

Recruitment and Selection of Library and Information Professionals in University Libraries of Gauhati University and Assam Agricultural University: A Study

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Article History

Received: 27.11.2018

Accepted: 06.12.2018

Published: 30.12.2018

DOI:

10.36347/sjebm.2018.v05i12.002



Abstract: The human resources are the most important assets of an organisation. The success or failure of any organisation largely depends on the calibre of the people working therein. Thus to achieve the goals of the organisation we need to recruit people with requisite skills, qualification and experience by keeping in mind the present as well as the future requirements of the organisation. In this paper an attempt is made to bring into light the present status of the professional staff at Gauhati University Library and Assam Agricultural University Library, their qualifications, no. of promotions held in their entire career, if any of the posts are lying vacant in the libraries, job analysis methods and what methods are used in recruiting and selecting the professional staff in both the Gauhati University Library and Assam Agricultural University Library. A few recommendations are also made by the author for implementing them in recruitment and selection processes in the two university libraries.

Keywords: Professional, staff, university, library, qualification.

INTRODUCTION

The success of any library, no matter how well designed or equipped, depends ultimately on the quality and number of personnel responsible for it. A well qualified and highly motivated professional staff, adequately supported by technical and clerical staff is critical to this success.

The staff of a library typically consists of professionals and non – professionals assistants. The second category again may be subdivided into: technical assistants, technicians, clerks and other support staff.

All the professional positions, in addition to the head of the library must be staffed by qualified professionals. The head is responsible for the planning, development, implementation and overall evaluation of the library. This includes supervision of other library staff – both professional and non professional. The professional staff members holds titles and perform duties that vary among libraries. This is influenced by the number and type of library users, type of the parent organization and its programmes and type of services provided by the library in addition to the availability of resources [1].

The library personnel can be grouped into the following categories for various kinds of job requirements in a library.

- Professionals of different grades for management and professional activities

- Semi professional for doing the routine jobs
- Supporting staff for specified activities and
- Staff for routine jobs in administration, financial work and accounts and other supporting services [2].

Library Profession

A profession differs from other vocations and employments in certain fundamental respects. Its members should acquire an intellectually based technique, assume responsibility to their clients and belong to professional associations which lay down standards and norms for their education, conduct and behavior towards their clients, institutions and fellow – practitioners. Librarianship has got all the essential attributes of a profession [3].

Need of the present study

All the university libraries have staff that holds professional qualifications in library science along with others who do not have any professional qualification and their job does not demand it. The lowest position that demands professional qualification

in a university library is library assistant and the highest position is the University librarian. Among these two positions there are other positions that vary from university to university specially in the state universities whereas in the central universities there is some kind of uniformity among them. Timely promotional prospects are lacking in the state universities among the professionals below the rank of assistant librarian.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Vijayakumar K.P in his study analysed the size and structure of the professional and non-professional manpower in the five university libraries of Kerala. He examined the staff pattern, manpower categorisation, their salary scales, and qualification both general as well as professional and has rightly determined the strength of professional as well as non – professional manpower in the five university libraries. He has also suggested some urgent measures to be taken to rectify the anomalies prevailing in the present situation [4].

Mathew K, Susan and M. D, Baby conducted a study to survey the professional development activities and educational needs of library professionals in seven major universities in Kerala. In this study it was revealed that majority of the professionals have pursued higher degrees in library science or IT allied courses after entering the profession and are positive about participation in training programmes and workshops [5].

The study by U. Selong Edem, was conducted to examine some issues, obstacles and the structure of career advancement prospects in Nigerian universities which was found to be slow and frustrating to reach the peak by practising librarians. The survey results identified some obstacles in the career advancement of the professionals such as the academic work of publishing, inadequate opportunities to reach the rank of university librarian, lack of higher educational qualifications in librarianship and the lack of a generally accepted laid down policy on promotion criteria. The author recommends the creation of new positions at the top to reduce frustration and stagnation of the library professionals at the lower grade [6].

Imas Maesaroh and Paul Genoni, in their study reported on the ongoing research examining the present and desired state of academic library staff education and professional development in Indonesia. It investigated ways in which staff in Indonesian academic libraries can be supported in order to assist the higher education sector in producing high quality research, teaching and learning outcomes [7].

Statement of the problem

The university library must have efficient and adequate professional staff to perform all the activities within the organization diligently. If the professionals in a library are inadequate and inefficient all the services will be affected. And if a library have sincere, dedicated and qualified human resources or the professional staffs its activities may be managed both smoothly and effectively. Again there are opportunities for career advancement of the professionals in some libraries where in some others there are no such scope. Thus every university library must have adequate staff both professional as well as non- professional and proper recruitment and selection of professional staff is most essential in today's environment along with effective career advancement prospects.

Objectives of the study

- To estimate the professional staff strength to the total staff of the two university libraries
- To see the present staff is adequate and efficient enough for the present day library services.
- To identify the vacant positions and reasons for not filling up the vacant positions
- To identify at what level the recruitment process is done in the two university libraries
- To see the career advancement prospects of the professional staff below the rank of Assistant Librarian

METHODOLOGY

The population of this study included all the qualified library professionals of the two university libraries viz Gauhati university Central library and Assam agricultural university Central library in the state of Assam which included young professionals with 3 to 5 yrs experience as well as professionals with 15 to 23 yrs of professional experience working in the central libraries of these two universities from the rank of library assistant to university librarian during the period 2014 to 2017.

The research design for the study was the survey method using a structured questionnaire and interview method. The questionnaires were administered personally to the library professionals permanently employed in the universities to all the twenty six professional working in the two university libraries but only eighteen filled in questionnaires (Thirteen from Gauhati university library and five from Assam Agricultural University library)were received by the researcher which was meant for collection of data regarding the number of professional staff to the total staff in the libraries, their qualifications, no.of promotions held, their method of job analysis, qualifications acquired after entering into services etc from The Librarian or Head of the library and other professionals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that there is twenty four professional staff out of fifty five total staff at Gauhati University Library after completion of Fifty glorious years with a percentage of 43.6. Whereas there are only five professional staff working in the different

professional positions at Assam Agricultural University Library which is about to complete fifty glorious years of establishment with a percentage of only 22.7

As shown in table 1

Table-1: source: field work

Uni	Yr. of est	Prof. staff	Total staff	Percent.
GU	1948	24	55	43.6
AAU	1969	5	22	22.7

Category of respondents

The following Figure shows the positions held by the twenty one professional staff of Gauhati University. The post of Deputy Librarian is vacant for more than four yrs i.e.2013-2018.

Whereas there are five professional posts lying vacant at Assam agricultural university library,

one post of Librarian, two technical posts of Classifier/cataloguer and two Library assistants.

Category of respondents from Gauhati University Library and Assam Agricultural University Library (In Figure 1 and Figure 2).

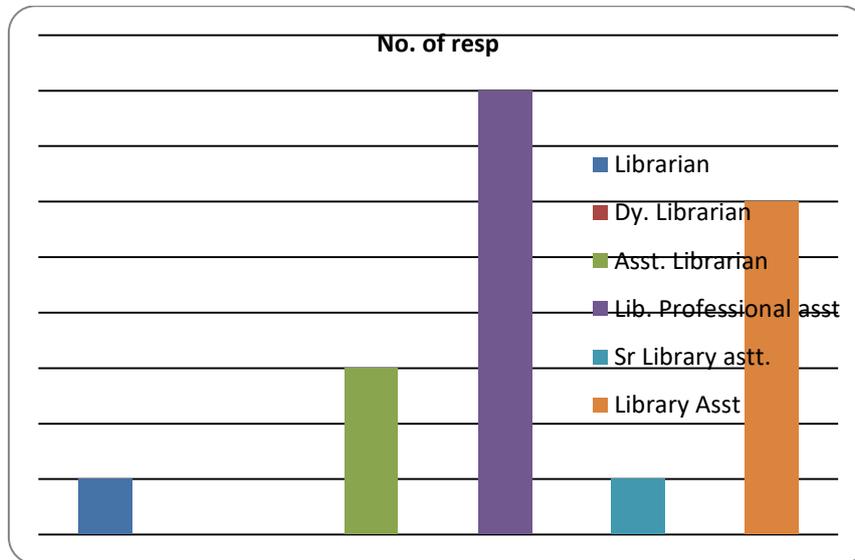


Fig-1: Gauhati University

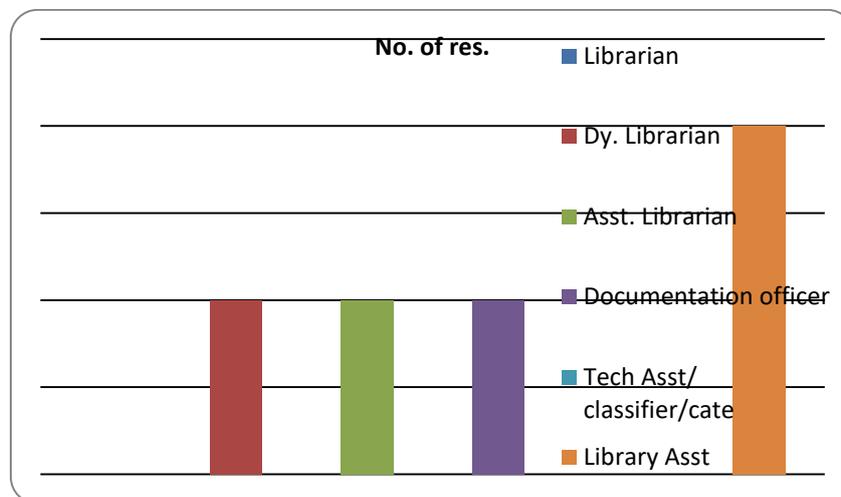


Fig-2: Assam Agricultural University

Qualification of the staff

There are two Phd degree holders in Gauhati University library, one assistant librarian and the University Librarian and only one Phd degree holder at Assam Agricultural University library the Deputy Librarian. All the professionals in both the libraries possess MLISc degree except three at Gauhati University who possess BLISC in Library science and two at Assam Agricultural University Library who do not possess any professional degree or diploma. Nine

professionals at Gauhati University library have acquired qualifications after entering into services and one at Assam Agricultural University Library have acquired qualification after entering into services. And one professional at Gauhati university even got incentives in the form of special increment after acquiring the qualification. And all the other professionals who acquired or obtained some qualifications did not get any incentives from their parent organization on obtaining their degrees.

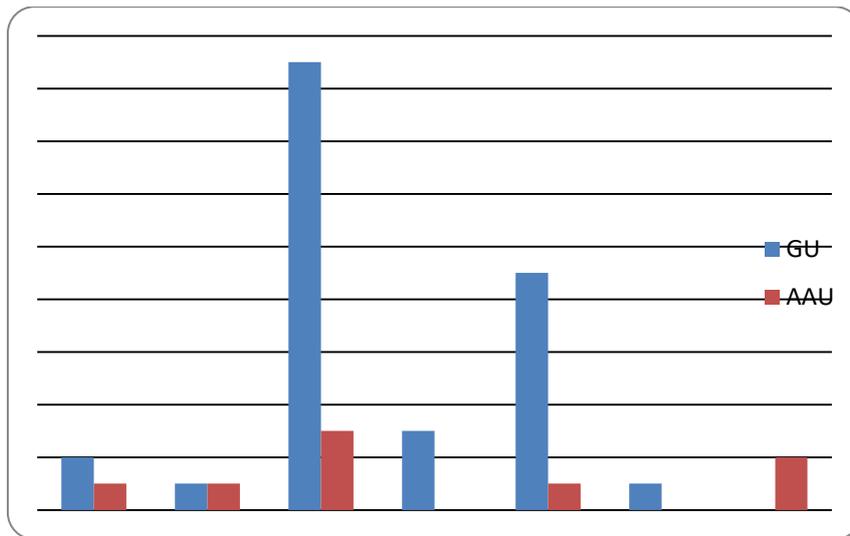


Fig-3

Adequate staff, staff retiring in the coming years

In the view of the University Librarian there is adequate staff at Gauhati University library but at Assam Agricultural University Library there is shortage of professional staff. There at Gauhati University library no staff is retiring in the coming

years and at Assam Agricultural University Bev Pugh library there will be staff retiring in the coming years. Both the libraries opined to fill up the gap immediately and no professional staff left their present job at both the libraries during the last few years. As shown in figure 4.

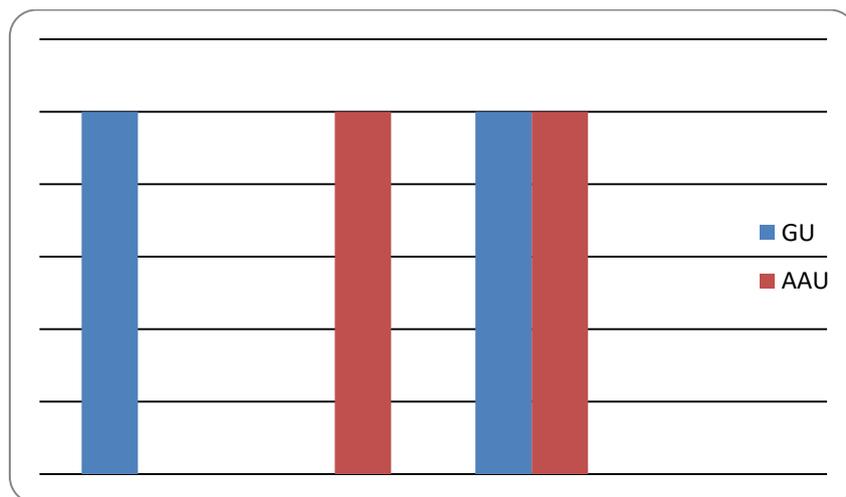


Fig-4: Yes : 1 No : 0

Previous experience

At Gauhati university library, Seven professionals had previously worked in different capacities before joining into the present job, and two professionals have the intension of leaving the present job seeking better job prospects, one is an asst. librarian and another is a library assistant.

Whereas in Assam Agricultural University library, Two professionals had previous experience before joining into the present position and one among them had the intension of leaving the present job seeking better job prospects.

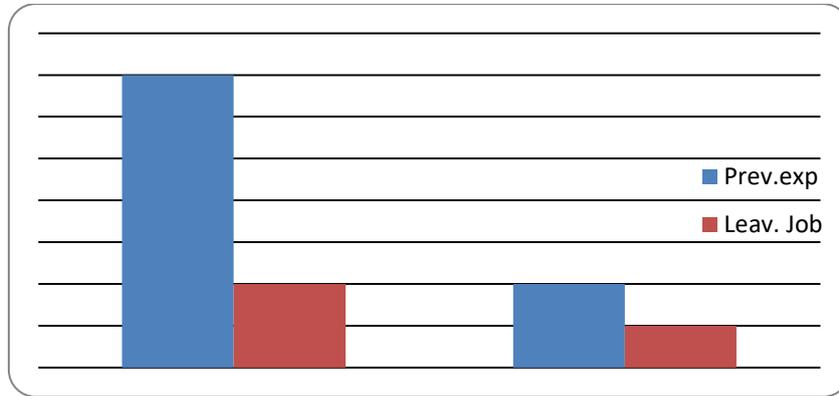


Fig-5

Recruitment process

The recruitment process takes place at both the University libraries through external advertisement. Still internal promotion and recruitment through interview was prevalent at Assam Agricultural

University library and written test as well as interview both are conducted at Gauhati University Library for recruiting the professional staffs. Promotional scope from the rank of library assistant to assistant librarian exists at Gauhati University library.

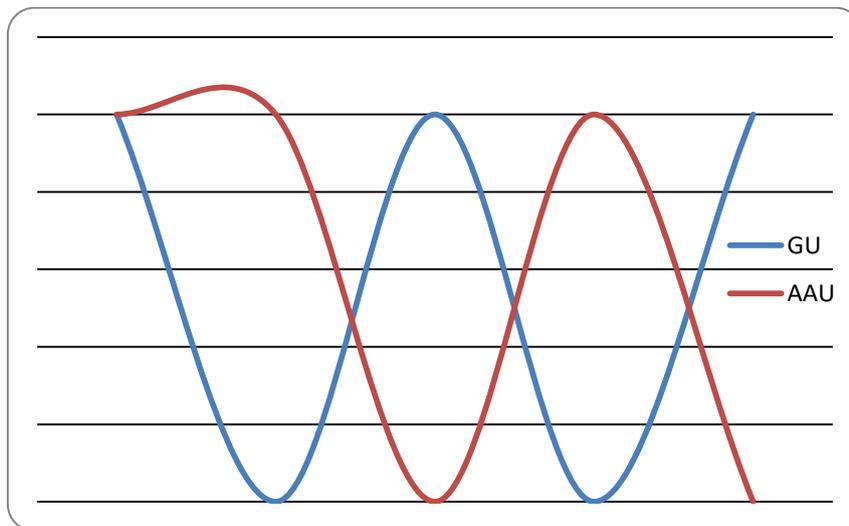


Fig-6: Yes 0. No

Job analysis and job rotation process

Job analysis is done at both Gauhati University Library and Assam Agricultural University Library by observation method. But at AAU library

individual interview with the professionals was also prevalent and at GU library diary method is also maintained. Both the libraries regularly followed job rotation processes for all the professional staff.

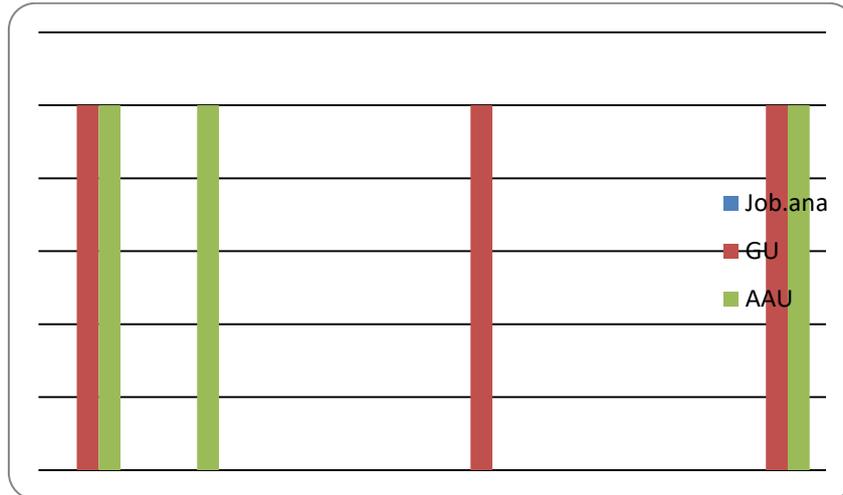


Fig-7: Yes : 1, No: 0

1. Observation 2. Individual interview 3. Group interview 4. Structured questionnaire 5. Diary 6. None 7. Any other 8. Job rotation

Number of promotions held by the professional staff at Gauhati University library

At KKH library all the three assistant Librarians had three promotions, Four professional assistants had two promotions each, one Sr. library assistant had one promotion and Six library assistant

had no promotions till date after completion of five years of service in the respective positions.

And at Assam Agricultural University library, no professional staff had any promotion till date. All the gaps were filled up through external advertisement which was basically done through open interview.

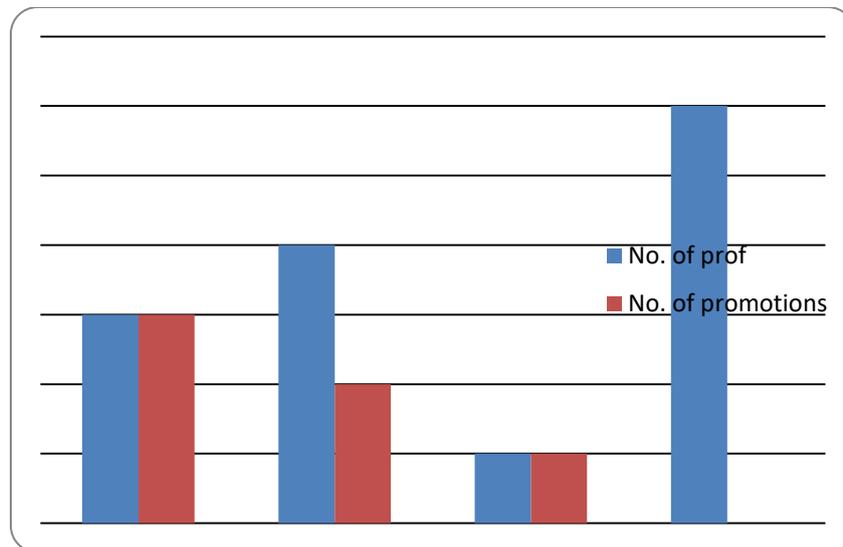


Fig-8 Gauhati University Library

Conclusion and suggestions

Thus from the above study it becomes clear that there is shortage of professional staff at Assam Agricultural University Library whereas the Gauhati University library has adequate professional staff. The reason for not filling up one vacant post of Deputy Librarian at Gauhati University is not known to the Librarian but at Assam Agricultural University Library the vacancies are not filled up due to shortage of funds from the government. The career advancement process is very slow in both the university libraries. Unless and

until the university adopts appropriate measures to fill up the vacant positions and take measures for career advancement of the professional staff, the library services will be greatly affected and efficient staff would seek better prospects outside their organisation. And the few who will still hold their positions, will not be much motivated to give their best services to the organisation.

A few suggestions have been made by the researcher such as –

- No professional positions must be kept vacant for a long time.
- Incentives in the form of special increments must be granted to all professionals on acquiring higher qualifications to motivate them to give best services to the organization.
- The management or authority should take measures if internal promotions can be made to fill up the vacant positions.
- If internal promotion is not possible due to certain circumstances, then necessary steps should be taken.
- Necessary arrangements have to be made to proceed with the recruitment process.
- Most importantly there should be scope for career advancement of the professional staff within the parent organization so they get all the opportunities to give their best to the institution.

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