Unit 3: Planning and Evaluation of Library and Information Centres

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Planning of Information Systems

- Planning involves drawing up a frame work of a course of action towards achieving a goal set by an organization, speedily and economically.

- Planning is setting up a path for the centre. It involves the systematic study of existing resources, present and future requirements.

- Without proper planning system cannot work efficiently and effectively.

- It is essentially a path set for the movement towards the goal.

Planning Process

- Planning can be properly done if the **<u>objectives</u>** of the library / information centre are clearly stated.

- Appropriate **<u>manpower</u>** with requisite qualifications and abilities should be thought before planning.

- Provision should be made for necessary <u>funds</u> for equipment.

- Adequate **<u>supporting professional staff</u>** to enable them to build up a modern library / information centre.

- A **<u>functionally building</u>** to house the information centre is however taken as existing.

Need for Planning

- Planning is essential to ensure economic and effective utilization of the resources and fulfill the present and future requirements of the users of the system.

- It is not only necessary to promote scientific and technological research but also to disseminate information in a faster pace (rate) to the largest of their utilization.

- It has been well recognized by many developing countries that a national development plan should aim at developing a national infrastructure for scientific and technological information.

- The awareness as the part of national planners, scientific and technologists have let to drawing up a plan for national and regional scientific information centre for different disciplines.

- Transfer of information is a vital importance to research and development but the mass of information being generated now-a-days poses an enormous problem due to the multiplicity of journals.

- The users who need the information to further their work and those who organize the information for them are confronted with the problem of flood of publication.

- These people need analyzed condensed and evaluated information relevant to their field of interest. To meet their demands and to satisfy these people the information centre came into existence.

Advantages of Planning

The following are the important advantages of planning of information centre.

- Planning helps to systematically move towards the achievement of the goals of the information centre.

- Planning helps concerted and to be united action by a group of people or a cooperation towards achieving the ultimate goals of a centre.

- Planning helps re-checking error identifying and re-modifying due to unforeseen circumstances at any stages in course of action.

- Planning helps in clear demarcation and allocation of activities among a group of people and effectively controlling the course of action of different people towards achieving goals.

- Planning helps to draft a financially elastic budget. A good plan is escapable or re-adjusting itself to a enhancing of financial resources.

- Planning provides an integrated and analytical projection of future course of an information centre.

- Planning provides a systematic approach to the development of resources and activities of the system.

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- Planning avoids duplication of efforts, and provides improved and economic services to large number of users of the system.

Factors in Planning: Systems approach to Planning

- In a system approach to planning for the information centre it would be helpful to take into account the following parameters involved in any system analysis in general.

a) Over all **objectives** of information centre.

b) **Component units** of the respective units.

c) **Functional organization** of the components into coherent (united together) whole.

d) **<u>Inter linking of the component units</u>** to facilitate their productive use.

e) The **<u>present and future resource requirements</u>**.

f) **<u>Environmental factors</u>** affecting the performance of the centre.

g) To build in **<u>control preventive and corrective measures</u>**, this would enable the centre, to adopt the change.

h) The conditions for **<u>health growth and development</u>** of centre in future.

i) **<u>Identifying an agency</u>** which would ensure **<u>continuous inputs</u>**.

j) **<u>Holding / Collection / Database development</u>**: Building up a good database, books, periodicals, reports, theses etc. guided by a well formulated selection and acquisition policy should be given adequate attention from the beginning.

k) **<u>Information Services</u>**: From the very beginning emphasis should be placed on the provision of information services that would be helpful to the users.

l) **<u>Manpower:</u>** The effectiveness and efficiency of the information centres would largely depend on the competence of the staff professional and non-professional.

m) **<u>Furniture and equipment and space</u>**: Based on the standards, furniture and equipments to be acquired to the information centre.

Steps in Planning

- The different steps in planning may be stated as follows.

1. **Definition of objectives**: This involves explicit statement of the essential goals of the information centre.

2. **Formulation of the policies**: Formulating general guidelines to channel thinking of and action of different units / departments of a information centre towards achieving a objective.

3. **Determination of course of action**: A selection course of action from among several alternatives towards achieving the objectives.

4. **Drawing up a Budget**: Budget is essentially a statement of expected results expressed in numerical or financial terms. Budgets are usually concerned as controlled devices.

5. **Initiating Programmes**: It involves effectively executing, action in the frame of defined objectives, policies, procedures and budge.

Financial planning methods for an information centre

1. **Per Capita Method:** This is especially helpful in an organization where data on the total annual expenditure is not available.

- In this method a minimum amount per user, depending upon the type of the user top / middle management personnel, operator / worker, is fixed which is considered essential for providing library services.

2. **Cost of Additions Method**: In this, the total annual expenditure estimated on the bases of the cost of the documentary that are added per year.

- Here it is assumed that there is a plan which gives the total number of documents, which are expected to be added at the end of five years.

- This method is helpful where data on the total annual expenditure is not available.

3. **Method of Details:** In this approach, the total annual expenditure is estimated on the bases of all items of expenditure salaries of staff, cost of document, binding, photocopying service etc. and other, over heads.

- This approach would imply that due weightage is to be given to past expenditure while estimating the annual financial requirement.

- **Methods of Proportion:** The financial estimation is based on a purely arbitrary principle, that a certain minimum proportion or percentage of the total budget incurred by the organization should be allocated to the information centre for its annual expenditure.

- This method necessarily implied that the provision of library finance is the responsibility of management concerned.

- The recommend figure is 2 % of the total turnover of an industrial organization. In USA 2 to 10 %. It depends upon the management.

Standards for Planning

- Library standards provide an essential base for planning of an information centre. They provide a unit of measurement for particular work or service.

- Therefore, establishing library standards has become an important pre-requisite for the planning process, performance standards usually.

a) Provide an objective basis for decision making.

b) Aid the equitable distribution of work while delegating responsibility.

c) Provide an objective test for the measurement of effectiveness of methods of doing a work or of solving a problem.

d) Provide a basic guideline for manpower planning.

e) Provide a unit of measurement for cost and time analysis technique.

f) Provide a mean work simplification and increases productivity.

g) Promote faster and precise communication of ideas among information personnel and information centre planner.

Areas for Standardization

a) Document stock

b) Technical processing

c) Library manpower requirement

d) Financial provision

e) Library housing (as location, layout, windows and physical amenities / services, contract of building book trolley).

f) Performance, standards, and working conditions.

g) Setting up standards for different kinds of information services.

Objectives of the Planning Information Centre

- The objectives of the Information centre should preferably be divided from and be in conformity with the policies programmes and activities of the parent organization they serve.

- The overall objectives of information centre may be stated as follows.

1. Building up a **good and valuable document collection** relevant to the organizations needs in order to support the service activities.

2. Acting as **control point** for the filing of the organization technical / scientific reports and other related documents and organizing them for use in order to aid the exploitation of the organization know how and reduce or eliminate duplication of work (a good centre becomes over the years an organizational corporate memory).

3. **Exploiting the literature** (published / unpublished) and other sources of information in order to provide the staff with new and up to date information on subject relevant to their fields of specialization.

4. Providing an **efficient and effective** information retrieval and **dissemination system**.

5. **Fulfilling all these objectives in an economic and balanced manner** so that only reasonable services are provided and at a low cost as possible commensurate with effectiveness.

6. **Fixing the duties and responsibilities for the manpower**.

Conclusion

- An information centre must be evolved as industrial agency at state and national level to provide adequate information to the decision makers on the various facets of planning of the organizations and countries plan too.

- Identification of the research and development project have direct relevance to social needs and the integrative and coordination of the various research programmes to meet the national objectives will be possible only through a well developed information centres for research and development project planning at the national and international level.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS EVALUATION

- The ultimate aim of all the managerial principles, methods and techniques discussed so far is to help attain objectives of the organization efficiently, effectively, economically, and in time.

- It is evaluation that testifies whether the objectives are achieved and if so, to what extent.

- Evaluation also includes accountability to the funding authorities, the patrons and other stake holders as to whether the resources spent have resulted in the attainment of the desired objectives.

- Evaluation is basically a judgment of worth an appraisal of value (Suchman, 1967).
  - It means assessing the worth of the value of the unit to the people for whom it is meant.
- It is assessing performance against user's expectations.
  - It could also be interpreted in a narrower sense of whether the output is commensurate with the input. In the context of a system, has to achieve.
- By and large, evaluation means testing the service of system for effectiveness and efficiency.

Why Evaluation?

- Evaluation studies are intent to:

- Assess a set of goals, a programme plan, or a design prior to implementation;

- Determine whether and how well goals or performance expectations are being fulfilled;

- Probe into the reasons for specific successes and failures;

- Explore techniques for increasing programme effectiveness;

- Establish a foundation for further research on the reasons for the relative success of alternative techniques; and

- Improve the means employed for attaining objectives or to redefine sub goals or goals in view of research findings (Scanson, 1975).

Process of Evaluation

- Identification of the item or programme to be evaluated;

- Defining the objective of evaluation;

- Selection of the criteria by which performance is to be assessed;

- Selection of appropriate measuring techniques / methods;

- Formulation of hypotheses;

- Collection of data;

- Analysis and evaluation of data; and

- Derivation of results

Levels of Evaluation

- Evaluation could be a both macro and micro levels.

- Macro evaluation measures how well a system operates and expresses the results quantitatively. It indicates the level of operation, but does not deal with the reasons for that level of operation or factors that go to improve performance.

- On the other hand, micro evaluation is diagnostic and investigates how a system operates and why it operates at a particular level of effectiveness (King and Byant, 1971).

Evaluation Criteria

- The performance of a library is evaluated primarily in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

- Evaluation is also thought of as weighing the goodness of results (expected or realized) of a library service against the resources required.

- Goodness is measured in terms of "How good is the service?" – a measure of quality (effectiveness); and "How much good does it do?" a measure of value (benefit).

- The quality of service is its capability for meeting the needs of the user it is intended to serve, and its value judged in terms of the benefits accruing from its use as viewed by those who bear the costs.

- Thus, the criteria of measuring goodness are capability of service, resources required to create the capability, utilization of the capability of service, resources required to create the capability, utilization of the capability and benefits accruing from utilization (Orr, 1973; Buckland, 1982).

- Effectiveness and efficiency are functions of other subs criteria, namely, cost, cost-effectiveness, accessibility, time saved, satisfaction, cost-benefit evaluation and cost-performance benefit evaluation, which are now explained.

Importance of Evaluation

- Pointing out the existing deficiencies so that remedial measures can be instituted to rectify them;

- Improving upon existing methods or suggesting new methods that can increase both efficiency and effectiveness; and

- Reassessing objectives in the light of the performance evaluation results and modifying them, if necessary.
  - Of all the aspects of library management, evaluation seems to be the most difficult to achieve.

What can we evaluate?

- The answer to the question "What can we evaluate?" is very simple: any aspect of organizational functioning can be subject to evaluation. Thus, we can evaluate:

- The way the management structure functions;

- Internal operations relating to information materials, such as cataloguing and classification, indexing, etc.;

- Library / information services to users;
- New programmes of service delivery;
- Alternative possibilities for doing anything;
- The functioning of a total system prior to planning change; and
- New possibilities for technological support to services.