

EMERGING TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS OF INFORMATION LITERACY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LIS PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA

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Abstract *Information Literacy is the defining paradigm of modern education. Librarianship in the present digital age is not restrained to the documents rather; the profession has now amalgamated to multifarious subfields. Information literacy is essential today for development and progress. This paper aims to attempt find the concept of information literacy (IL). The paper shows initially the general idea about information, information literacy with relation to library and information science. It describes the importance, components, basic types and needs of information literacy. The paper further gives a glimpse of different activities and roles especially information literate LIS professionals. This paper also highlights the emerging trends and developments of information literacy in the library profession in the present day.*

Keyword: *Information Literacy, IL, Library Literacy, Media Literacy, Visual Literacy, LIS Profession, India*

INTRODUCTION

Information literacy is a key component of, and contributor to, lifelong learning. 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. Information literacy is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological changes and proliferating information resources.

Information Literacy skills are essential to fully participate in, and contribute to, the world we live in. Teachers and school librarians, at all grade levels, should develop collaborative working relationships to develop Information Literacy curriculum and to teach Information Literacy skills to all students; and school administrators should actively encourage and support their efforts. Information Literacy is the defining paradigm of modern education. Librarianship in the present digital age is not restrained to the documents rather; the profession has now amalgamated to multifarious subfields. Advancement of technologies and its application in library services, multifarious, multidimensional needs of the users due to inter-disciplinary research are some of the factors which are responsible for the librarian to accept and adapt to the changing situations causing thereby, change in library profession. (Mishra & Mishra, 2010)₁

CONCEPT OF INFORMATION LITERACY

The concept of information literacy is generally attributed to Paul Zurkowski¹ in 1974. Indeed, since 1974 IL has been an area of increasing interest to librarians and information professionals and there is a huge amount of literature on this topic. (Babu, 2008)₂ Information literacy is the understanding information, access and evaluate the different types of information systems and sources in the modern age and fluent in the technology. To be information literate, one should be able to efficiently and effectively locate and use information needed for problem-solving and decision-making. Information literacy is a means of empowerment in today's information-rich environment.

WHAT IS IL?

Information Literacy is set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. Legal information literacy as the set of abilities to recognized a legal information need, identify likely information sources and use them to retrieve relevant information, assess the quality of the information and its applicability to a specific situation and analyze, understand and use the information to make good decisions.

According to Chan, an information skilled student must be able to: 1. Recognize a need for information. 2. Know how to accurately identify and define the information need. 3.

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Category	Range of Literacy
1	Traditional Literacy- the ability to read and write
2	Visual Literacy- the ability to understand, use and express using images
3	Computer Literacy- the ability to understand and operate computer those are interfaces between information and end users
4	Network Literacy- the ability to locate access and use information in a networked environment like World Wide Web
5	Media Literacy- the ability to access, analyze and produce knowledge in television, motion picture, radio, newspaper and magazines and
6	Traditional Information Literacy- to locate, select, evaluate and use information effectively.

Know how to locate information effectively. 4. Know how to organize, analyze, interpret and evaluate information. 5. Incorporate selected information in to his/her knowledge base and 6. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

DEFINITION

ALA has defined IL in the following words, “Information literacy is the ability to recognize when information is needed and locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.”

According to Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), “IL knows when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.”³ “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.”⁴

SCOPE OF INFORMATION LITERACY

Information literacy includes a range of literacy which as following categories as:

NEED FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

According to Oberman (1991) students must be equipped with critical thinking skills to counteract the problem of

information overload and to be able to take advantage of the numerous choices offered by the electronic environment.

Today libraries are functioning in hybrid environment. Most of the libraries are providing traditional as well as ICT based services. Indeed, libraries have been conducting instruction programmes with various nomenclatures to describe their resources, various services, marking and parking patterns, library use ethics etc. However, the changing library environment requires the libraries to play more important role through information literacy programmes. The abundance of information available through the Internet in public domain in the form of subject gateways, e-books, e-journals, subject and subject concept based web pages, etc., as well as the information available through different subscription based databases made available by various hosts and aggregators, is bound to play a very important role in teaching, learning and research, particularly in higher education and R&D institutions.⁵

FIVE COMPONENTS OF IL

There are mainly five components of information literacy which are according to the nature of IL; it shows the broader aspects of information literacy. (Ferguson)⁶. The components are as follows:

SEVEN FACES OF IL

Christine Bruce, in her book seven faces of information

Table. 1: Five components of IL

Types	Five components of IL
Basic Literacy	Includes Reading, Writing, Speaking, Counting, Calculating and Perception and Drawing.
Library Literacy	The library is the place where information is stored, catalogued, indexed, and available. This type of literacy includes types of materials, indexing, cataloguing, research process etc.
Media Literacy	Media Literacy includes an understanding of the many different types of media and the purposes for which they can be used.
Technology Literacy	Every student should have frequent opportunities to use technological tools to create their own information artifacts — in print, on the screen, and online also.
Visual Literacy	Visual Literacy is the link between Media Literacy and Technology Literacy. Media images and sound are end products created using the tools of digital technology.

literacy (1997) identifies seven categories of IL as experienced by Australian educators in two universities:

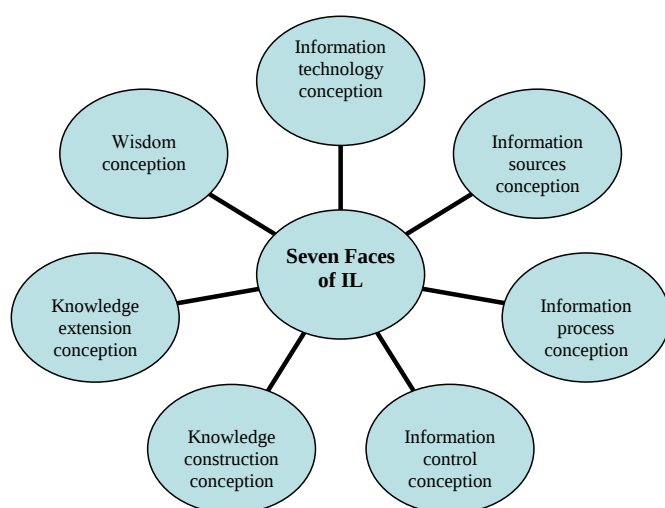


Figure:1. Seven faces of IL

1. Information technology conception — using information technology for information retrieval and communication
2. Information sources conception — finding information
3. Information process conception — executing a process
4. Information control conception — controlling information
5. Knowledge construction conception — building up a personal knowledge base in a new area of interest
6. Knowledge extension conception — working with knowledge and personal perspectives adopted in such a way that novel insights are gained
7. Wisdom conception — using information wisely for the benefit of others.

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION LITERACY

The libraries have been conducting library and information use programmes under the broader umbrella of User Education consisting of, user orientation, freshmen initiation and bibliographic instruction programmes. These programmes have followed the contemporary developments in the field and to meet the expectations of the users. The changes in search strategies for accessing information from Internet demand different skills, different from retrieving information either from CD-ROM databases or online information retrieval systems. This demands the learners to work independently on computers; therefore they must be familiar with:

- how to identify relevant databases in relation to a query
- how to interconnect such databases
- how to differentiate between an index and a search engine

- how to use different search strategies on the Internet like advanced search
- how to build Web catalogues
- how to serve as intermediary for Internet access to remote user
- how to download, cut and paste, and so on (Karisiddappa, 2005).

INFORMATION LITERACY IN INDIA

After Independence, India has experienced growing population of literate and educated citizens due to various efforts in universalisation of elementary education through programmes like: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), and National Literacy Mission and so on. On the other hand, for the facilitating educated citizens with the adequate documentary and knowledge resources, government and other agencies have established public libraries. The community information centers and village knowledge centers are the recent additions to this effort that would transform India into an information society, where information and knowledge resources are considered as critical ingredient for development. But problem is with the effective and efficient use, consumption and evaluation of information resources, so that informed citizen can take right decisions. Here information literacy can play a vital role in educating the users of libraries on various information and documentary resources, where to start searching of information, what where and how to access them, how to assess and compare retrieved information, how to communicate their information or findings to the general masses and experts, and so on.

In India, The concept of information literacy begins to appear in the library and information science (LIS) literature is very recent, but related terms, concepts and services are present in research and practice in India during the 1990s. Information literacy cuts across many different disciplines and across professional and even political agendas: librarians, teachers and faculty, experts in educational technology, learning facilitators, all contribute to the training in information literacy of citizens, even while unaware of the concept and its implications. In recent reviews in primary and secondary compulsory education and the higher education sectors, all these are related in several ways to the IL experience. Recording the evolution and achievements of IL in India is not an easy task because of its great variety, but in recent years LIS institutions in India have gone through an accelerated pace in development which certainly has had a strong positive influence for all IL-related activities and services and for the widespread acceptance of the concept itself (C.R. Karisiddappa, 2004).

An international Information Literacy workshop was organized in India by Punjab University with the support of

UNESCO in Oct 2005 to promote Information Literacy in South and South East Asia. They resolved that Information Literacy should be introduced within national curricula at all levels including life long learning programmes to make the stake holders independent learners and critical thinkers. There is a need for social responsibility to leverage the benefits of LIS professionals for the under privileged.

Recently the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kerala proposed to implement an Information Literacy programme in colleges affiliated to its university. (Oct 2006). A number of seminars and workshops are being conducted in India, thanks to the generous grants from UNESCO. In addition to this universities are conducting seminars and symposia (University of Madras, 2007).

CONCLUSION

Information literacy is the necessity of the information age. It is an understanding to find way through many sources of information without becoming overwhelmed and overloaded. Information skills further helps to acquire, manage and utilize the information for the benefit of the individuals and the society. In this paper, as we are looking forward in the age of information and technology, where everybody need to be perfect in his/her work. In the field of library science the importance of technology can be seen as it is called library and information science. At present, every user wants his/her required information quickly without wastage of time, and for it Information Technology is a boon for LIS professionals because of its time saving feature. All of us ought to be well informed about science and technology

to participate in decisions about its role in our societies in regard to library and information science. Hence, without information literacy, it is difficult to understand and retrieve the information from different sources. The librarians, library professionals and information professionals wanted to train the student through the information literacy program.

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