Teamwork: an essential change management strategy for university libraries in Sri Lanka

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The intension of this paper is to study the teamwork and its requirements for the University Libraries in Sri Lanka (ULSL). Teamwork is well practiced in firms in Japan and the West. National culture peculiar to Asian countries is a very favourable indicator and a grounding factor for developing teamwork and teamwork culture. National events and festivals peculiar to Asia which are based on cooperative efforts of the people provide an encouraging background for the teamwork. Stupendous cultural and religious monuments, irrigation constructions coupled with a long standing ethical and value system bear testimony to teamwork and teamwork culture inherent in Asia. This background also prompted the researcher to conduct a survey on this theme, in order to identify the viability and fitness of teamwork for the ULSL. The objectives of the study is to gain a clear view about the teamwork, to identify whether the teamwork is an essential requirement for ULSL, to examine the present status of teamwork in ULSL, to investigate the attitude and response of professional staff of ULSL toward the teamwork, to explore to what extent the teamwork is required and to find the areas where the teamwork is needed.

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. There was no necessity of using a sample, since the population was finite. Primary data was collected circulating two structured questionnaires among the Librarians, and Assistant Librarians, Senior Assistant Librarians.

100% librarians and 93% AL and SAL were very willing to work as teams. Out of six change management strategies introduced to the libraries, teamwork was ranked by 90% being it in the highest position. 40% AL and SAL were dissatisfied with the existing position of teamwork in university libraries. Both librarians (80%) and AL and SAL (80%) pointed out that any problematic situation has to be met with the help of teamwork. Both librarians and AL and SAL prefer the areas i.e. *cataloguing and classification work, information and reader services, IT work, and book selection and acquisition* for teamwork. Librarians ranked the application of teamwork for the areas viz. *cataloguing and classification work by 70%, information and reader services by 70%, IT work by 60%, and book selection and acquisition by 50%.* It emphasizes that teamwork in university libraries demands the (subject) departmentation approach. In addition to that, it is proposed to devise teams for each department/division, i.e. Acquisition team, Periodical/Serial team. Suggestion is made to plan teams for two areas viz. IT and digitization and Reference and Information Services. It is also proposed to design Faculty wise library teams for each university library, appointing two liaison officers one from the library and the other from the respective Faculty or teaching department. The core areas of each team have to be streamlined in order to cover whole areas and the respective members for each team should be appointed both self-appointed and assigned basis. In this context, project like *New Teamwork Initiatives (NTI)* has to be commenced. Through NTI, actions have to be taken how teamwork is conducted. Priority areas of teamwork and some evaluation strategy are also to be designed. It is proposed to conduct brainstorming sessions in order to work out the priority areas of teamwork and to give a clear picture for the participants about the teamwork.

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