

TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND ACHIEVEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Public libraries are social entities of any community. These play significant roles in upgrading literacy of society. Managing these libraries within limited resource-level is highly dependent on the capacity of human resources. In this regard, training is necessary as it is a systematic approach to enhance skills in acquisition management, reference services, circulation, current awareness services, and mobile library services to prove the worth of public libraries in rural areas. As a component of human resource development, training provides improvement in job performance of public librarians and library staff as per the expectation of their local government. This study identified a specific problem as to what extent the outcomes of the training programmes lead to achieve the objectives of the public libraries in Northern Province. Therefore, objectives are drawn to explore the beliefs and attitude of public librarians with respect to the existing training programme that expect the achievement of objectives of public libraries. Correlation between the existing training programmes and achievement of objectives in the public libraries will also be analyzed. For the purpose of establishing the relationship between the variables, a field survey was executed to collect data from the respective public libraries in Northern Province. Of 134 public libraries in the province, sample of 68 public libraries were selected applying stratified random sampling method from five district level public libraries for this study. A questionnaire, which is the commonly used tool to measure attitudes, was used as a tool for data collection. This study focused on the relationship between the training programme and its outcomes i.e. public library's development, self-development, and performance improvement. The correlation (R) (0.610) explains a positive and moderate relationship. The coefficient of determination (R^2) (0.373) explains that only 37.3% of the variance from the total variance. Hence, the statistical result of the present study concludes that training programme enhances the organisational development, self-development and performance improvement. There is a positive and moderate relationship between the training programme and the organisational development, self-development and performance improvement, which leads to the achievement of public library's objectives.

Keywords: Public libraries, Human resource development, Training, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries are social entities of any community, thus, they play significant roles in upgrading literacy of society. Especially, in remote zones of Northern Province of Sri Lanka, where resources are scarce, public libraries' presence to help in education cannot be underestimated. With steady developmental activities taking place after ending the war in the area, public libraries are in need to transformation. Managing these libraries within limited resource-level is highly dependent on the capacity of human resources.

The ultimate target of training is to achieve the objectives of an organization. It is applicable to private and public sector organizations. Manampere (1990) insists that government policies must largely be expressed in actions for the benefit of society. To realize social responsibility, human resources of any organization should bear knowledge, required skills, and attitude. Public libraries are no exception.

In this regard, training is an integral part of the public libraries to achieve its objectives. Training programmes are executed to the public librarians to make them aware of the benefits of human resource development. The need of the trainings should be properly identified. In the present global context, it is essential to equip the staff with skills and knowledge to cope with the high technological advancement for the survival and growth of the public libraries. Therefore, well-planned training programmes lead libraries effectively toward their objectives. This paper examines as to how far the training programmes have achieved their intended goals. In doing so, it further looks into the challenges those libraries face in implementing the programmes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES

This section focuses on the available literature on training designs and their programmes. Firstly, training is defined as a deliberately planned programme to alter knowledge, skills and attitude of human resource to yearn effectiveness in activities and functions of an organization (Beardwell & Holden, 1997). Being an organization with a range of staff, public libraries are in need of conducting trainings.

This has been intensified by the current technological advancement in almost every function of any operational entity. If they are not preparing to vanish, training is necessitated (Beardwell & Holden, 1997). In similar lines, Biswanath (2000) says that training gives an important contribution to the improvement of human resources to meet the goals. Public librarians too need to be updated for the betterment of services. Davis (1988) insists that an effective training is expected not only to fill in existing performance gaps but also to prepare the organization for managing change within the organization.

Unutilized skills have no value unless the skills are combined with other factors of production to generate expected outcomes that are taken to consumers (Kelly, 1992). Trainings in general have two aspects, namely learning and implementing in task. The transfer of learning might take time to implement, especially if the trainees do not have opportunity in immediate course (Virmain, 1992).

Virmain (1992) emphasizes on attitude of top management whose commitment to training and development is very necessary. The involvement of top-level decision markers in training will ensure that training is purposive. Public libraries in the country are managed by local authorities, who might not shed enough importance on trainings of library staff.

Findings of a survey, conducted by Shafie & Maria (1996) stated that training of support staff is imperative if they are to understand their role in the organization and appreciate the contribution that they can make to the civil service, and the nation in general. Many functions as front liners within the organization they are the “window on the civil service” for many visitors. They, therefore, need to be equipped not only with skills but also the appropriate attitudes to enable them to deal courteously with members of the public.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Training in a systematic approach to enhance skills in acquisition management, reference services, circulation, current awareness services, and mobile library services will prove the worth of public libraries in rural areas. As a component of human resource development, training provides improvement in job performance of public librarians and library staff as per the expectation of their local government. This study identified a specific problem as to what extent the outcomes of the training programmes lead to achieve the objectives of the public libraries in Northern Province. Therefore, objectives are drawn to explore the beliefs and attitude of public librarians with respect to the existing training programme that expect the achievement of objectives of public libraries. Correlation between the existing training programmes and achievement of objectives in the public libraries will also be analyzed.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research methodology was used for the study using a structured questionnaire, personal interviews and participatory observation to elucidate data and information on public libraries of the five districts. For the purpose of establishing the relationship between the variables, a field survey was executed to collect data from the respective public libraries in Northern Province. Materials and reports relevant to these libraries also used as secondary sources of information to collect the data. Of 105 public libraries in the province, sample of 68 public libraries were selected applying stratified random sampling method from five district level public libraries for this study. A questionnaire, which is the commonly used tool to measure attitudes, was used as a tool for data collection.

Sample

Following table depicts the details of public libraries selected for the study.

Table 1: Selected Public Libraries

Districts		No. of Public Libraries	No. of Local Authorities	Sample (Two public libraries from each Local Government Office)
01	Jaffna	60	17	34
02	Kilinochchi	09	03	06
03	Mullaitivu	08	04	08
04	Vavuniya	10	05	10
05	Mannar	18	05	10
Total		105	34	68

(Source: Commissioner of Local Government's Office, Jaffna)

RESULTS

The information gathered from the primary and secondary sources used to comprehend the availability of existing training programmes of the public libraries in the five districts. The data collected from the questionnaires and interviews descriptively analyzed and the results discussed. Findings are discussed against the objectives of the study.

This study focused on the relationship between the training programme and its outcomes i.e. public library's development, self-development, and performance improvement. The correlation (R) (0.610) explains a positive and moderate relationship. The coefficient of determination (R^2) (0.373) explains that only 37.3% of the variance from the total variance. Hence, the statistical result of the present study concludes that training programme enhances the organisational development, self-development and performance improvement. There is a positive and moderate

relationship between the training programme and the organisational development, self-development and performance improvement, which leads to the achievement of public library's objectives.

Biswanath (2000) identified that training makes a very important contribution, to the development of organisation's human resources and hence to achievements of its aims and objectives. Davis (1988) stated that basically training works through people. It provides the desired skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable the individual employee to produce desired outputs. The findings support the above said idea that the organisation development, self-development, performance improvement lead to achieve the objectives of the organisation at the province level public libraries in the Northern Province.

The researcher found three (03) factors i.e. organisation development, self development, and performance improvement are having positive and moderate correlation in relation to training programme and also it was revealed that organisation development, self development, and performance improvement contributing to achieve the organisation objectives. While designing the training programme all should consider the three (03) interrelated factors of the training programme and the future needs of the organisation.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the rapid change in the human resource management environment, Public Libraries have to adopt various techniques to achieve organisational objectives. Training librarians is one technique to achieve such objectives. Provision of training is the responsibility of the management of local government for the organisational development, self-development and performance improvement. Anyhow certain factors like lack of fund, inadequate number of librarians and management's interest in training hinder training of librarians and that training could be improved through adequate funding, formulating training policy and recruiting adequate librarians.

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