

Information Literacy and Academic Libraries

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Abstract: - *This paper describes the role of information literacy in academic libraries. The aims and objectives of the information literacy, its competency in development programmes are highlighted. The need of information literacy as well as its importance, benefits, barriers, etc. are discussed in this paper*

Keywords: Information Literacy, Economic Society, Community Information Centre, NKC.

Introduction:

Information Literacy bridges the gap between digital divide that we observe at grassroots level. Initiatives in India in the form of Common services centre’s village knowledge centres, CIC’s, Gyandoot etc. were ushered in with the participation of NGO’s developmental agencies and corporate organizations. Government of India recently established National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to formulate national plans and policy frameworks for nurturing knowledge-based economy in India and addressing challenges of globalization.

In the 1960s, partly because of the increasing importance of information literacy in response to rapid technological developments, the Association of College and Research Libraries

Published a set of five “Information Literacy Competency Standards for the U.S. Similarly, the society of College, National and University Libraries in the UK published a seven pillars model of information literacy, which details the seven major information skills required by all students.

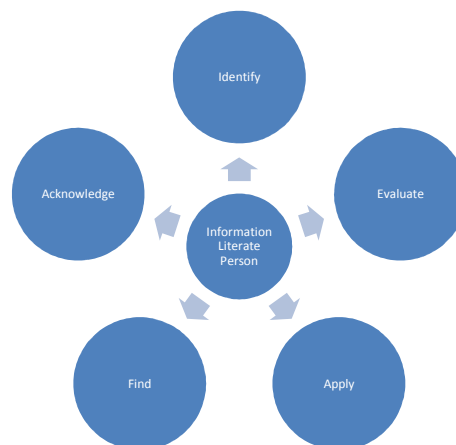


Fig. 1 Relationship between Information Literacy and Information Literate Person

The above fig.1 shows relationship between information literacy and the information literate person. The information literate person can identify, find, evaluate, apply, acknowledge in formation. Therefore, information literacy is very important in academic libraries in India.

Definition:

According to Glossary of Library and Information Science, Information Literacy skills help in finding the information one needs, including an understanding of how libraries are organized, familiarity with the resources they provide (including information formats and automated search tools), and knowledge of commonly used research techniques.

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

Why Information Literacy:

Information Literacy (IL), refers to the set of skills required to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. IL become essential as students promote to post graduate research work. They can also have wider benefits, while encouraging students to become independent, life long learners and learned people must actively participate as citizens of the nation in the information society. These skills are also recognized by employers as essential in the modern workplace. Scholars find that the

traditional literacies of reading, writing and mathematics reasoning are insufficient for lifelong learning, and information literacy is essential.

Need for Information Literacy:

It is essential part of long learning and information citizenship. It is emerging as a distinct skill set and a necessary key to one's social and economic well-being and increasingly complex information literacy skills rose to national consciousness. This is shown by President Barak Obama's assertion of designating October 2009 as National Information Literacy Awareness month. It has been the exception and not the rule, particularly it related the integration of information literacy practices within our educational system and workforce development infrastructure. Information literacy skills are vital to future success.

- Global Literacy according to IFLA website, is the primary purpose of the info. Literacy section is to foster international cooperation in the development of IL education in all types of libraries and information institutions.
- In 2010 the school of info. Management at Wuhan, China held an information Literacy competition at its professional leadership development programme. 30 students from several countries participated in a unique contest to sharpen the information literacy among the youths. This contest was an idea created by SIM after taking part in the 2008.
- No information, means no development of any kind either of literacy or technology, or of

public relation order, of human resources, or of physical and digital developments.

- Modern society is deeply concerned over information Literacy.
- Launching of Employment news website on April 7, 2006 “www.employmentnews.gov.in” This website would help tech savvy youth of the country to have tailor maid info. under one umbrella for such interested individuals who wants to have info relating to any career/job under the Govt. sector. So the youth of the country can have latest updated info about job vacancies as well as information on various careers options.
- Right to information act provides for setting out the practical regime of right to information for the citizens.

This law was passed by parliament of India on 15th June 2005 and came into effect on 13th Oct. 2005. Under this act citizens have a right to.

1. Furnish any information. As per needed to the individual.
 2. Ask copies of documents as per needed to the individual.
 3. Obtain certified sample of materials of work.
 4. Obtain information of printouts, diskettes, floppies tapes, video cassettes or in any other electron.
- Gyandoot was initiated in January 2000 by a committed group of civil servants in consultation with various gram panchayats in

the Dhār district of Madhya Pradesh. It is a low cost, self-sustainable and community-owned rural intranet system that caters to the specific needs of village communities in the district.

- Vaidya Vahini provides the opportunity for schools, teachers and students, all across the nation. To expressed and shared their creative and academic potential via internet. It aims on creating such an environment by providing facilities for content development and collaboration.
- CIC in formation centre provide internet access, and e-mail, printing, data entry and works processing and training for the local populace. This programme was initiated by the Dept. Of information and technology Govt. of India and set up of 487 blocks of the eight north eastern states.

Importance of Information Literacy:

- Information Literacy is critically important because we are surrounded by a growing ocean of information in all formats. The primary purpose of the information literacy section is to foster internal co-operation in the development of information skills education in all types of libraries.
- User education, learning styles, the use of computers and media in teaching and learning networked resources, partnerships with teaching faculty in the development of instructional programs, distance education and the training of libraries in teaching information and technical skills.

- It is the mission of the section to disseminate information on information literacy programs and trends.
- To build excellence in the lifelong, non-formal, informal educational systems to meet the knowledge challenges of the 21st century and increase India's competitiveness advance in fields of knowledge.
- To promote creation knowledge in S & T laboratories.
- To promote the use of knowledge capabilities in making government an effective, transparent and accountable service provider to the citizen and promote side spread sharing of knowledge to maximize public benefit.
- Information Literacy extends beyond current technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking and interpretative skills across professional boundaries and empowers individuals and communities. Within the contest of the developing information Society, we urge governments and intergovernmental organizations to pursue policies and programs to promote information literacy and lifelong learning. Recently Government of India established National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to formulate national plans and policy frameworks for maturing knowledge base economy in India and addressing challenges of globalization.

Information Literacy Curriculum:

The information Literacy curriculum that are implemented by librarians need to include

outcome, tasks, procedure and evaluation in the curriculum.

- Initiating the search strategy
- Locating the resources
- Assessing and comprehending the information
- Communicating the information
- Evaluating the product and process

Benefits of Information Literacy

- Expansion of knowledge through substantive operation of knowledge creation.
- Synthesis of data information into knowledge.
- Appropriate and critical application of information and knowledge in problem solving.
- Incorporation of validate information in the personal or corporate knowledge base.
- Motivation for self-directed learning.
- Appreciation for lifelong learning.
- Identify and articulate needs which require information solutions.
- Identify and select appropriate information sources.
- Critically evaluate the information retrieved.
- Organize, synthesize, integrate and apply the information.

Barriers of Information Literacy

- There is lack of awareness among students about information literacy sessions and instructions.
- Instruction sessions are affected by time constraints.
- Attendance by students is voluntary and as a result all students do not take advantage of this instruction session.
- Inadequate library staffing.
- Lack of willingness among the students to learn a part from their academic curriculum.
- Lack of cooperation among professional organizations and lack of well-articulated or promoted information Literacy policies and programs.

Conclusion:

Information Literacy plays its role to absorb the knowledge from experienced persons too and use the same knowledge in generating wealth and welfare of the society. Some initiatives provide by the Government for the Citizens interface to ensure better transparency in governance e.g. Gyandoot, Community Information Centre, etc. These information centre provides various kinds of community information's as requires by sanitation, agriculture, wholesale process of agricultural products, Village industries, weather, land records, utilities and so on.

Information Literacy programs are already in existence in narrower forms in various libraries and information centre in India, in the forms of user education, bibliographic instruction, library research and so on.

Therefore, librarians should implement and give emphasis on information literacy programmes in their respective institution.

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