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LIBRARY STAFF

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Human resources are the most vital resource in any service organisation. Similarly, well-informed library staff is one of the greatest assets of any library. Most of the libraries put lot of efforts into defining the competencies, i.e., skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, necessary for library staff to provide best services to their users. The staff thus constitutes the most vital resource of any library. This resource is primarily responsible for transforming all other resources into valuable products and services. It is, therefore, necessary to build up this resource with great care and attention.

Different categories of staff, at various levels, are required to operate several functions of a library. In this lesson, you will learn the processes involved in building staff strength of a library.



16.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- recognize the staff of an information organization as a vital human resource;
- explain requirements of staff in Academic, Public and Special libraries;
- list the categories of library staff and explain their functions;
- outline a staffing framework on basis of activities of the libraries;
- identify different types of staff required for a library;
- list various stages of recruitment process; and
- describe the evaluation of staff performance at all levels.

**Notes****16.3 STAFFING**

In lesson 15 of this module, you have learnt the seven elements of management. Here, we will discuss staffing, the most necessary element of management.

Staffing includes manpower planning that determines the quality and quantity of employees of libraries. This exists at all levels in relation to size and scale of operations of a library. Staff of the library is not only a vital resource but also an invaluable asset. It is the live human resource that uses all other resources optimally to achieve the goals and objectives of a library. The performance of the staff is entirely dependent on the quality of the staff. Building up the staff strength, therefore, should be given the highest attention. It involves a series of steps as given below.

- Manpower planning that determines the quality and quantity of employees of a library, at all levels in relation to its size and scale of operations
- Recruitment and Selection
- Employment and Induction
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Performance Appraisal
- Staff Training and Development

16.3.1 Manpower Planning

Manpower planning is concerned with employing persons for performing various activities of libraries. Its objectives are to ensure that right persons are employed for different positions at the top, middle and lower levels of management. It is, therefore, necessary to determine the categories of staff and their number(s) required at each of the three levels. At each level, functions, duties, responsibilities, authority, etc. are different and varied. Hence, competent persons with appropriate qualifications and years of varied experience, should be employed to obtain the best results.

The staff employed for a library can be categorized into 4 groups as given below :

- Professionals
- Semi professionals
- Non-professionals
- Support staff

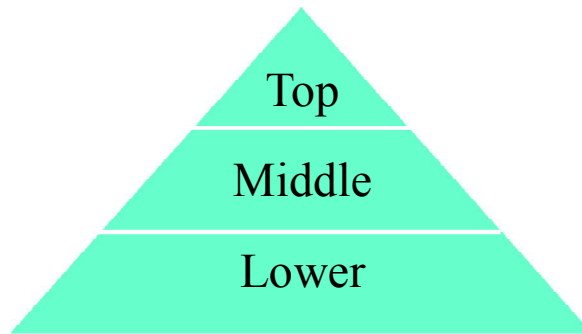


Fig 16.1: The Three Levels of Management

16.3.1.1 Professional staff

The categories of staff to be employed in the libraries are usually at the three levels of management as indicated in the above figure. Their functions, responsibilities, authority, etc. are explained below:

At the top level, qualified library and information professionals are required. They are usually professionals with experience. They carry out functions in various roles, hold responsibilities and are in a position of authority. They are involved in planning, policy and decision making. They set procedures and practices of functions and operations of a library, exercise control and discipline in the library. Designations of this level may vary, but in general, there would be the Chief or a Deputy librarian(s) functioning at the top level.

At middle level, assistant librarians and many of the senior professional assistants function. They usually take care of the technical activities. They also act as a link between the top and the lower level.

At the lower level, junior professional assistants and semi-professionals function. This level takes care of the various routine activities of the library.

The number of professionals at the top level are few in number, more at the middle level and many more at the lower level. This depends on the size of the library in terms of its collection strength, various activities and number of users.

16.3.1.2 Semi-professional staff

The semi-professional staff of the library are engaged in performing library routines and techniques under the guidance of the professional staff. They are personnel with training in library science usually a diploma or certificate in library and information science (LIS). Their designations may be library assistant, technical or professional assistant, junior cataloguer or equivalent. They usually perform the routine professional and technical activities. In many

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libraries, this category of staff works as support to professional activities under the direction of a senior professional.

16.3.1.3 Non-professional staff

Non-professional staff may be subject specialists, computer hardware and software technologists or other technical experts, appointed for specific purposes for shorter duration. They may not form part of the regular staff. Their role is advisory and they are not assigned or entrusted with any managerial or routine responsibility. They function under the supervision and control of the Chief Librarian and occasionally under Deputy Librarians, depending on the department/section they serve. Only in large libraries with a number of functions, non-professional staff may be employed permanently.

16.3.1.4 Support Staff

Support staff usually comprises of administration and accounts personnel, who take care of the office functions, such as personnel, purchase and store, office maintenance, and similar other responsibilities. Besides this, staff is also required for cleaning work, sanitation, security, gardening, driving vehicles, etc. This staff has the respective appropriate qualifications and experience related to their nature of work.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.1**

1. What do you understand by staffing?
2. Elucidate various steps in manpower planning?
3. Describe the three levels of management ?
4. List the various categories of staff?

16.3.2 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment is the second step in the process of building up the staff strength of a library. Usually the recruitment process starts with advertisements in daily newspapers, employment news publications, professional periodicals and on internet. Applications are invited from suitable candidates in a prescribed format. At times, TV channels and radio broadcasts announce news/information on jobs and positions for an organization.

In general, the applications in a prescribed format are required for the sake of convenience of screening and scrutinizing. Usually, advertisements seek data



related to the applicants, i.e., name, age, contact address, telephone number, e-mail id, academic and professional qualifications and prescribed years of experience for the posts. The advertisements carry the name(s) and/or designation of the vacant position(s), job description, number of posts, salary scale and total emoluments, terms and conditions of service, last date for the receipt of applications, etc. Sometimes career prospects are also indicated.

Registrations by persons seeking jobs in employment exchanges of government, private placement services are other means through which persons can be recruited by organizations.

Libraries of academic and research institutions usually follow the conventional patterns of recruitment procedures, except under special conditions of recruitment for senior positions. Libraries attached to smaller institutions follow their own respective general recruitment practices of the parent organizations for filling up positions in libraries. Public libraries under government follow their usual procedures of recruitment.

16.3.2.1 Selection

Selection of suitable candidates for specific positions in all types of libraries deals with identifying and matching right applicants with the requirements of positions to be filled. Screening and short listing applicants for personal interviews are the next step. For positions at the middle and lower categories, written tests may be conducted to filter applicants before making the final list of persons to be called for personal interviews.

16.3.2.2 Personal Interview

The candidates who are shortlisted are called for interview to assess their personality in terms of attitude, aptitude, approach, communication skills, behaviour and other traits that ensure the candidates' suitability for the position. For senior level positions, besides qualifications, the candidate is judged on the basis of individual's ability to lead, take decisions and work in coordination with the junior staff. For the top position, i.e., to head the library, candidates, at times, are required to make an oral or a formal presentation on a topic of current interest.

16.3.3 Appointment and Induction

The selected candidates are issued appointment letter, according to their placement in the selected panel with all terms and conditions of employment.

The next important aspect is to make the appointed candidate feels that he/she has joined the right organization. This is termed as 'induction' which refers

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to inducting the candidate into the organization that he/she has joined. The person is introduced to other staff members at various levels. Rules and regulations of the organization, duties and responsibilities, discipline, etc. are aspects that the appointed persons should know from the beginning. The induction responsibility is usually assigned to an experienced professional at middle level to make the new employee feel at home in the new organization.

Orientation of new entrants is required not only to the immediate environment but also to the whole organization's activities, functions, culture, etc.

16.3.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The top level person, usually the chief librarian should have the highest professional and academic qualifications with experience, abilities and competence to set achievable goals and objectives. He should have ability to set targets to be obtained in a particular period, establish measurable standards and norms for every operation, exercise authority and enforce discipline.

The middle level persons, should have the professional and academic qualifications with experience to operate as heads of departments. They should be able to get the different operations executed efficiently to achieve set targets.

The lower level staff should be more in number compared to middle level, who should perform at operational level which includes routines and repetitive duties related to various work tasks.

Each of the above levels of staff must perform at the highest performance level as per standards to ensure the expected results.

The main functions of almost every library are:

- Collection development (Acquisition)
- Technical processing (Classification and Cataloging)
- Circulation of documents
- Stack room maintenance
- Maintenance of readings rooms
- Display of selected reference books for consultation and use
- Reference and Information services
- Office management

The staff is distributed to these units, taking into account the attitude, aptitude, interest and experience of the staff while allocating different duties and



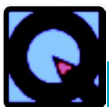
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responsibilities. This is to ensure not only best performance by the staff but also to their satisfaction.

Every position in an organization and the person who functions in that position has a role to play in achieving the targets set in tune with the goals and objectives of the organization. Appropriate duties with responsibilities and the necessary authority to execute the operational functions are assigned to every supervisory position. Authority and responsibility should go together.

A library primarily is a service-oriented organization and the users are its customers who should be served just as a business house handles its customers. The library, therefore should give the highest priority to customer satisfaction. Every department of a library and its sub-divisions must keep this as a basic principle and duty, to serve the users of the library. Even the housekeeping activities such as collection development, technical processing that do not have any direct contact with users, must understand that the library functions for the satisfaction of users which is its primary goal. Everything they do will have a direct bearing on the use of the library. The technical processing division, should focus attention on the library catalogue as a reliable user guide. These policy decisions will help the service divisions of the library in projecting the image of the library as an excellent service center.

The staff in service units, having direct contact with users, have to be ready for users of all temperaments. At times, there may be provoking situations that may result in their patience being tested. For instance, a privileged user, may sometimes seek special concessions for a liberal extension for returning a book which is in great demand, or seek exemption for non-payment of overdue charges, or a reference book to be lent and so on.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.2**

1. List the steps in recruitment procedure.
2. Why is induction necessary?
3. What is the need of public relations characteristics by service staff of a library?

16.3.5 Performance Appraisal

The library and information service activities are not one-time activity but are continuous ones. The performance of the library staff at all levels has to be assessed periodically to keep the staff strength at optimum efficiency. Their future growth and development is also an important aspect. This assessment

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is known as performance appraisal, irrespective of the position of the staff in every organization. Performance appraisal is measurement of performance and efficiency of every employee with regard to their assigned duties and responsibilities. There are norms and standard yardsticks designed to assess the performance efficiency at optimum levels for every type of work. While it is much easier to measure quantity of work done, measuring quality of work is far more complex.

In libraries there are many tasks that can be quantitatively measured such as items of documents classified, catalogued, shelved and serviced, number of documents issued during a day and so on. But how well these jobs are done is a qualitative assessment.

Performance appraisal is not only important but also intricate for developing appropriate yardsticks, particularly in the changing context of information work and services. It is indeed necessary that performance strength of the staff has to be constantly and systematically enhanced to reach the highest level of efficiency and user satisfaction.

16.3.6 Staff Training and Development

Staff development is an essential activity to keep performance at the maximum level in the present and in the future. The staff at all levels are required to keep their professional knowledge, technologies, techniques constantly updated. Staff development implies acquisition of new knowledge in areas of relevance in the work situation. This enhances the capacity to perform at a higher standard of efficiency. Education and training at all levels are necessary without distinction of position or activity. In large information organisations, training and development are an in-built activity.

16.3.6.1 Training

In-house training is necessary for the new employees to enable them to be part of the new organization and blending them into the organizational environment. Existing employees very often get in-service training within the organization by senior staff this is to provide them hand-on experience on the assigned job as well as get exposure to other jobs so that they can work if they are transferred from one section to another.

Short duration programmes on new techniques and application of emerging technologies are offered by professional associations and other institutions. These courses are useful to those who wish to acquire new skills or update their knowledge in the fast changing fields.



Workshops, seminars and conferences organized at national and international levels by professional organizations are another method of staff development. This provides opportunities for staff at all levels to interact or exchange ideas and experience with professional colleagues from different institutions. Delegation to such professional events should be a policy of all libraries. This is to give exposure to their staff to new ideas and professional practices.

Psychological traits which contribute to successful staff performance are leadership qualities, motivating persons or examples of self motivation, communication skills in personal relations, etc.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.3

1. Discuss the need for performance appraisals.
2. Explain the purpose of staff training.
3. What are the different forms of staff training?

16.4 SALARY AND BENEFITS

Salary is an amount paid to library staff in return for work for a particular period, usually a month. Salaries for library staff varies depending on a number of factors including the type, size of the library and staff position, qualification and years of experience, etc. In most of the libraries, salaries and other benefits are as given below :

- Salary: Basic salary plus allowances, total salary, total remuneration
- Salary scales –overlapping and non-overlapping
- Salary structure based on: Length of service, Merit, or Combination of both
- Fringe Benefits Employee insurance, retirement benefits, bonus, conveyance allowance, medical benefits, etc.
- Monetary rewards

**Notes****16.5 OFFICE MANAGEMENT**

Every organization normally has administrative and finance units to take care of the general maintenance of its physical premises. Management of office, requirements of purchase and supply, personnel management, watch and ward, finance and accounts and other office functions are also required. These units function under the supervision and control of administrative and finance officers with administrative and finance/accounts assistants and section officers. They serve under the supervision and control of the Chief Librarian or Head of the organization and report to him/her.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- This lesson focuses on human resources as the most valuable of all resources that have the potential to transform all other resources into tangible products and services.
- Staffing is an element of management that builds up the manpower strength of any organization.
- The three levels of staff are: Top, Middle and Lower level.
- The different categories of library staff are: Professional, Semi-professional, Non-professional and Supporting staff.
- Staffing involves a series of steps such as manpower planning, recruitment and selection, employment and induction, roles and responsibilities of persons in different positions, performance appraisal, staff training and development that includes continuing education.
- Induction is necessary to introduce the new staff to their co-workers, superiors and to the other staff of the library. This is to make them feel at home in their new environment.
- Office functions takes care of all administrative and financial functions of the organization



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. How is staff strength built in a library?
2. Define induction. How does induction of new employees help ?
3. What would be the result if there is no performance appraisal in a Library?
4. Staff training and development should be an in-built facility. Why?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

16.1

1. Staffing is an element of management to build up staff strength of a library to achieve its goals and objectives.
2. Manpower planning includes provisions of staff strength, both in quality and quantity and quality in relation to the different functions, recruitment and selection, appointment and induction, performance appraisal, staff training and development.
3. The three levels of staff are: Top, Middle and Lower.
4. The different categories of library staff are: Professional, Semi-professional, Non-professional and supporting staff.

16.2

1. The steps in recruitment procedure are:
 - Advertisements in newspapers and other communication media, inviting candidates suitable for different positions
 - Recruitment and Selection
 - Appointment and Induction.
2. Induction is necessary to introduce the new staff to their co-workers, superiors and to the other staff of the library. This is to make them feel at home in their new environment.
3. Library services have to be based on more interactive relations with users to determine and understand their information needs, depending on the type of users in libraries.



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**Notes****16.3**

1. A library has to always maintain its standard of performance efficiency, irrespective of any change. Performance appraisal helps to maintain the high standard of efficiency by periodical assessment of staff. Those who fall short of the standard efficiency are to be given special attention to raise them to the standard quality.
2. Training to update professional knowledge and trends in the field makes the staff get prepared for the changes that constantly take place in professional fields. This ensures the highest performance standards.
3. The different types of staff training is: in-service training for new employees, continuing education to keep abreast of new developments and trends, higher professional qualifications for those who need to qualify at higher levels. Besides these, participation in national and international conferences, seminars, workshops and such other meeting give an exposure to the staff to exchange knowledge and experience and keep them updated with current trends.

GLOSSARY

Career development : The process by which individuals establish their current and future career objectives and assess their existing skills, knowledge or experience levels and implement an appropriate course of action to attain their desired career objectives.

Continuing education: Upgrading already acquired knowledge of the staff of an organization

Ethics: A philosophy principle concerned with opinions about appropriate and inappropriate moral conduct or behaviour by an individual or social group.

Fringe benefits: Employment benefits granted to employees in addition to their current base salary or wages (i.e., cash, facilities, health insurance, pension plans, holidays, paid vacations, etc.).

Induction programme: Programmes designed to introduce and acclimate newly hired employees into the organization.

Salary structure: A structure of job grades and pay ranges established within an organization.

WEBSITES

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_resource_management

<http://www.managementstudyguide.com/human-resource-management.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_resources



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