

REORIENTING INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTRES



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**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
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THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND LIS PROFESSIONALS IN PROMOTING INFORMATION LITERACY

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Abstract

Library is a storehouse of information and traditionally librarian is acting as custodian. Each and every person has a fundamental right to information literacy and information access. Information Literacy means "ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (ALA). Only library professionals can help to their user to build up user awareness about how to handle the needed information. In this present information era some changes in role of librarian can be seen. LIS (Library and Information Science) professionals should be educated themselves to enhance their skill and have to inform about information literacy to their user. This article discuss about overview of information literacy briefly. Necessity and requirements of information literacy programme in library are described here. The main focus of this article is on role of librarian in information literacy. Some suggestions are given at the end of this article.

Keywords: Information, Information Literacy (IL), Information Literacy Programme, ICT (Information and Communication Technology), Libraries, LIS (Library and Information Science) Professionals.

1. Introduction

Information literacy is the ability to find, understand, evaluate and use of information. Libraries are an active partner, useful and effective contributor in present social change. Traditional literacy is not sufficient.

Role of libraries is changing with revolutionary change of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) all over world. Different type of information seekers have different type of information needs. Library professionals have to provide services to fulfill these information needs. And this is role of librarian to promote information literacy.

Information literacy is increasingly important due to rapid technological change and regular explosion of information resources. So, the LIS (Library and Information Science) professionals who are working in this environment have face challenges for providing the quality information services to the user.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To understand the concept of Information Literacy (IL)
- To explore the relationships between the Information Literacy (IL) and Libraries.
- To discuss the role of LIS (Library and Information Science) Professionals
- To discuss about some problems to promote Information Literacy (IL)
- To put some suggestions for implementing Information Literacy (IL)

3. Literature Review

Knežević (2013) described the importance of information literacy and the role of libraries in IT. This paper considered role of public library and contribution of school libraries for information literacy.

Kumar V. and others (20 ?) discussed about the information literacy and the role of librarian. This paper also discussed about need, objectives and benefits of information literacy. They also gave some suggestions in conclusion part of this article.

Hassan and others (2009) discussed about role of academic libraries to promote information literacy in between students of higher education institutions. They also described about information literacy models.

4. Information Literacy

4.1 Definition

The term 'information literacy' first appeared in 1974 by Paul G. Zurkowski.

Information literacy is the ability to gather, organize, filter and evaluate information and to form valid opinions based on the results.

ALA defined information literacy as "set of abilities that enables an individual to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to effectively locate, evaluate and use the needed information."

CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) have defined information literacy as "Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner."

Beside this SCONUL define Information Literacy as: "Information literate people will demonstrate an awareness of how they gather, use, manage, synthesise and create information and data in an ethical manner and will have the information skills to do so effectively."

According to ACRL, Information Literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze and use information.

4.2 Need for Information Literacy

The need for information literacy may be essential due to the following reasons:

- Changing shape of libraries
- Wide spread of information
- Increase in number of users
- Advent of ICT (Information and Communication Technology)
- Vast variety of information sources
- Rapid increase in the stream of information due to information revolution
- Research on complex and interdisciplinary topics

4.3 Objectives of Information Literacy

Following are the objectives of information literacy:

- Recognition of importance of information and responsibility for information
- Understanding of foundation of information science
- Understanding of characteristics of information society, effect of information user society and human beings
- Capabilities of judgment (evaluation), selection, organization and processing of information

4.4 Scope of Information Literacy

Information literacy includes a range of literacy. The range of literacy may be:

- Traditional Literacy: to read and write
- Computer Literacy: to understand and operate computers those are interfaces between information and end-users
- Media Literacy: to understand different media storing networked information and use them

- **Network Literacy:** Network literacy for library users consists of two aspects: knowledge of networked information and skills to locate, select, evaluate and use the networked information
- **Traditional Information Literacy:** to locate, select, evaluate and use information effectively
- **Visual Literacy:** to see and understand the information
- **Web Literacy:** to locate, select, retrieve and use the information from web

4.5 *Benefits of Information Literacy*

The following benefits of information literacy may be observed:

- Expansion of knowledge through substantive operations of knowledge creation
- Synthesis of data and information into knowledge
- Appropriate and critical application of information and knowledge in problems solving
- Enhancement of the critical thinking
- Incorporation of validated information in the personal or corporate knowledge base
- Motivation for self-directed learning
- Appreciation for lifelong learning

5. Information Literacy and Library

Library acts as information centers. The role of library professionals is to provide information services to different types of information seekers to meet the specific needs of the users. Library professionals can help their users to develop awareness of information literacy.

5.1 *Reasons of Information Literacy Programme in Libraries*

- To create a direct interaction and communication between users and library professionals
- To infuse the ability to locate and select proper information
- To grow confidence in communicating, instructing and educating the users
- To demonstrate the usefulness of several web resources
- To inform the users with different search techniques
- To elucidate the necessity of bibliographical citations
- To identify and communicate information in all formats
- To instruct the ability to apply the principles of scholarly communication to the problems of information handling

5.2 *Requirements for Information Literacy Programme in Libraries*

Requirements for information literacy programme in libraries are following:

- To identify a need for information, and construct plans for locating information
- To locate, access, evaluate information obtained from different sources, and shape the information to apply and communicate
- To increase the availability and accessibility of resources in the libraries
- To support and interact with knowledge resources
- To improve computer support service
- To accept change and adopt new technological developments
- To require more support from their authorities
- To need additional skilled staff members
- To acquire additional training (seminar, workshop, etc.) in this background

5.3 *Information Literacy in Libraries through ICT*

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and IL (Information Literacy) have inter-connected with the term information. Information can enhance the capabilities of the person in many ways. ICT literate person acquires various types of skill and capability to exploit the resources and maximize the uses. One should have the knowledge and skill to deal with modern electronic gadgets. At this step ICT literacy helps a person to update his skill and knowledge.

6. *Role of Libraries and LIS Professionals*

The role of libraries and LIS Professionals are

- Libraries act as partners in information literacy education
- Libraries and librarians are qualified to support and teach information literacy skills
- Librarians act as computer literacy teachers
- Librarians are excellent guides in determining available sources
- Libraries can take an active role in understanding the need of their users
- Libraries aim to educate and train users to become information literate.
- Libraries can provide active laboratory for users to explore investigates, examines and retrieves information

Today information has become a major economic commodity. The librarian is responsible for locating, acquiring, disseminating and tracking information resources of many types. Every citizen needs to be educated for productive information use. Libraries and librarians play an important role in the education of people for effective and efficient information use by teaching them information skills at all levels of education to enable to be informed citizens of the country.

Librarians have to identify and select good age-appropriate and age-specific literature.

Librarians can design an information literacy curriculum, which matches users' capabilities, because they have the expertise and knowledge to teach these skills. Librarians are really in the most favorable position to be the leaders in developing an information literate community.

7. *Problems*

The problems for implementing information literacy programme in library are:

- Lack of resources
- Unwillingness and negative attitude of library staff
- Lack of technical support
- Insufficient financial resources
- Non-availability of less expensive multilanguage software
- Absence policies and regulations

8. *Suggestions/ Recommendations*

In libraries for implementation of information literacy programme, some suggestions/ recommendations are:

- Librarian need to know how user want to learn and to provide information in learning
- Librarians need to obtain knowledge about the electronics tools (computer, etc.)
- Librarians is required to implement the information literacy programme
- Introducing the information literacy programmes in the curriculum

- Librarian and Library professionals should have the sufficient knowledge about how to use information
- Library professionals need to learn about implementation of ICT tools
- Librarians should carry out surveys about the utility of information literacy among communities
- Librarians or library professionals should participate seminars, workshops, training, orientation programmes

9. Conclusion

LIS professionals have to play a significant role to promote information literacy in society. There exists a gap between librarians and the users' information needs. To bridge this gap they need to educate and re-educate themselves to acquire new skills and competencies for a new role and need to cultivate the concept of lifelong learning of information literacy skills. LIS professionals need to play an important role in the education process by making people aware of a need and motivating the use of information, a new knowledge and a new ability.

The librarians are well equipped to teach such skills, but the major obstacle in promoting information literacy programme in developing countries like India has the lack of public awareness of the problem created by information illiteracy.

The successful implementation of the library services for information literacy will depend on the willingness of the participants to cooperate with each other. To bring the concept of information literacy, it should be kept in mind about the rural community of India. Full assistance should be given to them to make the villagers information literate through library and information centres.

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