

IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS FOR AN INFORMATION LITERATE SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT:-

The purpose of this paper is to present a broader analytical insight to the information literacy concept, in order to achieve an information literate society. The concept and its practical approach towards achieving an information literate society will be discussed in detail in this paper. Information literacy is a set of skills required by a person to find, retrieve, analyze and use information. Information literacy is directly linked with lifelong learning, critical thinking, and learning to learn concepts of education. Information literacy skills are achieved by students, through student centered, resource based teaching learning methods that direct them towards deep learning, thus creating an information literate society. Basically information literacy programmes are action oriented, while helping to solve the real life problems and making the correct decisions. In addition this paper also

proposes to discuss the available information literacy models and their practical approach, information literacy standards, and available frame works.

INTRODUCTION:-

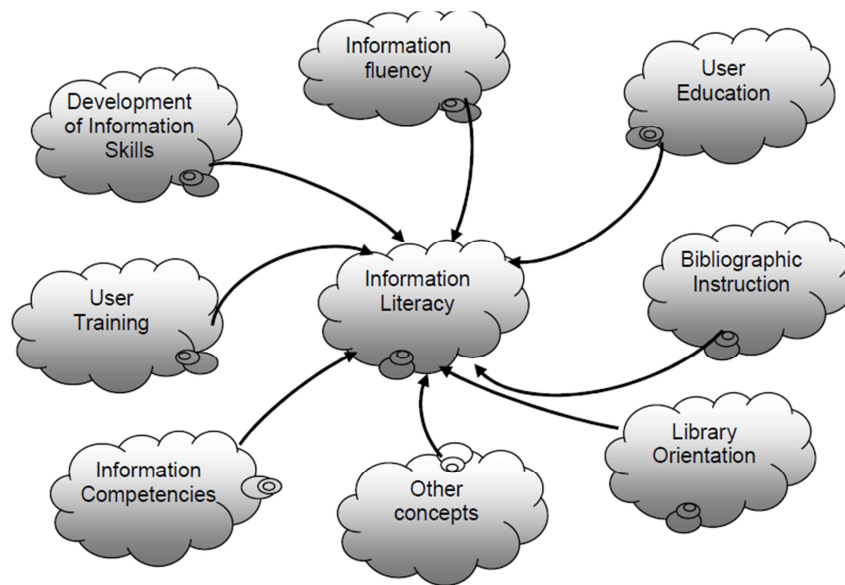
Literacy means the ability to read and write. But there seems to be various types of literacy. Such as audiovisual literacy, print literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, web literacy, technical literacy, functional literacy, library literacy and information literacy etc. Nominal and active literacy too focuses on making people aware to read and write in their day to day activities. Information literacy is quite different to the above. It is a combination of all these concepts but goes beyond them. According to the American Library Association, information literacy is the ability to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" .

INFORMATION LITERACY:-

Information Literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information. The twenty-first century has been named the information era, owing to the explosion of information and the information sources. One cannot achieve the study target without practicing special information literacy skills. In other words information literacy skills empower the people with the critical skills which will help them to become independent lifelong learners. These skills will enable people to apply their knowledge from

the familiar environment to the unfamiliar. Due to information explosion it has become increasingly clear that students cannot learn everything they need to know in their field of study, within a few years, at school or the university. Information literacy equips them with the critical skills necessary to become independent lifelong learners. As the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy explains. "Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand."

Information literacy concept evolved from several basic library concepts such as library instructions, bibliographic education, user education, and information literacy programmes.



IMPORTANT OF INFORMATION LITERACY:-

Information literacy is important owing to the amount of information that is available in contemporary society. Simply being exposed to a great deal of information will not make people informed citizens; they need to learn how to use this information effectively.

Data Smog refers to the idea that too much information can create a barrier in our lives. Especially students and the society require a special skill to handle this fast increasing information, in order to use their educational and economical purposes more effectively. Information literacy is considered as the solution for the data smog.

Information literacy allows us to cope with the data smog, by equipping us with the necessary skills to recognize when we need information, where to locate it, and how to use it effectively and efficiently. Consequently it will help decision making and productivity which is beneficial to the society.

Due to the information explosion and data smog all students and the society face many difficulties to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information. Due to the expansion of internet services we receive a lot of information that is not evaluated, unlike the printed sources. Hence the authenticity, validity, and reliability of this information is in doubt.

Student centered, inquiry based, problem solving, and critical thinking proactive learning environment with the help of information literacy skills, will develop deep learners in the society. Furthermore, information skills are vital to the success in education, occupation, and day to day communication of all citizens. In the twentyfirst century, life long learning has become one of the main themes in the higher education sector. Therefore the students need to be educated with regard to the abilities and skills of how to learn, or learning to learn, by developing the aspects of reasoning and critical thinking . Information literacy skills will help students to achieve this target in a broader sense, in student centered learning. Traditionally, we assume that the students will gain information literacy skills

automatically by themselves. But it is not. In fact, information literacy skills need to be inculcated among the students, by the teachers and librarians.

Learning mainly focuses on achieving knowledge, skills and attitudes, associated with particular subject areas. Irrespective of the disciplinary stream, each and every student should be able to access, use and communicate information in an innovative manner. The Information literacy curriculum plays a major role in order to cultivate these skills among the university and school students. The curriculum can be implemented by the library professionals with the help of academic and administrative staff.

NEEDS OF INFORMATION LITERACY :-

Information literacy skills are helpful to everybody, especially students, in order to succeed academically and in their future job opportunities. Teachers and lecturers are greatly in need of information literacy skills, in order to carry out their occupations efficiently and successfully. Basically, everybody in the society is in need of information literacy skills.

Information literate individuals improve the society's quality of life in general and academically. Information literacy helps us in our day to day life such as buying a house, choosing a school, making an investment, voting for the election, and many more.

Information literacy skills are of prime importance in order to achieve every body's academic goals. Truly information literacy is the foundation of the democratic society.

A society that is capable to access, evaluate, use and communicate information in an effective and efficient manner is called an information literate society. When we educate our children with the necessary information literacy skills, consequently, the society becomes information literate.

CONCLUSION:-

The development of Information Literacy competencies among the library users and throughout the society has become a vital requirement to face the challenges of the 21st century. Information literacy programmes need to be implemented mainly by the library staff in schools, universities, public and other libraries in order to achieve library goals and to convert their users to lifelong learners and critical thinkers. However it is very important to note here that these programmes would be more successful, if the library staff is able to enlist the co-operation of the teaching and administrative staff too. In addition to this, information literacy programmes will enable librarians to play a more prominent and meaningful role among their clients.

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