

2.41 Managing human resources in university libraries in Sri Lanka: Appropriate styles and strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate the existing Human Resource Management (HRM) set up and to explore the possibilities and outcome for utilizing to improve the HRM in University Libraries in Sri Lanka (ULSL). Objectives of the study were to identify key issues related to HRM, to suggest some guidelines for formulating human resource policy for ULSL, to explore the human resources needs and necessary changing requirements of HRM in university libraries and to develop an appropriate HRM model for ULSL.

The method used for this study was the descriptive research. Survey technique was used in order to collect data. The population of the study was the professional staff working in ULSL. Primary data was collected circulating two structured questionnaires among the Librarians and Senior Assistant Librarians (SAL) and Assistant Librarians (AL). The major focus was given for testing and verification of three hypotheses viz. **01. HRM is the most important factor for providing an efficient and effective library and information service in ULSL, 02. Professionals in university libraries prefer to *participative management style* than *bureaucratic style of management*, 03. Professionals prefer to work as *teams* in a more self-guided committed work environment in university libraries.**

To test the hypothesis 01, Librarians and SAL and AL were asked to mark the most important factor for producing an efficient and effective library service out of six factors and they stated that well trained, qualified and dedicated library as the most important factor. Within this background, a suggestion is made to implement more HRM awareness programmes for ULSL. It is proposed to formulate and implement a sound HRM policy for university libraries.

For hypothesis 02, out of three management styles, majority of Librarians (70%), and SAL and AL 85% endorsed the statement “*HRM functions and activities which belong to library domain should be dispersed among respective Heads/Sectional Heads, while holding full responsibility with the Librarian himself.*” It manifests that ‘*participative management style*’ which is based on the principles of more collaborative approach is needed for ULSL.

In testing 3rd hypothesis, out of four organizational structures, the highest responses (60%) were received by the Librarians for the 3rd model “*a new cohesive and collaborative model, based more on the principles of teamwork with high commitment*” The underline theory behind these three hypothesis is that Human Resource factor is to be given the prime concerned by the ULSL and the very human resources have to be handled with appropriate management styles, strategies and structures.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Teamwork, Participative Management, University Libraries, Sri Lanka