Library Leadership: Inevitable In Academic Libraries

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Abstract

Unlike the countries like USA and UK, the concept of library leadership is gradually occupying significance in India and as such attempts have been made to explore the significance and growth of library leadership in Indian context and literature generated over a period of time on leadership in library and information science. Further the competencies required to become strategic library leaders have been discussed based on various leadership models proposed by pioneers in the field and stress upon to build congenial atmosphere in the library for better performance of libraries working in team spirit.

Keywords

Leadership; Library Management; Human Resource; Management

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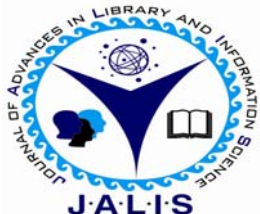
INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science Professionals of today have to face the challenge of looking toward the future and ensuring that the libraries in which they work will be able to meet the needs of the digital age and to provide services needed by both today's and tomorrow's clientele. Libraries support the parent institution's teaching, learning, and research mission irrespective of its being academic or corporate or R & D setup. The expertise and skills needed by the Librarians also calls for continuous updation to possess expertise and skills to work in the complex, multifaceted and modern digital library. These skills includes besides sound knowledge of theory and practice of librarianship are Communication, technology skills, ability to change, learn and grow, collaboration, team work, assessment, marketing, leadership and innovation.

The *National Skill Development Corporation* (*NSDC*) is a first-of-its-kind Public Private Partnership in India set up to facilitate the skill development to fulfill the growing need in India for skilled manpower across sectors and narrow the existing gap between the demand and supply of skills and even the Global Investors Meet (GIM) - 2012 organized by Government of Karnataka also had scheduled a technical session on `Skill Development'. Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi launched project Skill India Campaign on the occasion of the first ever World Youth Skills Day during 2015 which included the launch of the National Skill Development Mission and unveiling of the new National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015. This shows the relevance and importance of empowering libraries for lifelong learning skills. Human Resource is an asset to any country for its development irrespective of any area. Technology is of course need of the hour but it is only a tool and human resources have to manage and execute the work. Thus, Human Resources are very significant resources for the prosperous development of any nation. It is the quality of manpower that can make or mar the name of any institution and as such the concept of `Human Resource Management' has occupied significant in the modern world. In the academic, research, corporate world or any system, management skills and education is of utmost significance. Management is not confined to any particular discipline of Commerce or Management studies, but it has become universal wherever manpower resources are involved. This is not an exception to Library and Information Centres.

Probably Library leadership is not much heard especially in the Indian context unlike in USA or UK librarianship. Although Library Leadership is a part of Library Management, but today the concept of leadership has become more of inter-disciplinary nature and is growing as a specialized subject. The term `Leadership qualities or Leader' is normally a mouth word of the society when there is an achievement either in the political or social system or higher education or any other system providing credit to the personality acknowledging his/ her leadership quality or vision of being a good leader.

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

> *"Leadership is about listening to people, supporting and encouraging them and involving them in the decision-making and problem-solving processing. It is about building teams and developing their ability to make skilful decisions"*
> - (Stuart Levine and Michael Crom, 1994).

Library Leadership refers to the ability of a Librarian or head of the library to lead the team of subordinate library professionals and supporting staff with utmost confidence and diligence by his/ her act of benevolence showing passion for creativity, innovation and development of library on par excellence creating congenial atmosphere and subordinate staff should also feel and execute duties and responsibilities to achieve the mission of the library moving in the same direction as of library leader. In the words of Boer, Bothma and Olwagen (2012) library leadership as "The ability to be visionary, to embrace change and to anticipate future information technologies, thereby providing strategic direction for their libraries and the ability to motivate their colleagues to share the vision, will empower library leaders for the digital demands of the 21st century".

It is often heard the terms `good leader', `good administrator` or `good management' used as a means of appreciation giving credit for effective execution of work and these terms are often used inter-changeably.

In the modern world, there isn't much difference between leaders and managers as both managers and leaders are expected to have leadership qualities, be excellent communicators and have good people skills but leader are vision orientated while managers are task orientated.

(Source: Mark Sanborn, Leadership, Relevance and Loyalty)

1.3 GROWTH OF LITERATURE ON LEADERSHIP

J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC) @ UGC Infonet a national gateway (http://jgateplus.com/) for UGC Infonet e-journals and databases has been used to trace the growth of literature on "Leadership" in "Library and Information Science" subject as on 17th September 2015 in which the term on `leadership` is searched in title of the article resulting 470 articles and the results are presented as under:

Chart 1: Subject-wise distribution of Articles on `Leadership'

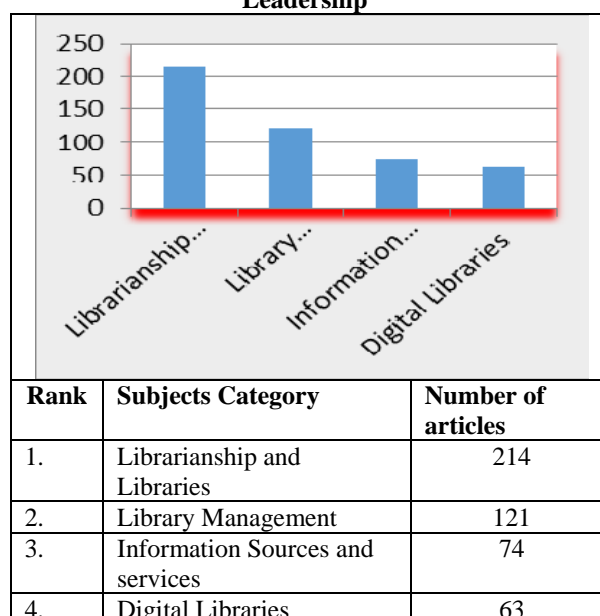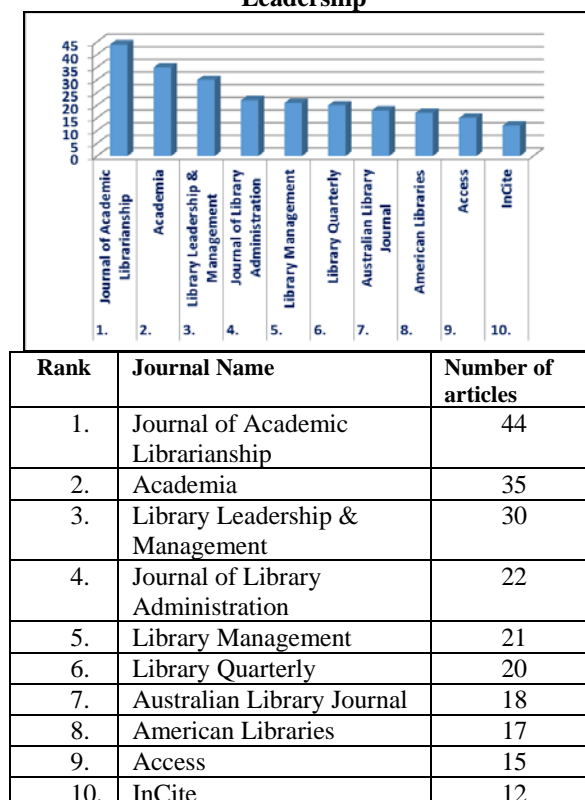| Rank	Subjects Category	Number of articles
1.	Librarianship and Libraries	214
2.	Library Management	121
3.	Information Sources and services	74
4.	Digital Libraries	63

Chart 2: Core Journals containing Articles on `Leadership'

Rank	Journal Name	Number of articles
1.	Journal of Academic Librarianship	44
2.	Academia	35
3.	Library Leadership & Management	30
4.	Journal of Library Administration	22
5.	Library Management	21
6.	Library Quarterly	20
7.	Australian Library Journal	18
8.	American Libraries	17
9.	Access	15
10.	InCite	12

The library leadership has really got its maturity since year 2000 and onwards and however the number of articles appeared between 1916 and 2000 was found on average of one or two articles only. The key prolific authors contributed research articles on `leadership' are Mark D Winston (N=9).

Chart 3: Prolific Authors contributed on `Leadership'
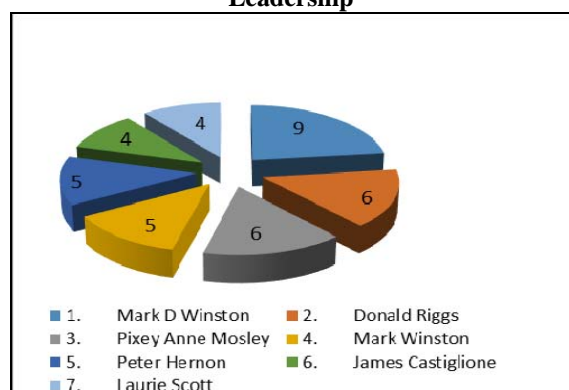
LIBRARY LEADERSHIP: MODELS AND COMPETENCIES

The Competencies of Successful Leader emphasized by various stalwarts in library profession and here the efforts are made to know the various leadership models for the benefit of librarians to understand, measure and evaluate the strength of leadership and strive to possess the competencies in the light of the existing leadership models.

- **Professor John Adair's Functional Leadership Model**

This a leadership model that is used to assess the extent of strength and weaknesses of an individual in determining leadership competencies possessed. The fundamental elements of this leadership model are

  o Achieve the task;
  o Develop Individuals and
  o Build a team.

- **Herrmann's Whole Brain Model**

This model developed by Ann Herrmann Nehdi that contains 120-question Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument assessment defines and describes someone's thinking preferences across the Whole Brain® Model.


Source: (http://www.herrmannsolutions.com/what-is-whole-brain-thinking-2/)
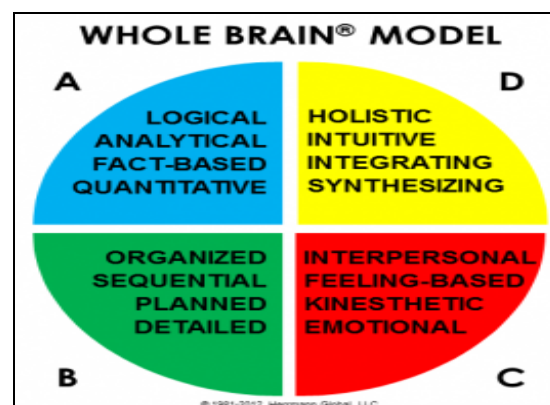
- **Drotter's Leadership Pipeline**

Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel developed the Leadership Pipeline Model that encompasses six key transitions which help the

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organizations like library to develop good leaders. They are

Source:
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/leadership-pipeline-model.htm
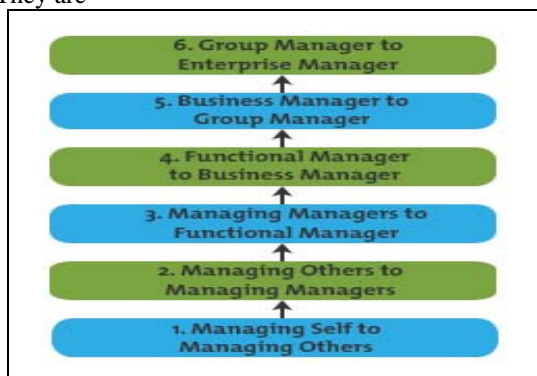
CONCLUSION

To conclude, Library leadership is the need of the hour but this is still a very primitive stage in Indian academic librarianship. It is often said that leaders are born not created. But what so ever, the reason as to why lot of hue and cry of leadership is for better productivity, visibility and strengthening of libraries and this can be achieved only with the strong leadership of head librarian who shows the way, excels and leads the team with utmost diligence and act of benevolence to meet the customer expectations with consensus among library team.

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