

Strategic Approach to Human Resource Management with special reference to University Libraries of India

Chakrabarti Abhijit

Library Professional, Kolkata, India.

E-mail: knowledgeavi@gmail.com

Abstract - The paper presents an insight and paradigm, generally for the university authorities and particularly for the librarian working in university libraries in India. It also explores what types of human resources management concepts and techniques required for managing information in terms of achieving the expected targets of the university libraries in India. The necessity of environmental analysis, internal and external to the libraries is incorporated for enabling librarian to underpin what and why would be necessary for the effective use of human resources management strategies for the university libraries. In this respect, it is highlighted to consider the present scenario of constantly changing socio-economic, political and technological environment in the university libraries of India. The paper analyzes the current trends in human resource management and pointed out the strategic approaches to human resource management.

Keywords: Human resources, management, human resource management, strategic management.

I. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) represents the result of accelerated changes in the modern world and the importance attached to people and their potentials nowadays. The strategic approach to human resources management is a developing process which changes according to events within the organization and environment. Human resource can be considered as the key element in establishing, maintaining and day to day running any type of organization. University Libraries are academic organizations. They cater for the provision of information needs of different category of the learned people. Personnel or staffs perform all types of functions and services pertaining to university library. All functions and activities which enhance the quality and standards of better university library service depend on the effective decision making capabilities, their implementation and necessary evaluation procedures. It can not be denied that no library can be functioned without human resources. Within this context, HRM is an area that library and information professionals should be conversant with practical applications.

Definition of HRM

HRM is mainly directed towards the needs of management for the provision and use of human resources. Activities are carried out with other members of management who deal with human resources, rather than directly with employees, and the emphasis is on planning, monitoring and control, not on mediating. Human resource management gives more emphasis to what has been done

for managers, rather than what managers have done for employees.

Basic characteristics of human resources management are:

1. Commitment to achieving individual goals and interests, not only organizational and Decentralization of the management process and the transfer of part of management competencies from higher to lower levels of management;
2. Employees are viewed as assets or as human capital which should be invested in by providing opportunities for learning and development of learning organization.
3. Human resources are viewed as a source of competitive advantage;
4. Humanization of productive relations between the organization's management and employees;
5. Increased independence of employees in decision-making and work, making them happier and more motivated to work;
6. Ongoing flexibility of management process and control activities in order to find acceptable and sustainable solutions for environmental requirements;
7. Orientation to the man and his values as the most important resource of the organization;
8. Active participation of employees in management perform better activities;
9. Reducing the number of management levels for more direct communication between the authorities and employees;

HRM is a distinctive approach to employment. Management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of highly committed and capable workforce, using integrated array of cultural, structural and personal techniques. HRM is a system in which participants seek to attain both individual and group goals.

K. A. Swathappa¹ states, "Human resource management refers to a set of programmes, functions and activities designed and carried out in order to maximize both employees as well as organizational effectiveness".

The modern concept of human resource management is not just a man who goes to work and gets paid, but matters and is treated as a subject of management. Human resource management is increasingly becoming a collective activity

involving managers and employees. The environment of constant change, rapid development of science and technology, increase of competitiveness, daily facing with specific difficulties and challenges, requires from the organization's management to constantly search for good and adequate solutions.

HRM is that part of the management which is concerned with human and social implications of the change in internal organization with maximum benefits to the organization.

The above definitions remark several important viewpoints, which are related to HRM in university libraries in India. They are as follows:

- a. Does the librarian make an appropriate organizational culture?
- b. Do the librarians try to apply strategic approach for HRM like creating objectives, missions, planning, etc?
- c. Do library managers apply cultural, structural and personnel techniques in HRM?
- d. Does the present University Library contain a suitable working environment?
- e. Does the university library in India consist of highly committed and capable workforce?
- f. Does the existing HRM in university library in India cater the expected HRM needs and requirements?

For answering the above questions, it is better to know about strategic approach. Like operation research, the concept strategy has come to management discipline from the war front. Therefore strategy is obviously related to planning and policy formulations in any organizational setting. Strategic management is concerned with decision making affecting the entire organization to deal effectively with its environment.

II. STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHRM)

SHRM is both a revolutionary approach and the use of management strategies for HRM. The SHRM is a way forward in achieving an organization, its objectives successfully using following three elements:

- I. Mission and strategy
- II. Organizational structure
- III. Human Resource Management

Hendry and Pettigrew² stated that SHRM has four meanings:

- I. The use of planning.
- II. A coherent approach to design and management of personnel systems based on an employment policy and manpower strategy underpinned by a philosophy.

- III. Matching HRM activities and policies to some explicit library strategy.
- IV. Seeing the people of organization as strategic resources for achievement of competitive advantage.

Within this context library managers are able to design and apply suitable models and practices using SHRM for the University libraries in India.

There are three theoretical approaches to strategic management of human resources, namely:

- 1) Universal access,
- 2) Access to opportunities and fitting,
- 3) An approach that is based on resources.

Universal access

It focuses on the concept of human resource management based on four objectives of human resource policies that must be met in order to obtain the desired organizational result.

The objectives of human resource policy are:

1. Commitment (employees feel as a part of the organization and they show it by their relationship to performance);
2. Flexibility (structure of the organization is flexible) and
3. Quality (high quality employees provide high quality goods and services).
4. Strategic integration (human resource management is integrated into strategic planning);

Access to opportunities and fitting

It is an approach to integration or opportunities which is based on two basic forms of incorporation.

The first involves external integration (human resources strategy fits the demands of organizational (business) strategy)

The second involves internal integration (all human resources activities fit together making one unit).

An approach that is based on resources

The approach based on resources focuses on the relation between internal resources, strategy and performance. The development of human capital provides a competitive advantage.

There are four ways in which human resources generate competitive advantage, namely:

- The resource must have a value (merging with the requirements of the individual competencies of the organization estimated value);
- Low frequency of resources (organizations that have difficulty in searching for the best talents);
- Difficult to imitate resources (the inability of competitors to copy resource);
- A resource should be indispensable (human resources do not become obsolete as opposed to technology and can switch from one market to another)

III.FIVE MODELS SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP

An overview of possible relationships between the organizational strategy and human strategies of human resource management is provided. These relations are characterized by five different models³. Viz-

- I. Model of separation (A);
- II. Model of integration (B);
- III. Dialogue model (V);
- IV. Holistic model / model of whole (G);
- V. Model based on Human Resources (D).

Model of separation (A) is common in smaller organizations, and there is no link between the human resource strategy and the organizational strategy in it.

Model of integration (B) assumes integration of the human resource strategy into the organizational strategy and an employee is seen as the key in the implementation of organizational strategy. This model is represented in the organizations that direct their business goals from top management to lower organizational units, but also it is expected from organizational units (including the organizational unit of human resources) to propose a functional strategy that will enable the implementation of the organizational strategy.

Dialogue model (V) involves mutual communication and considers other possibilities of the organizational strategy.

Holistic model (G) treats human resources as the key of competitive advantage for the implementation of the organizational strategy.

Model based on Human Resources (D) This model reflects strategic HRM perspective, which is based on resources. It is considered a turning point of human resources strategy from implementers of the strategy to the driving force in the formulation of the strategy.

Present scenario of university libraries of India (ULI)

Literature survey reveals that no proper survey or investigation has been done in order to identify the areas of improving the quality of better human resource planning in university libraries in India. Human resources are life blood of ULI. In order to have a better productivity in the sense of qualitative library and information service, certain key

strategic areas are there to integrate into the HRM in ULI. The concerned sections of the university system generally the university authorities and particularly the librarians are yet to identify the efficiency, validity and the need of HRM. There are some factors which are responsible for changing strategic approach of HRM in the university library. These are as follows:

1. Globalization
2. Better utilization of resources
3. Digital libraries
4. Value added services

Strategic planning

Planning is linking knowledge to action and being able to visualize future implications of present decisions. Strategic planning is a management tool and a systematic approach to prepare for a better future. It is a continuous process which assesses and adjusts the organization in response to changing market opportunities in a dynamic environment. In this ever changing and competitive environment strategic planning in the university library will be helpful in sharing the vision of the future of library services.

By introducing strategic planning, there are some direct outcomes. For example, awareness of current trends and better financial planning, better relationship with stakeholders; creativity and better technology, enhancement in creditability of library services, job satisfaction, level of customer satisfaction, sense of belonging, sharing a vision, skill development, team building and improvement in library services.

Human Resource Planning

Human Resource planning is fundamental in developing and implementing the organization's human resource strategy, which in turn enables the organization to meet goals. The essence of human resource planning is the integration of all human resource activities within a central philosophy that people in the organization should be managed. The result of this should be that human resource activities are coherent, consistent and mutually supportive and can drive the organization's strategic objectives.

The key themes of human resource planning are:

- I. Concerned with all factors that influence the way so that people are managed in the organization. This would include culture, informal and formal organization and system.
- II. Required an integrated view of all human resource activities carried out both by specialists.
- III. Linked with business planning and the strategies and policies resulting from it are closely linked to business strategy.

IV. HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES

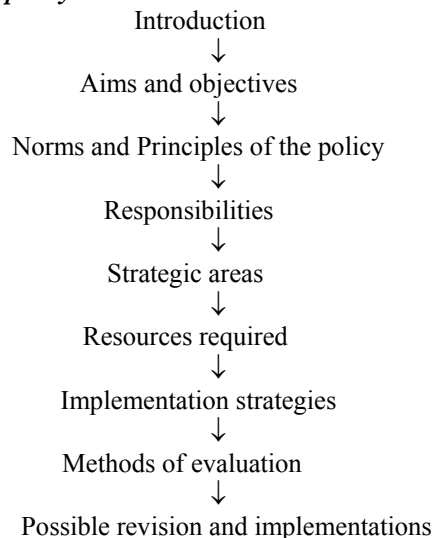
The above ideas clearly show the necessity of human resource policies for an organization. There are several human resource planning strategies suitable for libraries in many countries. Some strategic **policy**⁴ areas are enumerated below which would eventually support librarians for the formulation of their human resource policies:

- Employee relations
- Employee welfare and grievances
- IT policy
- Motivational Strategies
- Promotions
- Recruitment and selection
- Staff appraisal
- Staff training and development

Policy strategies

When policies are going to be formulated, special emphasis has to be given on the critically needed areas with possible mechanisms for finding funds, and how these are put into actions. Librarians would find new roles and responsibilities and they have to examine how these roles and responsibilities are decentralized with appropriate management styles and structures. Librarians have to apply suitable communication and coordination techniques in order to make these policy strategies function. The content of a forementioned HRM policy could be drafted with a use of following or any other suitable model:

Model steps of a policy statement



Library of the future

Over the last two decades the development and the use of information and communication technologies have set in motion a worldwide process of transition from industrial to information society. These technologies have exerted a dominant pressure in redesigning the work of the library.

New technologies and mode of access have articulated changes in organizing and disseminating information. The library of the future is one that was building by adopting such technologies. Different mentalities and attitudes will be needed in order to adopt the emerging new technologies.

Organizational Culture (OC)

Organizational culture is defined by Peterson⁵ as “of shared beliefs, values, attitudes and expectations together with the psychological notions of the unquestioned assumptions that everyone has about the organization’s ways of doing things and its traditions “. By examining this definition one can understand the existing organizational culture and its status in university library in India. But it is better to investigate the values and norms in university library in India like care for users, desires, obligation and dedication towards work, equity in the treatment of employees, quality, teamwork and behavioral patterns like the language commonly used etc. Identifying OC the librarian could pursue some further strategies like teamwork, succession planning, job design and development of competencies and leadership drive, etc. And the existing traditional model towards a more cohesive and more reciprocal commitment model states that OC is an indicator of success. Acceptance or otherwise of the culture can determine staff satisfaction and productivity and also the public impression of the library. OC must be nurtured carefully and continually. All these strategies trace towards a holistic approach to HRM in university libraries of India.

V. CONCLUSION

Human resource management is a subsystem of organization’s management that provides capable and responsible staff for every position and enables every individual and organization as a whole to achieve maximum business goals. In order to successfully cope with an increasing competition and rapidly changing environment, it is necessary for modern systems and organizations to allow the release of creative potential by applying new principles regarding human factor. It is necessary to recruit, develop and retain human resources who are highly trained, motivated and dedicated to his work. The strategic approach to human resource management, focuses on understanding, predicting, directing, changing, development and adaptation of human behavior and human resources in the organization, which requires a commitment from employees, self-control, a high degree of confidence, professionalism, ongoing education and striving.

Human resources management is constantly changing and improving thereby abandoning traditional management models, giving way to more modern, more flexible, more practical and more humane forms of management that characterize humanization of the relations of production expressed through increased motivation, satisfaction and adequate stimulation. For the librarian this is rather laborious job but they have to work cohesively with relevant stakeholders while developing mutual

relationship with organizations like University Grants Commission, The National Library and Ministry of HRD. The universities, university libraries and relevant library schools in India could play a leading role in coordinating the work, while individual university libraries try to develop possible strategies. The principle objectives behind the process is to offer an insight and paradigm, generally to university authorities and particularly to librarian in order to establish an effective and efficient library and information service profession, using human resources management strategies in universities libraries in India.

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