

Information Literacy Programmes and Practices: A Survey of Selected Higher Institutions of Udaipur District

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ABSTRACT

Information literacy (IL) is the set of skills that allows us to find, evaluate and use the information we need¹. Libraries have long been involved in training their users in library use, its services and sources. Programmes such as library orientation, user education, etc organize by libraries to teach the user how to use library, how to search information sources and how to access information in the digital age. Information literacy is critically important in present age, because we are surrounded by a growing ocean of information in all forms. Research in this area in developing countries such as India is still in primary stage. This paper is a case study of position of information literacy in selected libraries of higher institutions of Udaipur division. The survey found out that only 14.28% of respondents conduct IL training at regular basis and 35.71% of respondents conduct IL training only for new users. The present study demonstrates various aspects of information literacy such as frequency of IL programmes, organization of IL programmes, instructional materials for IL programmes, IL programmes for different category of users, problems in effective delivery of IL training, resources required for IL program, techniques and methods used in IL programmes. The result of survey also provides information about interest of librarians in IL programmes. It is suggested that information literacy should be included in initial and in service training programmes, and be available as apart of teachers' ongoing professional development.

KEYWORDS: Information literacy, information literacy programmes, higher institutions of Udaipur.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information literacy is the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand ². Library has long been involved in training their users in library use, its services and sources. 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. Association of College and Research Libraries. (1989). Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report. Retrieved from "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and has the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information ³. This study is an attempt to explain the need for user education is based mainly on the belief that to know how to use a library was an essential part of the education. The main object of user education revolved on the many sources of information available and not on the mechanism of using the system. In addition to teaching how to use library, find information librarians now to recognize the importance of teaching critical thinking skills to enable users to evaluate and select the best information for their need. Data Smog is a term coined by author David Shenk that refers to the idea that too much information can create a barrier in our lives. This data Smog is produced by the amount of information, the speed at which it comes to us from all directions, the need to make fast decisions without having all the information that is available we need. Information literacy is the solution of Data Smog. It allows us to cope by giving us the skills to know when we need information and where to locate it effectively

The growth in the interdisciplinary subjects an important factor for the development user instruction. Academic libraries undergone rapid collection growth and acquired new techniques of organization and retrieval. The quantity of material to search because of the diverse discipline requires that effective instructions method should be developed. It is not just the quantity of material that makes help essential but also the diversity of the sources, and formats ⁴. In the digital age, fencing around library resources is a daunting task. Moreover, the instructional needs of user have changed dramatically as new methods for teaching and learning have emerged. While information sources and methods for finding information are still a useful component of library instruction, a broader construct of information of information literacy has emerged as a framework for effective information inquiry .This practice is going to be an essential skill in new learning contexts ⁵ . There are many ways to understand these new dimensions of learning and associated skills.

One of these is the need for a conceptual understanding of information and knowledge processes. Another is the need for skills to exploit technology to use information effectively.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited to selected higher institution libraries at Udaipur district only. The result will contribute in knowing the implementation status of information literacy programmes in the selected libraries .The result might have implications for librarians to better organize their information literacy programmes and for users to better understand their own skill levels and their need to ask librarians for help. Administrators and faculty members may consider incorporating IL instruction in the regular curriculum.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objective of the study are to:

1. Understand the implementation status and developing trends in IL programmes
2. Know the availability of ICT infrastructure in the libraries selected for study
3. How to information literacy programmes are planned, designed and delivered
4. Know the difficulties in planning, designing and running the IL programmes
5. Know the impact of IL programmes on the utilization of library resources
6. Know the impact of IL programmes in enhancing the intellectual output of the institution

4. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire method has been employed to collect the data from selected libraries of higher institution of Udaipur district. Questionnaire was circulated to 24 selected libraries out of which 21 responded. Among 21 respondents, 7 respondents indicated that they do not have any information literacy training or instruction to their users. So, these 7 libraries were excluded and only 14 libraries were considered for data analysis and interpretation.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Information Literacy Programmes

5.1.1 Frequency of Information Literacy Programmes

All the 14 libraries selected for survey provide IL programmes for the purpose of maximum utilization of library resources and services. Information Literacy programmes are quite familiar in academic libraries while in R&D sectors IL programmes are not conducted at frequent interval (Table 1)

Table-1: Frequency of Information Literacy Programmes

| Frequency of IL Programmes | Number of Libraries | Percentage |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Regular interval | 02 | 14.28 |
| Annually | 03 | 21.42 |
| When required | 04 | 28.57 |
| For new users | 05 | 35.71 |

Table 1 show that 14.28% of respondents conduct IL programmes at a regular interval, 21.42% respondent of respondents who conduct it annually, 28.57% of respondents who conduct it when requested and 35.71% of respondents conduct such programmes only for new users.

5.1.2 Organization of Information Literacy Programmes

Table 2 shows that respondents have understood well their duties. In majority (71.42) of libraries, it is the librarian who conducts IL programmes .Some of the libraries (28.57) conduct IL programmes by library staff. Separate staff is not available for IL programmes in any library.

Table-2: Organization of Information Literacy Programmes

| IL Programmes are conducted by | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Librarian | 10 | 71.42 |
| Library staff | 04 | 28.57 |
| Separate staff is available for IL Programmes | - | - |

5.1.3 Instructional Materials for IL Programmes

Table 3 shows that 42.85 per cent respondents indicated that they have developed instructional materials including tutorials or modules. Where as 11(78.57 per cent) of respondents have developed resources as instructions

sheet, guides and manuals for the proper understanding and utilization of the resources of the libraries and 14.28 per cent of respondents revealed that they have developed WebPages and intranet portal for providing IL programmes.

Table-3: Instructional materials for IL Programmes

| Instructional materials | Number | Percentage |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Instructional materials including tutorials or modules | 06 | 42.85 |
| Resource help sheets, guides and material | 11 | 78.57 |
| WebPages and intranet portals | 02 | 14.28 |

5.1.4 Programmes for different category of users

Table 4 shows that 21.42 per cent respondents indicated that they conduct IL programmes for scientist/engineers/IT staff, 14.28 per cent conduct IL program for administrative staff, 28.57 per cent IL Program for faculty members and majority of librarian (71.42) conduct IL program for students.

Table-4: IL Programmes for different category of users

| Category of users | Number | Percentage |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Scientist/Engineers/IT Staff | 03 | 21.42 |
| Administrative staff | 02 | 14.28 |
| Faculty | 04 | 28.57 |
| Student | 10 | 71.42 |

5.1.5 Problems for effective delivery of IL

Table 5 shows that the time available for library staff to perform IL training is the major issue. This is expressed by 57.14 respondents. This problem can be solved by appointing separate staff for planning and delivering IL programmes .Where as 35.71 per cent respondents indicate that user resistance is also a hurdle for effective delivery of IL programmes, 28.57 per cent respondents indicate the problem quality products and 42.85 per cent respondents revealed that staff expertise is one of the serious problem for effective delivery of IL program.

Table-5: Problems for effective delivery of IL

| Problem for effective delivery of IL | Number | Percentage |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| Lack of quality products | 04 | 28.57 |
| User resistance | 05 | 35.71 |
| Staff time | 08 | 57.14 |
| Staff expertise | 06 | 42.85 |

5.1.6 Resources required for IL Programmes

Table 6 shows that 21.42 respondents indicated the requirement of additional staff to conduct the IL training, 7.14 per cent respondents indicated requirement of separate training room for IL programmes .Where as 21.42per cent respondents expressed that training for the staff (trainer) is very important, 14.28per cent respondents revealed the lack of funds for IL program and 14.28 per cent respondents indicated the requirement of modern electronic gadgets.

Table-6: Resources required for IL programmes

| Resources required | Number | Percentage |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Additional staff to plan or conduct training | 03 | 21.42 |
| A separate training room outside the library | 01- | 7.14 |
| Training for the staff how to teach | 03 | 21.42 |
| Funding | 02 | 14.28 |
| Printed training manuals | 05 | 35.71 |
| Modern electronic gadgets | 02 | 14.28 |

5.2 Training Aids used for IL Programmes

5.2.1 Techniques used in developing IL Programmes

Table 7 shows that large majority (92.85%) of respondents revealed that interaction is the best techniques in developing IL Programmes and 28.57 %respondents used video techniques in their IL programmes .Five (35.71%) respondents have used multimedia techniques into their IL programmes.

Table-7: Techniques used in developing IL Programmes

| Techniques used | Number | Percentage |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Interaction | 13 | 92.85 |
| Audio | - | - |
| Video | 04 | 28.57 |
| Multimedia | 05 | 35.71 |

5.2.2 Methods used in IL Programmes

Table 7 shows that large number (85.71%) of respondents have indicated face to face as the most favoured method of delivering IL instructions, 28.57% used printed training material for delivering IL instructions and 35.71% respondents revealing lectures or demonstration as other favoured alternatives for IL instructions .

Table-7: Methods used in IL programmes

| Methods used for IL programmes | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Face -to-face | 12 | 85.71 |
| Printed training material | 04 | 28.57 |
| Lectures /Demonstration | 05 | 35.71 |

5.3 Information Literacy Programmes Assessment

This part is designed to show the overall perception of information literacy concept among the selected libraries (Table 8). It is designed in three-point scale format so as to get understanding level of information literacy concept among the respondents through some basic statements available in the literature. The analysis of data is following:

1. All respondents agreed that to measure the effectiveness of the IL programmes relevant research, services reviews or assessment should be carried out.
2. Eleven (78.57%) respondents agreed that IL programmes help in increased visits to the library by the users.
3. All (100 %) respondents agreed that IL programmes help search skills within the areas of research interest.
4. All respondent agreed that IL programmes are necessary for effective utilization of library resources.
5. Twelve (85.71%) respondents agreed that IL programmes help in increasing research output of the users and organization.
6. Eleven (78.57%) agreed that IL programmes help in understanding economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information.
7. 7.92.85 % of respondents agreed that IL programmes should be evaluated from time to time in view of their relevance in the fast technological and subjects developments.
8. All (100 per cent) respondents agreed that IL is helpful today, as much of the information is available in electronic format.

Table-8: IL programmes –Assessment

| Statement | Disagree | Agree | No opinion |
|--|----------|-------|------------|
| To measure the effectiveness of the IL programmes, relevant research, services reviews or assessment should be carried out | - | 14 | - |
| IL programmes help in increased visits to the library by users | 02 | 11 | - |
| IL programmes help search skills within the areas of research interest | - | 14 | - |
| IL programmes are necessary for effective utilization of library resources | - | 14 | - |
| IL programmes help in increasing research output of the users and organization | 01 | 12 | 01 |
| IL programmes help in understanding economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information | 02 | 11 | - |
| IL programmes should be evaluated from time to time in view of their relevance in the fast technological and subjects developments | - | 13 | 01 |
| IL programmes are helpful today, as much of the information is available in electronic format | - | 14 | - |

6. FINDINGS

Major findings of the survey are:

1. Maximum respondents (35.71 %) conduct IL programmes only for new user while minimum respondents (14.28 per cent) conduct IL programmes at regular interview.
2. In majority of libraries (71.42 %), librarians are conducting IL programmes.
3. Maximum respondents (78.57 %) have developed resources as instructions sheet, guides and manuals for proper understanding and utilization of the resources of the libraries.
4. Maximum (71.42 %) respondents conduct IL programmes for students and 28.57 % respondents conduct IL programmes for faculty.
5. Maximum respondents expressed that major problem for provide IL program is lack of time and expertise staff.
6. All respondent expressed different view about the requirement of resources for IL programmes.
7. Majority (92. 85 %) of respondents revealed that interaction is the best technique in developing IL programmes.

8. Large number (85.71%) of respondents indicated that face to face as the most favoured method of delivering IL instruction
9. All respondents agreed that IL programmes are helpful today, as much of the information is available in electronic format.

SUGGETIONS:

Information Literacy should be included in initial and in service training programmes, and be available as part of teachers' ongoing professional development .IL does not by any means have to be a 'high tech' enterprise, but it should at least reflect the levels of access that students, teachers, administrators and engineers have to technology outside the campus environment. IL programmes should be made a regular activity in the higher learning, R&D and industrial libraries. Library professionals are slowly and steadily familiar with the technological gadgets and showing interest in guiding the users in the information search and accessing the information through many means. Librarians should be collaborated with section such as computer and administrative divisions including teaching. The copy right issues related to electronic information access and use should also form part of the IL programmes.

CONCLUSION:

Information Literacy is the ability to access, evaluates and uses information from a variety of sources is central to all successful learning and by extension to all successful living .IL and digital literacy are central topics for the information science. They are associated with issues as varied as information overload, lifelong learning and growth of the information society. The mission of information literacy is never ending .To cope-up with the growth of knowledge, users and information packages; there is always a need to master the technologies. The need of the time is effective utilization of information and communication technologies in planning, designing and delivering of information literacy programmes. Guidance should be provided in locating, accessing, evaluating and effective using electronic information available on the internet Librarian can emerge as the leaders in motivating the users in the academic and research environment to become lifelong learners. Network technologies should be should be used to a maximum coverage for effective delivery of IL programmes.

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