

**“INFORMATION LITERACY WITHIN THE LIBRARY: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ACADEMIC LIBRARIES OF MARATHWADA REGION”**

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**Abstract**

Promotion of information literacy and development of an information literacy program in an academic setting is an institutional issue for the college or University as well as the library. Information literacy programmes require inclusion not only the faculty and staff throughout the Institution, but also of staff in all library, so an attempt has been made to study some selected academic libraries of Marathwada region.

**Keywords:** Information Literacy; I.T. ; Libraries.

**Introduction**

**Quotable Quotes**

“A thriving national and global culture, economy and democracy will best be advanced by people able to recognize their need for information, and identify, locate, access, evaluate and apply the needed information” **ALIA Statement on Information Literacy for all Australians.**

“Literacy remains part of the unfinished business of the 20th Century. One of the success stories of the 21st Century must be the extension of literacy to include all humankind” **Louise Frechette,**

**Deputy Secretary-General, UNESCO.**

“As librarians, we must ensure that all people have the skills — as well as the resources — to realise life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” **Nancy Kranich, president, 2000–2001, American Library Association.**

Information is as essential to our survival as water, food, shelter and clothing. Information is, however, much more than a survival tool. Information unleashes our imaginations and challenges our preconceptions and thereby provides us with a pathway to personal growth and fulfillment. In a digital world where the amount of information doubles every two years, students need to evaluate resources carefully and determine how to use relevant information to solve problems and make wise decisions.

The information society calls all people to become information literate which means that they should not only be able to recognize when information is needed but also be able to identify, locate, evaluate and use effectively information needed for decision making or fulfilling different goals.

Information literacy (IL) is increasingly important in the present context of the information explosion and concomitant uncertainties about its authenticity, validity and reliability. For the students, regardless of their discipline, information literacy skills enable them to master content and give them the confidence to proceed with investigation be self-reliant and have a sense of being in control of their learning.

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning, environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning.

Since 1974 Information Literacy has been an area of increasing interest to librarians and information professional and there is a huge amount of literature on the topic, especially from the United States,

Australia and Europe. Research in information literacy at the Sheffield University in the UK has resulted in a website with links to many information literacy developments around the world.

In India, University Grant Commission (UGC) has taken sincere efforts to bring a boost in the higher education system by introducing UGC-INFONET E-Journal's Consortium Project. Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) which is the co-ordinating agency for UGC-INFONET project is conducting various training programmes, user awareness programmes, workshop and seminar to research scholars, faculty members and library staff and how to access their abundant resources offered by the UGC.

#### **Scope of the Study:-**

The study entitled "Information Literacy within the Library: A study with special reference to Academic Libraries of Marathwada Region" covers only six (06) selected Academic Libraries of Marathwada Region i.e.

- 1) Government Medical College, Aurangabad. (M.S.)
- 2) Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad. (M.S.)
- 3) Government Polytechnic College, Aurangabad. (M.S.)
- 4) Milliya College Arts, Commerce & Science, Beed. (M.S.)
- 5) Marathwada Agriculture University, Parbhani . (M.S.)
- 6) M.P law College, Aurangabad. (M.S.)

In this project an attempt has been made to study the problems associated with the rapidly changing information, Information Technologies and Information Literacy within the Libraries.

#### **Methodology**

Questionnaires cum interview method was used to collect data from the libraries and staff of these selected libraries.

#### **Information Literacy-**

Information literacy means being information wise. It means knowing when a book may be more helpful than a computer. It means knowing how to find, evaluate and use information in all forms. Information literacy is more than print literacy, computer literacy or media literacy.

It means knowing when you need information, where to find it and how to evaluate and use it in your everyday life Information wise people know librarians can be their guides. Information wise people create smart communities.

Information wise people support libraries. .It is only a thinking community that can progress and grow. Even at the individual level, in today's increasingly complex world with an equally complex information environment, only those who are information literate can be successful.

#### **Why information literacy?**

Good decisions depend on good information.

Our nation faces a critical new challenge in the 21st century: helping people cope with a bewildering amount of information.

Technology is changing how we live, learn and work. The ability to read or even use a computer is not enough. You must also be able to evaluate and apply information. The ability to read is a basic survival skill, but it's not enough. Today's workforce must be able to find and use information in all forms. Our children must be information wise if they are to succeed in the 21st century. Today getting information can be easy. Getting the right information can be difficult.

Information is the lifeblood of our democracy. But information is power only if you know how to find the best information and apply it to the decisions you make in your work and daily life.

Real information power is having the right information at the right time.

More information isn't necessarily better. Anyone who's done a search on the internet and found 999 hits knows that!

The internet is an exciting medium. But it can also be confusing. That's why it's important for parents and all adults to learn about the internet and how it works. The more you know, the more you can help your child and yourself.

### **Why libraries?**

Libraries are unique they are one-stop shops in person Online. Where else can you have access to nearly anything on the web or in print as well as personal service and assistance in finding it?

Libraries are part of our lives. They are a place for education and self-help. They offer opportunity to all.

Libraries are changing and dynamic places, at the forefront of the information age.

Libraries level the playing field in the information age. They make information affordable, available and accessible to all people.

If you know how to use a library, you know how to learn for a lifetime. If we didn't already have libraries, we'd have to invent them!

Every parent can afford to give his child the key to success — a library card. There is no such thing as good education without good libraries.

### **Why librarians?**

In a world that's information rich, librarians are information wise.

Librarians are the ultimate search engine. They can help you find the best information, whether it's a website, book, video or pamphlet.

Teaching others how to critically evaluate information is a unique skill that librarians bring to a society suffering information overload.

Librarians bridge the information gap by ensuring that all people have the resources and skills they need to live, learn, work and take part in the democratic process.

Librarians provide more than facts. They provide the expertise and services that add meaning to those facts.

Special librarians provide critical expertise that help businesses, government, health and other officials make sound decisions based on sound information.

In schools and universities, librarians teach information literacy skills that students will need to succeed on their jobs and through out their lives.

Public librarians have helped generations of Australians to lead better, more satisfying lives. Today they are teaching them to be information literate.

Librarians have been organizing information and guiding people to the best sources for centuries.

Librarians put the 'high touch' in high tech. They are there to help you.

Let a librarian be your guide through the information maze!

According to the American Library Association (ALA) "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.

Information Literacy is the ability to access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources.

### **Role of Library Professionals**

In a world that is information rich, librarians are information leaders. They know that having more information is not necessarily better. Real information power is having the right information at the right time. Librarians have been organizing information and guiding people to the best sources of information for centuries.

Teaching others how to be wise information consumers is a unique skill that librarians bring to a society suffering information overload. The role and function of a library and information professional in the changing environment can be described as, he must facilitate information use, navigate knowledge systems and information sources. He should consult and advice an information problems and audit the optimal management of information resources.

He must translate between the technical system and cultural resources and transform data and information flowing between systems. He should have the capability of offering information policy support for organizational strategies and provide resources for information literacy. The library professional emerging role and functions being closer to the needs of the users and therefore should have the capacity to evaluate the precise requirements of the users.

#### Library Professional of Some Selected Academic Libraries of Marathwada Region Under Study

The Primary objective of Libraries is to organize and provide access to information. Library profession in India, particularly those serving high-tech institutions, are already subject to various challenges. The introduction of computer was a challenge to all librarians. Librarians may have to functions more like consulting information engineers than as the Traditional passive custodians of information and dispenser of documents. Moving from a collection centered model to one that is access and secure oriented.

In Marathwada region, from the survey, it is learnt that there is no proper infrastructure for application of I. T. (Information Technology) and also interviewed the library professionals to know in what ways the library professionals make a contributions to information literacy efforts in their libraries.

Out of 74 questionnaires distributed 67 were received back

Table No. -1 indicates the number of respondents from each selected Academic Library of Marathwada Region.

Sr. No.	Category	No. of Questionnaire Distributed	No. of Questionnaire Received	Total Collections
1.	Govt. Medical College Library, Aurangabad. (M.S.)	15	13	13
2.	Dr. B. A. M. University Library, Aurangabad.(M.S.)	20	18	18
3.	Govt. Polytechnic College Library, Aurangabad. (M.S.)	08	08	08
4.	Milliya College Library, Beed.(M.S.)	05	05	05
5.	M. A. University Library, Parbhani. (M.S.)	20	17	17
6.	M.P law College Library, Aurangabad. (M.S.)	06	06	06
<b>Total</b>		<b>74</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>

**Table No. 01**

### **Area of Contribution to Information Literacy Efforts in Libraries.**

An attempt has been made to study under the following areas.

#### **Circulation Staff Information Literacy Contribution**

- Recognize that the circular desk is often the first point of contact for a user and that the user's first impression is important;
- Train all staff for positive "First Point of Contact" interactions ;
- Involve student staff in training, discussing approachability and describing the information literacy goals for the library.

#### **Inters Library Loans Information Literacy Contribution**

- Help user to determine what is available within the library;
- Refer when appropriate ;
- Use inter library loan request as an indicator of collection need.

#### **Reference Information Literacy Contribution**

- Teach how to find a point need;
- Collaborate on researchers;
- Use a "Please Disturb" sign at reference desk;
- Conduct a reference interview;
- Identify what users are really asking for;
- Do not hide things!

#### **Administrative Information Literacy Contribution**

- Share information literacy plans with all staff ;
- Help library staff promote information literacy;

- Make personal contacts across campus;
- Add information literacy support to job description, as appropriate.

#### **Acquisitions, Cataloguing and Serials Information Literacy Contribution**

- Make it possible for faculty, staff and students to make collection request Online, as well as using request cards;
- Acquire new (and needed items) in a time;
- Notify requesters about the acquisition of new items;
- Stay in close touch with the curriculum;
- Provide links to website and online journals from within the catalogue.

#### **Library Web Page Design, System and Network Information Literacy Contribution**

- Computer operation knowledge and skills, (which constitute computer literacy) such as how to operate OPAC, or Microcomputer Workstations, how to use modem with communication software to dial in systems and to down load files, how to use stand alone or network printer to print information. How to use CD-ROM devices etc;
- Network knowledge such as some basic concepts on networking technology, overview of library network environment, different network systems features and usage of LAN and online cataloguing systems , WAN specially Internet related, WWW, E-mail, FTP functions, CD-Rom Databases, necessary functions and commands to use networking systems such as login/logout;
- Multimedia Knowledge and skills for graphic/images resources, sound information resources and other devices as scanner with OCR applications;
- Networked information available in network system, in their contest of databases (in subjects), coverage and format, structure of files and records, information intended market for users and uses, information delivery services;
- Information retrieval skills such as Boolean logic searching; And

- Standards and methods to evaluate information results for effective use of information.

The study reveals that the library professionals/staff were not able to provide/contribute towards the Information Literacy Promotion as there were many factors; but interviewed with the librarians have found out that, the libraries are unable to contribute to same extent as in the **Table No. 02** It indicates that except Dr. B. A. M. University Library, Aurangabad, Govt. Medical college Aurangabad & Marathwada Agriculture University Library, Parbhani, the contribution made by the staff is very poor.

Sr.No.	Contribution Area to Information Literacy	GMC Lib.	DR. BAMU Lib.	GPC Lib.	MC Lib.	MAU Lib.	MPLC Lib.
1.	Circulation Staff Information Literacy Contribution	02	04	01	00	01	01
2.	Inter-Library Loan Information Literacy Contribution	01	02	00	00	00	00
3.	Reference Information Literacy Contribution	03	06	01	00	01	01
4.	Administrative Information Literacy Contributed	01	02	01	00	01	01
5.	Acquisition, Cataloging and Serial Information Literacy Contributed	03	12	01	01	02	01
6.	Library Web Page Design System and Network Information Literacy Contribution	02	01	00	00	00	00
<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>04</b>

**Table No. 02**

**Impact of I. T. towards Contribution of Information Literacy**

The staff opinion revealed that most of the staff interested to go for I.T. application towards the contribution of Information Literacy within the Library.

**Table No. 3 indicates their interest towards the application of I. T. in the library for contribution of information literacy in the library**

Sr. No.	Category	Generate interest	Search & evaluation become easy	Tedious work can be eliminate	Library services will be improved	Total respond
1.	G.M.C library	10	12	11	10	13
2.	Dr. BAMU library	16	17	18	08	18
3.	GPC library	08	08	06	08	08
4.	MC library	04	04	02	04	05
5.	M.A.U. library	15	17	16	15	17
6.	M.P.L.C. library	06	06	06	06	06
<b>Total</b>		<b>59</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>67</b>

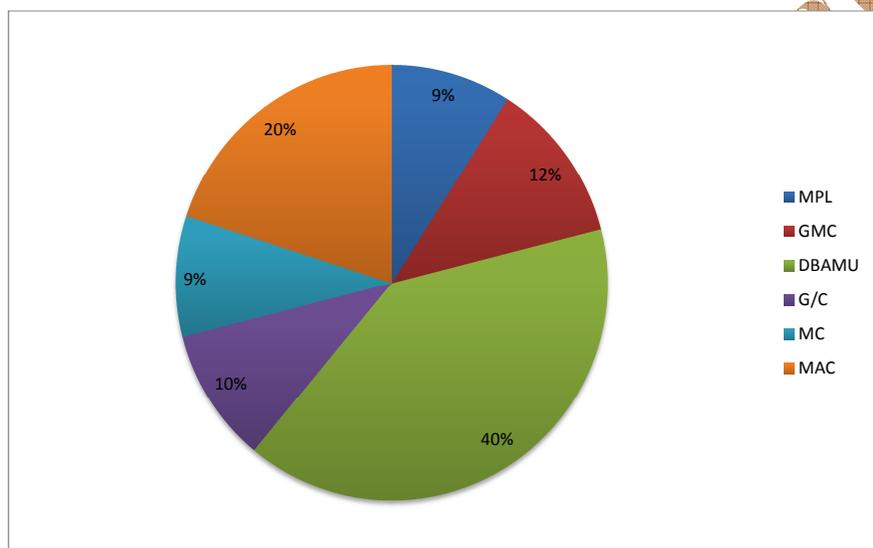
**Table No. 3**

### Staff opinion in IT training:

It is revealed from the study that the majority of the staff is not able to handle the computer but they are interested to go for training.

The given pie-chart shows the percentage of respondents.

### I.T. Training Necessary



### Findings & Suggestions

From the study it is revealed that most of the library professionals are not able to contribute information literacy within the library due to the following problems faced there by:

- Absence of I. T. Education;
- Most of the libraries functioned with inadequate number of staff;
- Lack of active Participation Conference/ Seminar/workshop, inservice training;
- Lack of professional competency;
- Inadequacy of technological infrastructure & I. T. skills;

### Suggestions

- University Grants Commission (UGC) should take initiative in directing the higher education institutions to integrate to information literacy across the curriculum by designing a separate paper at the Undergraduate/Postgraduate level students;
- Designing the National Information literacy policies, standards and framework;
- Carrying out survey and Studies on the usefulness of Information literacy
- Collaborating faculty, librarians and other staff to promote information literacy program;
- To conduct workshop to begin a dialogue with all the libraries professionals/libraries and staff on what information literacy is;
- To encourage each staff members to examine his/her work for ways in which he/she (either directly or indirectly) contributes to information literacy efforts;
- Government should made efforts in preparing policy guidelines and standards at National level.
- Forming a National Information literacy Forum in the networks of education and library organization and association.
- The Government should envisage a National Task force to monitor ILP'S.

## **Conclusion**

Library professional should be ready to participate in the process of generating and distributing information and knowledge for quality of life and education for all. The goal of an educational institution is to create a community of learners; we can all help foster the atmosphere that supports the goal. Information literacy is becoming an important part of collaborative efforts on campus. Attitudes practice and policies need to change, the more library professional network literacy, the more they may obtain relevant information. India is in urgent need of the National Information Literacy Forum where issues related to information literacy can be discussed at National level. India needs a strong movement of Information Literacy. Each educational setup should have well-trained information and library professionals because they are the one who will be collecting, organizing and disseminating the information for productive use and development.

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