UGC SPONSORED MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

on

INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES AND PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF HYDERABAD KARNATAKA REGION: A SURVEY

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By

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1. Introduction

The higher educational institutions are established not only to impart education and award degrees to the students, but also to make them self learner and lifelong learners. At the same time their libraries are not only store houses of knowledge but also temples of learning and explore knowledge, because, information environment has become too complex and changing too rapidly. In the information age, the students are expected to employ sophisticated information gathering techniques to locate, organize, evaluate and use the information effectively to be successful in their endeavor. Students must learn critical thinking and imbibe information. In this context the higher educational institutions libraries need to be dynamic and the librarians are to take leading role in assessing the information literacy competence of the students and plan for conducting such programmes to improve the situation.

Due to information literacy’s importance in the higher education curriculum, certain regional and discipline-based accreditation associations now consider it as a significant outcome for college students. Hence, in the institutions of higher learning in Hyderabad Karnataka Region, user education, library instruction and bibliographic instruction programmes are being provided from time to time.
2. Information literacy: concept and definitions

Paul Zurkowski, the President of Information Industry association, in 1974 introduced the concept of information literacy for the first time in a proposal submitted to the US National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS). In his proposal, he advocated the promotion of Universal information literacy.

A generally acceptable definition was proposed by Association of College and Research Libraries in 2000, which defines “Information Literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.”.

The American Library Association’s (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, Final Report (1989) states, “To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information”.

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, defines “Information Literacy knows when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner”.

3. Profile of Hyderabad Karnataka Region

The Hyderabad Karnataka Region is situated in the North Eastern part of the Karnataka state and falls within the geographical region of north maidin. The Hyderabad Karnataka Region covers the geographical area of 44108 Sq.Kms, which accounts for 23% of the total geographical area of the Karnataka state. At present it consists of six districts i.e. Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bellary, Koppal and Yadagir respectively. The total population of Hyderabad Karnataka Region according to 2001 census report is 9493182, which is about 18% of the total
population of Karnataka state. The average percentage of literacy rate is also very low (male 67% and female 42.43%), when compared to the state average.

4. Need for the study

The concept of information literacy has gained considerable attention in the higher education communities. There is a common belief that higher education institution (HEIs) should include the teaching of lifelong learning skills in their missions. Since the 1990s, higher educational institutions throughout the world have stressed the importance and the need of information literacy due to the following reasons:

- Rapid increase in the stream of information due to information revolution.
- Advent of information and communication technologies.
- Vast variety of information sources.
- Changing shape of libraries.
- Wide dispersal of information.
- Increase in number of users.
- Research on complex and interdisciplinary topics.

Glancing the literature published in India, it is observed that there is very little output as compared to the developed countries. There are no specific standards, reports and policy guidelines for IL brought out either by government, professional associations or the institutes of higher learning. Literature survey of the work shows that only few Indian authors have published some papers/articles related to Information Literacy. In spite of these developments, the overall situation is not encouraging and stressed for further studies and research in a concentrated geographical area in the changing context. Hence, the present survey
is an attempt to identify and assesses the information literacy programmes and practices of higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region.

5. Statement of the Problem

An important aim of higher education is to produce information literate graduates. Students at the higher level of learning and research are expected to have mastery over information literacy skills. In order to survive today’s information flow, the capacity and skills to handle large amounts of information are needed. It is important to understand how information is organized, where to find it and how to use it effectively. The aim is not only to locate and access information sources but also to analyses them in a critical way and make constructive use of them. It is thus vital to know how to process, synthesize and evaluate information.

Much of the research in information literacy is concentrated on the higher education sector. It includes work that investigates information literacy in a specific discipline or the information literacy experiences of students, the development and evaluation of information literacy in higher educational institutions. A study of impact of information literacy programmes on the effective utilization of information is the need of the hour. For the effective utilization of information, information literacy programmes should be well planned, designed and delivered. Hence, the amount of work, techniques, methods, technologies and manpower required in designing such effective information literacy programmes in the higher learning and research environment, where the library clientele are much mature information users is found immediate need. Hence, the following problem is chosen for minor research project and topic is entitled as:

“Information Literacy Programmes and Practices in Higher Educational Institutions of Hyderabad Karnataka Region: A Survey”
6. **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present survey are to investigate the Information literacy programmes and practices of higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region. The main objectives are;

- To know the availability of ICT infrastructure in the libraries selected for survey,
- To identify the nature, levels, models, forms and components of information literacy programmes currently practiced
- To identify the human resources and agencies involved while offering the information literacy programmes
- To understand the implementation status and developing trends in IL programmes and practices
- To know how the IL programmes are planned, designed and delivered
- To assess the importance and competencies of information literacy programmes in Higher educational institutions
- To know the difficulties faced while planning, designing and delivering Information literacy programmes

7. **Research Methodology**

Research in any discipline is inter-linked with research methodology and design aspects of the study. Methodology involves various tools, techniques and approaches. In the present survey, a survey method has been employed using questionnaire as a tool for data collection. The methods of interview and observation have also employed to capture the data that have not possible to collect through the questionnaire. Published literature and other secondary sources of information have been also collected.
The population of the present study includes different categories of higher educational institutions offering undergraduate and postgraduate studies and research in Science and Social sciences, Engineering, Medical and Health sciences, Education and Physical education and Agriculture, and Veterinary sciences. The data collected has been analyzed, tabulated and graphically represented using statistical software i.e. Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS).

8. **Significance, Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The purpose of the present research survey is not only meant to assess the information literacy levels and practices in the higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region, rather, it is meant to make collaborative efforts towards the progress of information literacy. The survey findings and results have been considered and utilized for the strengthening information literacy programmes and practices across curriculum within higher educational institutions.

There are 368 higher educational institutions, which include Universities, Degree Colleges and Professional colleges in Hyderabad Karnataka region and offering different categories of courses like Science and Social science, Engineering, Medical and Health sciences, Education and Physical education and Agriculture and Veterinary sciences. But, the scope of this study is restricted to 250 selected libraries of higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region, which comprising the backward districts of Bidar, Gulbarga, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal and Bellary. The parameters of the survey are as follows:

- Data collection is confined to library and information centers of higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region only.
• Data was collected using a questionnaire from the Librarians of higher educational institutions
• The survey was mainly a qualitative, using a small number of samples
• Data analysis and interpretation are entirely based on the feedback received from the respondents
• The collection details, technological infrastructure, services/facilities rendered and implementation of information literacy programmes were up-to-date at the time of collection.

9. Organization of the Study

The entire study is organized in the following five chapters

Chapter-I Deals with introduction need for the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research methodology, scope and limitation of the study and caperterization.

Chapter-II Describe an overview of information literacy – concept of information literacy, information literacy and lifelong learning, IL and Information Technology, IL models, standards, guidelines, Role of libraries and Librarians, Information literacy organizations

Chapter-III Provides Information literacy and higher education in Hyderabad Karnataka region: at a glance

Chapter-IV This chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation of the collected data

Chapter-V This chapter enlists the findings, provides suggestions and conclusion.
10. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the data analysis and interpretations of the data collected from 175 libraries of higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region, findings have been reported to provide a clear status of the information literacy programmes rendered in the libraries of this region and to enable the planners and policy makers to frames the suitable policies for strengthening the information literacy programmes among the users.

The major findings of the study are

- 250 selected libraries of higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region have been covered in the study to elicit the extent of information literacy instruction or orientation training programmes organized to the users and out of 250 libraries, 175 (70%) libraries have responded. As 24 library respondents do not provide any information literacy instruction or orientation training to their library clientele and hence, these 24 libraries have been excluded and only 151 libraries were considered for data analysis and interpretation in the light of the objectives of the study.

- 30 libraries (20%) rendering information literacy programmes are established between 2006 and 2011.

- Majority of the respondent libraries covered in the survey belongs to Degree colleges (N=106, 70.2%) and this is followed by Professional colleges (N=39, 25.8%) and Universities (N= 6, 4.6%).

- More than one third of the institutions (N=51, 33.8%) covered in the survey belongs to private aided institutions and government institutions accounts to 47 (31.1%).

- One hundred institutions out of 151 institutions (66.2%) covered in the survey offer science and Social Science courses and this is followed by the Education and Physical education courses 18 (11.9%).
- 40.4 percent (N=61) institutions have accredited by NAAC as ‘B’ grade and 21.2% of institutions are having ‘A’ grade, and very less 28 (18.5%) institutions with ‘C’ grade.
- 28.5% of the responding colleges are having less than 250 students only 12.6% of institutions have more than 2000 student’s strength. In case of staff strength, 24.5% (37 colleges) having teaching staff between 11 to 20 and 21.2% (32 colleges) are having adequate staff of above 70.
- 55 out of 151 responding colleges had a collection up to 10,000. 31 libraries (20.5%) had a collection of books ranging 10,000 to 20,000.
- 37% (N=56) of institutions procure below 10 periodicals while 28 colleges (18.5%) were receiving 11 to 20 magazines while only 9.3% (N=14 colleges) were getting more than 101 periodicals. On the other hand, majority of the institutional libraries do not have e-resources (66.5%, N= 99 libraries).
- More than 62% of the college libraries are maintained by only one professional staff while 18.5% of colleges have two professional staff.
- 66.9% (N=101) of libraries of responding institutions have no semi professional staff. However, nearly 87% of colleges have supporting staff.
- About one fourth of libraries more or less in the Higher Educational Institutions have budget in the range of below Rs. 50,000; 50,000 -1 lakh; 1-2 lakh and above 2 lakh respectively.
- More than half of the institutional libraries (55.6%) indicated that their collections of books as excellent and however 20.5% and 10.6% of libraries indicated journals/ Periodicals/ Magazines and E-resources as excellent respectively.
- Majority of the libraries are extending circulation (98%), reference (88.7%) and newspaper clipping services (71.5%).
- Among the ICT infrastructure, Computers (91.4%) and printers (74.8%) are mostly available in majority of the libraries of institutions covered in the study.
• Majority of libraries (51.2% are still in the process of carrying out library automation process and 23.6 % of libraries partially automated and 25.2% of libraries indicated fully automated their library activities and services.

• E-granthalaya (N=29), followed by E-lib (N=26) and SOUL (N=25) have been popular library software’s used by responding libraries.

• 66.9% of the responded institutions have the internet connectivity, out of which 26.7% having a single node for accessing Internet facility.

• 80.1% of the respondents use the method of display of new arrivals, followed by Library exhibitions 72.9%, Personal talks 58.3%.

• Libraries are extending circulation (98%), reference (88.7%) and newspaper clipping services (71.5%).

• 54.3% of the library respondents opine that information Literacy means User orientation and 15.2% feels that the training for specific use of library information sources is the meaning of information literacy.

• All the respondent libraries of higher educational institutes stated that the orientation and training program is quite essential to the users of the libraries (100%).

• Majority of the libraries of higher educational institutes (N=116, 76.8%) have conducted information literacy programmes at the beginning of the academic year and 21.9 percent t conducted information literacy programmes as and when situation warrants (N=33).

• In majority of the libraries under study, it is the librarian who conducts information literacy programmes for the benefit of users (N=142, 94 %).

• 85.4% of respondent libraries of higher educational institutes have indicated formal lectures and demonstrations as the most favoured method of delivering Information Literacy Program and followed by face to face (44.4%).

• Information Literacy program/User education programs are conducted by 71.5% of the responded institutions for teaching faculty and students.
The three preferred areas of rendering Information Literacy training program by the libraries of higher educational institutes are orienting skills about finding books/Journals in the library (1005), catalogue search (78.8%) and Internet search skills (71.5%).

Majority of the respondents (N=117, 77.5%) revealed that in-house team of library professionals are responsible to design, develop and update the IL products as part of their normal range of duties.

The overall perception of information literacy are found to be:

- 90 respondent libraries of higher educational institutes agree the relevance of information literacy for the benefit of users.
- 111 respondents agree the fact to measure the effectiveness of the information literacy programmes.
- 114 respondents agree to information literacy be evaluated to check the use and user satisfaction, helps in increased visits to the library the users and mastering the complex resources and search skills within the areas of research interest.
- Only 41 respondents strongly agree that information literacy programmes are necessary for effective utilization of library materials and 29 respondents strongly agree that information literacy programmes helps in understanding economic, legal and social issues surroundings the use of information.
- 113 respondents agree that information literacy programmes helps in increasing research output of the individual and organization.
- 92 respondents agree that it is difficult to organize information literacy programmes to the senior users of the library who are highly learned in using knowledge for productive research.
- 109 respondents agree that information literacy programme should be evaluated from time to time in view of their relevance in the fast technological and subject developments while 97 respondent libraries agree that information literacy programmes are helpful today as much of the information is available in electronic formats.
* Lack of awareness about Information Literacy program is the major issue and is expressed by majority of respondent’s i.e. 74.2%. 60.9% of respondents opined that lack of support from the management/higher officials is another major hurdle in effective delivery of Information Literacy programs. Nearly half of the respondents focused on the users’ casual nature. Staff expertise 35.1% and the non co-operation of the teaching staff are also the problems in effective delivery of the Information Literacy Programs.

11. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the data analysis and interpretations of the data collected from 175 libraries of higher educational institutions in Hyderabad Karnataka region, findings have been reported to provide a clear status of the information literacy programmes rendered in the libraries of this region and to enable the planners and policy makers to frames the suitable policies for strengthening the information literacy programmes among the users.

But, Information Literacy program cannot be implemented in isolation. The success of any IL program needs a good collaboration between teaching faculty, librarian and administrators. Hence the role of administrators, teaching faculty and librarians is very significant to successfully implement it in higher educational institutions and the investigators have made following suggestions.

The role and responsibility of administrators of higher educational institutions are needed to concentrate on the following points;

- Include information literacy in their mission statements to become an information literate institution.
- Formulating information literacy policies, guidelines and framework.
- Willingness to make information literacy a compulsory subject for the completion of graduation or post graduation.
Develop cooperative partnership with the teaching faculty, librarians and other staff to successfully initiate IL program.

Facilitate training program such as “Training the trainers” for teaching faculty and librarians to promote information literacy among students, and

Organise workshops and seminars to create awareness about the IL and to foster willingness among the students to learn it.

To implement IL successfully in higher educational institutions, the teaching faculty is needed to perform the following functions:

- To support the administrators in promoting IL in their institutions.
- To develop a good relationship with the library staff and guide them to planning, designing IL course of their concerned subject.
- To realize the importance of IL and acquiring those skills to impart them on students,
- To act as a facilitator to make students as information literates.
- To help librarians to assess the information literacy skills acquired by the students through conducting tests or by giving graded assignments.
- To act as a giver of IL knowledge to students to become critical thinkers and effective users of information.

To promote information literacy in higher educational institutions effectively, the library professionals are needed to perform the following functions:

- To make Information Literacy need analysis of students
- To plan and design IL course in collaboration with the teaching staff.
- To develop Information Literacy curriculum.
- To find out the effective method of teaching IL to students.
- To plan and discuss the ways of teacher involvement in teaching IL to students.
➢ To collect the feedback of the students experiences on IL program with the help of teaching staff.

➢ To assess the effectiveness of IL program and try to improve it if needed.

Other suggestions are:

- The Government should envisage a National Task Force to monitor information literacy programmes.
- The mission statement and planning documents of the College should include a statement for goals and objectives of information literacy.
- College should have a separate funding and the other measurable support for an information literacy agenda.
- Technological infrastructure needs to be implemented to enable better utilisation of the online resources being subscribed.
- Faculty-Librarian should collaborate to develop programme that deal with discipline specific research skills and assignment specific tutorials.
- There is a need to develop and demonstrate tutorials on Copyright Laws, Electronic Access to Information, and Institutional Policies related to the access and use of information.
- There is a need to develop tutorials related to database search skills, Internet skills, web search tools, web search strategies, evaluation of web resources, using subject-based portals, and gateways, etc.
- Library staff should play a significant role in the identification of relevant sources and should involve in the hands-on-training of students.
- Training for trainers programmes need to be recognised in order to upgrade knowledge of subject specific information sources and tools for both library and faculty.
- Launching of National Information Literacy website to facilitate sharing of resources.
12. CONCLUSION

The survey has revealed that the learning environment is undergoing major changes and information literacy is becoming an important part of collaborative efforts on campus throughout the Hyderabad Karnataka Region. But, implementing and managing an information literacy programme in higher educational institutions has many challenges. Thus, in order to promote effective information literacy programmes in higher educational institutions several efforts needs to be taken.

Higher educational institutions should understand the importance of information literacy and lifelong learning skills and educate their students how to find, evaluate and effectively use information. Each educational setup should have well trained Library and information professionals, because they are the only persons to collecting, processing and disseminating of information and knowledge for quality of life and education for all.

UGC should also take initiative in the higher educational institutions to integrate the information literacy programs across the curriculum by designing a separate paper at the undergraduate/post graduate level. Library associations at national and state level should come forward and organize workshops/conference/seminars related to information literacy policies, programmes, implementation and evaluation. There is also an urgent need of the National Information Literacy Forum, where issues related to information literacy can be discussed at national level and the Government should envisage a National Task Force to monitor information literacy programmes.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

PRINCIPAL

INVESTIGATOR