact whether the need for a change in libraries arises to internal or external factors, there are four major areas which constitute the contents of change, viz quality, marketing,

costs and technology. In order to bring about changes in these, libraries need to change three other aspects viz strategy, structure and human resources management. These three aspects determine the process of change and finally, change needs to be driven by value-based and competent leadership. Changes in quality,

marketing, technology and costs are visible to outsiders while changes in strategy, structure and people management practices are less visible to outsiders. However, a change in libraries brought about by a change in any of these aspects will have positive and enduring effect only if it is driven by value –based and competent leadership.

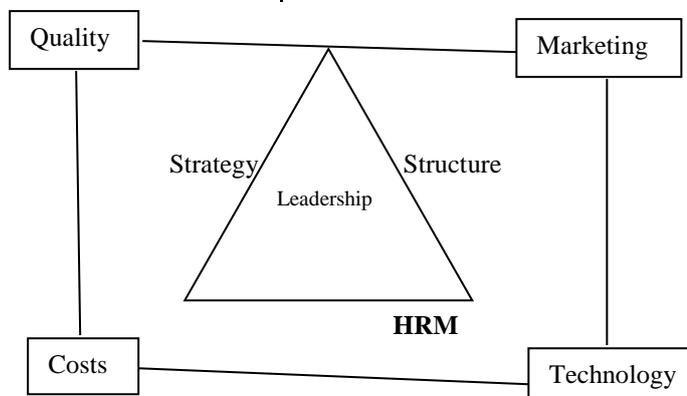


Figure-1: Levers of Change

CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

1. Change in Quality

Quality is all about meeting or exceeding expectations of users/consumers. Librarians and information professionals have failed to change and come up to consumers' expectations. It was discussed thoroughly in IFLA's 46th Library Conference, if libraries have to survive; they will not only have to change but, inculcate quality culture in their systems and procedures and will have to reorient their products and services to make them consumer-oriented. Moreover, to give value for the money spent on libraries and to gain confidence of funding agencies and parent organization, consumer satisfaction is the major measuring rod. Thus, success or failure of any change efforts depends on consumer satisfaction. If a change does not result in products or services that meet or exceed the expectations of consumers. It has obviously not achieved its purpose and therefore, quality of information products and services provided by libraries is its crucial element.

2. Change in Marketing

Marketing is an effective management of exchange relations of any organization with its various target groups. Marketing does not mean just selling or advertising or public relations or pricing and distribution, it has wider connotation. It includes all such activities that are necessary to create, stimulate and satisfy consumer demand. Libraries are basically service organizations. The difference between products and services is that, services are intangible, inseparable, variable and perishable. These special characteristics of services make their marketing more challenging. For libraries, marketing means to create the demand for interest in the use of the library resources and services among users/consumers. Marketing of information

services and products begins with the assessment of user needs and ends with the satisfaction of the users.

Libraries and information centers of all types and sizes are faced with the need to market. Librarians and information professionals must learn to effectively market and advertise their services. Basic steps for Marketing Library and Information Services are:

- **Competition for customers** - Libraries are part of a highly competitive service industry. Competition comes from mega-bookstores, online book dealers, consultants, the Internet, and individuals who feel they can go it alone.
- **Competition for resources** - Libraries of all types have to compete with other organizations or departments for funds. Public libraries have to vie for public monies that provide for their existence. Marketing library services benefits the bottom line.
- **Stop being taken for granted** - Libraries need to convey what is unique about the access and services they provide. Both customers and librarians cannot assume that libraries will always be available.
- **Promote an updated image** - Librarians are not perceived as well-trained, technologically savvy information experts. Most customers do not see the demanding information management responsibilities of a librarian.
- **Visibility** - Librarians are not on the radar screens of many people who think of themselves as information literate. People who are in positions to employ librarians

are not reading much in their professional literature about a librarian's value.

- **Rising expectations** - Library users expect recognition, attention, and appreciation for their individual information needs. Customers also have ever-changing needs and wants, which makes the library market as dynamic as retail markets. Marketing helps to create an environment in libraries that fosters customer consciousness among employees.
- **Survival** - Libraries depend on the support of others for their existence. A library must communicate and work with its customers and governing/funding entities to provide information about what the library is doing and to enable the library to learn about the community it serves.
- **Beneficial to library image** - Effective marketing can among other things: increase library funds, increase usage of services, educate customers and non-customers, change perceptions, and enhance the clout and reputation of the library.

3. Change in Technology

Technology is an important lever of change in all types of human societies. Technological changes in libraries and information services will include the designing of a new system that is Web-based and incorporated into the parent organization, such as the municipal council or a university. Such a system needs to be robust, secure, and capable of searching, generating reports, and allowing users to customize it according to their needs.

We now live in times when it is possible for students to attend classes, interact with teachers and other fellow students and learn without leaving their homes. Thus, technology does not mean tools, equipments and machinery alone, but it includes information, knowledge and activities too. Information revolution of the last decade has really opened the eyes of library and information professionals. Very sophisticated library management software's are entering the market with having variety of features and more and more libraries and information centers are getting automated. Print media is no longer an exclusive source of information, Libraries which cannot change with technological change, are in danger of losing their identity in near future,

4. Change in Costs

Costs' is also a part of content of change. Libraries are basically involved in service activities but with growing emphasis on technology, quality and marketing, libraries have started introducing value-added services too. Users are usually willing to pay for products and services that meet their

expectations and satisfy their demands. They do not hesitate to pay for membership of libraries which provide quality services and products. A cost structure should be on par with the overall changes taking place. Input costs, output costs, delivery costs, maintenance costs etc. are to be continuously regulated and be minimized to the fullest extent. The libraries may even generate some revenue by pricing information services and products, but, the main point to be noted is that the system will be considered to be efficient and effective only if the requirements are met with the lowest possible costs. Change management demands a productive and profitable use of every resource and therefore, managing costs is quite important in this context.

5. Change in Strategies

In order to implement change, the library needs to develop a strategic plan. Its vision and values should be evaluated and redesigned based on critical success factors (CSFs) (Smye, 1994). CSFs for libraries include customer-oriented services and the innovation of new technology. Librarians must have the clarity about what they want to achieve. Strategy means to lay down clear directions regarding short-term as well as long-term goals, objectives of library, adoption of course of action and allocation of resources necessary to achieve goals and objectives. Continuously getting feedback from the system, continuous evaluation and continuous improvement should be the key factors of the overall strategy of libraries. Libraries should have SMART objectives. SMART objectives mean Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time bound objectives. Strategy spells out the direction of change and shows path to change. One library may have a strategy of concentrating on quality, while some other may just focus on marketing, while some other may decide to improve upon human resource practices first and then to go for intensive marketing programme. There cannot be a common strategy for all libraries as they have different environments, strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, they cannot escape from having a sound strategy to cope with a change.

6. Change in Structural

Change in strategy is always followed by changes in functions, roles and responsibilities, decision-making procedure, co-ordination mechanisms, storage and retrieval system, hierarchy of staff etc. For instance, if one library takes up the project of automating the library, way of functioning of that library will drastically change. In the changing organization, management is led by teams, so that those staff most closely affected by the changes propose, institute and evaluate decisions, as opposed to the previous situation, in which such activities were all carried out by top management. Such management by objectives ensures that all staff is allowed – indeed required – to lead, think

and do. Ineffective systems hinder potentially effective people.

At the libraries, a number of library-wide discussion groups have been set up. The first of these was the technical services discussion group. Library staff decided together that the best way to communicate their suggestions for improvements, and solutions to problems would be via online discussion groups. Senior management does not attend these discussions. Anyone who wants can make a contribution, and proposals and suggestions are forwarded to the quality assurance team. Communication in the changing organization is by means of horizontal rather than vertical interactions, so that instant communication networks are available to staff at all levels. They should facilitate effective, productive and empowering communication.

7. Change in Human Resource Management

Change is a social process too, and for it to be successful, it needs to be supported by the initiative and enthusiasm of the members of libraries. Thus, human resource is a very crucial element of any organizational change. Unless human resource practices create a supportive climate for change, most change efforts are unlikely to succeed. Library employees have their part to play in adapting to change. They need to be able to see change as an opportunity rather than a threat, have the motivation to seek information and the ability to learn. To these employees, achievement is the motivation for excellence in performance. They must be able to work well under pressure, and to work in collaboration with other members of the team, their primary goal being the serving of the library's clientele.

These people-oriented changes in library and information services will require the redesigning of the human resource system. This will include the creation of a database not only to record the competencies and skills needed for each task, but also to match employees to jobs. Linking the database to the inventory of a professional recruiting company will also help to locate suitable candidates when vacancies arise. The development of the digital library will particularly require the recruitment of people with IT skills.

8. Change in Leadership

Leadership is taking the responsibility and performing or guiding the necessary action to plan for and achieve desired results. The main lever of change is value-based or principle centered leadership. A primary role of a leader is to bring purpose, clarity and direction to an organization. In ease of libraries, the leader is generally the librarian or information/ documentation officer and

he/she is expected to have many qualities like, selflessness, honesty, strong self-image, self-confidence, strong willpower, courage for taking decisions, tolerance etc. He/she should have sound knowledge of the library and parent organization, their goals and objectives and should be consistent in thought, word and deed. He/she should be trustworthy and should encourage initiative, creativity and self-discipline in the library. He/she should also possess an art of motivating the staff and should be a good planner, organizer, controller and evaluator.

The librarian has to have clear vision about the requirements to cope with change and to make the position of the library sound in the society. Lastly and importantly, the librarian should be caring and know the techniques of satisfying demands of external as well as internal customers of the library. A model of change levers in the context of libraries and information centers presented in this paper gives an idea of how the understanding of levers like, quality, marketing, technology, costs, strategy, structure, human resource management and leadership helps in understanding change and coping with it. Consumer-oriented approach in libraries is being advocated by experts and to be able to shift to this new approach from a traditional one, we need to have sound knowledge of factors playing important role in change management.

CONCLUSION

Change management is only the feasible solution to overcome all the difficulties and problems created in ever changing environment for the overall development and progress. The technology is already superb and has even greater potential, but needs the wisdom of older minds that are trained and have built a lifetime of experience in making sure people get the information they need. Librarians are quickly responding to the challenge and are making sure they get their share of the information age financial largesse. Marketing in libraries has gone beyond special days and book displays. The value of cost and quality of library's products and services has been recognized and now we as library staff need to develop and formalize our library strategies. Putting it all down on paper gives marketing ideas credibility and helps keep them focused. Thinking in terms of the wishes of customers and translating customer wishes into library policy also presupposes appropriate staff management. For only staffs who are motivated are ready and able to take an interest in customers and their concerns, and to achieve high quality in their work. We must seriously reflect on the implications, relations and conflicts raised by the information-oriented processes in libraries.

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