



Re-Engineering of Library Practices in Academic Libraries

Dr. Bhagwan Shamrao Padval
Librarian,
M. H. Shinde Mahavidyalaya,
Tisangi, Kohalpur, Maharashtra, (India)

Abstract: *The re-engineering refers to designing of new processes by making radical changes in the existing processes. These changes should respond to the demands of the users of the academic library. The emerging new technology can be used as a dynamic tool to make radical changes in the processes which ensures substantial gain in cost and time and also in providing effective and efficient services to the users.*

Key words: *Re-engineering, Academic Libraries.*

I. INTRODUCTION

As the libraries are service organizations, their importance is measured in terms of quality of services they provide. In order to provide better services, the libraries have been undergoing a consistent & continuous change in their internal and external environments. Re-engineering is a phase of transaction for libraries from traditional practices to modern practices. Therefore the library practices today focus upon putting the end user in contact with the exact information needed irrespective of barriers like geographical or non-availability of information. Due to issues like Internet & Intranet revolution, web publishing, electronic publishing & many other information technological innovations, the activities & operations in the libraries undergo a drastic change. The significance of library services depends upon their efficiency, effectiveness & economy. To achieve this, it is essential to adopt a process of re-engineering which refer to staff tasks, available physical facilities, infrastructure and available financial resources.

Considering the changing needs and variety of interests of users in academic libraries, these libraries have to go with new ways of storing, organizing, analyzing and retrieving information from various resources. It enforces these libraries to adopt new innovative changes by the way of process of re-engineering.

II. WHAT IS RE-ENGINEERING?

Re-engineering as a management tool became popular in the late 1980 & early 1990 and aims to cut costs, increase productivity and provide higher levels of service. It involves identification, analysis and redesigning at key processes, while keeping the user at the center of process redesign. The concept at the heart of the re-engineering is the need to stay competitive in today's library science sector.

Definitions of Re-engineering:

Re-engineering means to redesign or extensively modify the design. Re-engineering means the applications of technology and management science to the modification of existing system, organization, processes, products & services, Hence, there is a need for the re-engineering library activities also so as to provide better services to the users within limited resources.

a) **Hammer and Champy:** "Re-engineering is the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, services and speed."

b) It is the process which involves the fundamental rethinking and redesigning of library processes to achieve considerable improvements relating to input cost and efficient and effective library services.

III. IMPORTANCE OF RE-ENGINEERING IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The term 'Re-engineering' was first introduced by Michael Hammer in 1990. It involves rethinking and redesigning of library process to achieve dramatic improvements in the library performance pertaining into efficiency and effectiveness of library operations. The employees are involved in re-engineering process and they are supposed to provide technology based library services to the users. It involves redesigning of library policies, processes, services and organizational structure. Therefore re-engineering in libraries is an art of changing the processes of library, library structure and the management style which consequently lead to the better quality in library services and the maximum satisfaction of users.



The present day, information users in academic libraries may no longer depend entirely on library services and facilities to fulfill their information needs, but they may have alternative means of getting desired information rather from the Internet or Intranet. If, there has been such a change in the information seeking pattern and the behavior of information users, the academic libraries have to play a new role in order to meet the user's information needs in such changing environments. In such situation, the impact of ICT on library practices also cannot be ignored. So academic libraries cannot be an exception for this. In order to meet these new challenges, the academic libraries have to adopt and adapt with re-engineering of library practices.

IV. NEED OF RE-ENGINEERING IN LIBRARIES

There is a need to re-engineering academic libraries due to following reasons.

- ✓ Information explosion in all sector of knowledge
- ✓ Rising cost of the publication.
- ✓ User Demands
- ✓ Limited budget and resources
- ✓ Growth in research.
- ✓ Rapid changes in the profession.

V. APPLICATION OF RE-ENGINEERING IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:

Re-engineering in academic libraries should contain the following elements.

a. Re-engineering the Acquisition :

The activities of document selection, approval, suggestion, order placing, passing of bills, releasing payment, etc. can be done through the LAN or Internet. The work of accessioning can be done using computers. Due to some audit regulations, it may not be possible initially to replace the paper form of Accession Register by electronic form. So, till the audit regulations are get revised, the libraries can prepare Accession Register by printing the document details from the OPAC on Loose Sheaf. This will avoid a lot of duplication and unnecessary work of accessioning. Moreover, multiple copies of accession registers, if required, can also be printed easily.

b. Re-engineering the Classification and Cataloguing:

It is ideal to centralize globally the work of classification and cataloguing. The Library of Congress is already doing such work efficiently. A few libraries in Indian are availing the service of LC for downloading the classification and catalogue data. It is ideal to collaborate with the Nation Library Calcutta in this venture here; the work of preparation of India National Bibliography also will be automatically supplemented.

c. Re-engineering the User Services:

The work of user services has to be thoroughly re-engineered on the lines of consortium and electronic document delivery system. The procedures for all user services such as compilation of bibliographies, current awareness service, selective dissemination of information, photocopying, other documentation services, CD based and online database service have to be re-defined and need total revision.

d. Re-engineering the User Education:

The user education programmes need to be more technology oriented. Such programmes should be able to impart minimum theoretical and practical knowledge about computer, printers, scanners, network based systems, search software of different database vendors, Internet search engines and services, web browsing, downloading, e-mail data copying to CDs and DVDs multimedia applications, computer viruses, etc. The orientation and training should be designed in such a way to providing confidence in locating and using the required and authentic information easily.

e. Reengineering the Human Resource Development:

The aspect of re-engineering with regard to the human resource development is mainly concerned with the areas of staff selection, orientation, training technology adoption, work study, change management and motivation. The technologies, methods and procedures, used in the library and information. Systems are more dynamic and changing as compared to many of the other information professionals are reluctant to change. This also contributes to the low performance in the profession. This situation stresses the need for a total revision of the HRD policies of the LIS.



In order to prepare professionals and other staff in the libraries, Continuous Education programmes should be conducted regularly. The course contents and training should be evaluated and reviewed frequently. The compulsory orientation and refresher courses conducted by the UGC for the library professionals/ teachers in the UGC Cadre have helped to improve the situation.

f. Reengineering the Financial Process:

In modern libraries, the stress is more on electronic resources. So, more money has to be set apart for purchase and maintenance of hardware and software system and Internet connectivity than the conventional pattern of spending for large buildings, furniture, books, journals and binding. Moreover in consortia system, lot of work of acquisition, processing and services will be centralized. Hence, a substantial portion of the fund will have to be either deviated or pooled for consortium. This will need revision in budget process and financial management.

VI. CONCLUSION

Re-engineering of library practices in academic libraries is must in this modern information age. It's necessary for our library profession. It is process of quality improvement techniques and adapting new technology for development of our Institutional goals. Re-engineering is the concurrent redesign process of organization and their supportive information system for achievement of radical improvement in time, cost quality and its product and services.

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