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**Information Literacy And The Role Of Libraries**

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**Abstract:**

*Information plays an important role in education. Now -a- days many difficulties are arising to get the required information from vast collections, where information is available in different formats like in print and in electronic format. To get access to the required information and use that information properly students have to become information literate. Information literacy is a skill that is required for people to find the information, to retrieve the information, to analyse it and finally to use the required information. Information literacy have become an important part in library environment. Information literacy is not only meant for teaching and learning but also to make users aware about the information sources to choose authentic information from various sources, to acknowledge the sources, to use citations etc. To do this libraries have to furnish with necessary information skills to function effectively and to meet the challenges of today's information age. This article discusses the concept of information literacy and the role of libraries in imparting information literacy. It also discusses information literacy types and provides some information literacy methods.*

**Keywords: Information, Libraries, Types of Libraries, Information Literacy.**

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**Introduction:**

Libraries are important information channels and resource suppliers for supporting teaching and learning and plays important role to make students information literate. All over the world libraries are present for providing free and fair access to information for all. Libraries plays an important role in creating a literate environment and promoting literacy among all age groups by providing

relevant information both in print and in electronic format and there are no barriers to provide information to the users. In this age of information explosion, information is easily available and the abundance of information availability makes it difficult for the users to find relevant information. There is also doubt on the quality of information available. It has become very difficult to users for effectively use the relevant information

from the vast information resources. Libraries act as intermediaries between information and users for connecting users with relevant resources. Users must not only have reading skills, computer skills but must also have information literacy skills too. Users who cannot able to find, retrieve and evaluate the information which is needed are not considered as information literate.

Information literacy means one's ability to recognize when information is in need, the ability to locate, evaluate and to use the evaluated information effectively when information is needed. The concept of information literacy was first used by Paul Zurkowski in 1974. He defined information literacy as "anyone who had learned to use a wide range of information sources in order to solve problems at work and in his or her daily life" (Zurkowski, 1974). To be information literate one need to be able to recognise what and when information is needed, one must have the ability to locate, access, evaluate, organize and use the information effectively from variety of sources. Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. There are various types of information literacies such as audio -visual literacy, print literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, web literacy, technical literacy, functional literacy, library literacy and information literacy etc.

### **Definitions:**

According to the American Library Association, Information literacy is the ability to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information"

The NFIL describes information literacy as "the ability for formation, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand"

UNESCO defines information literacy as "information literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals"

### **Role of Libraries in Information Literacy:**

Thesaurus and encyclopaedia described the library as a place in which literary and artistic materials, such as books, periodicals newspapers, pamphlets, prints, records, and tapes, are kept for reading, reference, or lending.

Libraries are a building that houses a collection of books and other materials kept for referencing or for borrowing. The word library is derived from the Latin word *liber* which means book. A library is an organised collection of documents with some

associated services which is organised for use and maintained by the public or private body or by an institution. It also has staff to provide educational and recreational needs to its users. Library is a tool that can be used for learning at any level. The purpose of establishing libraries is to preserve valuable information and knowledge which may be contained in books or in other documents that can be available for future generation and so they can benefit from it. The role and purpose of libraries may differ as their different types of libraries like:

- Public library,
- Academic library and
- Special library

Public libraries serve cities and towns of all types. Public libraries are a publicly funded body which is centrally located, so it can be easily accessed by public. The purpose of public libraries is to acquire books and lend them to the public to improve their information literacy, share knowledge etc. they are often called as Peoples University. Public library is for the public, by the public and of the public. It provides services to every citizen/user irrespective of its cast, colour, sex and without any social, economic and educational standard. Public libraries differ from other libraries as it provides opportunity of informal self-education and inculcate reading habits among all types of readers. It has acquired

collection of novels, fiction, storybooks etc. They also maintains children corner. It meets the information needs of all and keeps them in touch with progress in all field of knowledge. Public library is an essential element in literacy and lifelong learning, as it is the place for learning. Libraries of all categories are basically used for education, information, recreation and for research. Academic libraries generally use education and research while special library uses information and research but public libraries are visited for all of the purposes.

The primary objective of academic libraries is to meet the academic needs of the institution for which it is meant to serve. These libraries generally collect and store all kinds of reading and reference materials to serve the needs of the academic community. Academic library is mainly grouped into three categories that is school library, college library and university library. Their role also differs from one another. From beginning libraries fosters student's interest in reading books. They provide student with guidance and advisory services with the objective of inculcating student's interest in reading books and other reading materials. They also promote extra-curricular activities i.e. storytelling, workshops, discussions and observing audio-visual programs,

with the aim for inculcating good communication skills among students and also by conducting quiz competitions to make them knowledgeable. At college level the volume of students in the class become big and teachers cannot give attention to every student, so they have to depend on the libraries for studies and have to learn by self. They receive guidance from the library to use manual or computer catalogue along with get assistance in locating books on shelves. Students get training and instructions in using library resources and services effectively. In university level students get library orientation programmes, students get the ability to locate the information in library, they also get guidance about OPAC and other online databases independently. Students in university libraries provided with training sessions where they are taught to use OPAC, use online resources, helps to locate information etc. and at the end they are asked to give feedback from the users to improve services of the library the role played by university library in making their students literate for example orientation, searching methods at the reference service section, seminar, integration in various courses, teaching through websites and teaching it as curricular course.

There are various methods of by which libraries can educate students.

First one is providing library orientation to new students where all services of the library is presented in front of users by which users should feel confident while asking help from the staff whenever the need arise. Second one is students are given guided tours where library staff takes group of twenty to thirty students and were introduced to the various services and resources available in the library. For example users are shown tools such as encyclopaedias, almanacs, yearbooks, dictionaries and other documents. Students are taught how to access the internet, databases, subject gateways etc. and provided guidance to the basic services like how to use OPAC, how to renew and issue books or other materials. Third one is imparting lectures to students where teacher or librarian or both provide lectures to the students in the classroom or in the library where students learn to analyse a topic and identify key concepts understand and use controlled vocabulary and thesauri select and use appropriate print or electronic resources for their assignments. Fourth one is giving seminars to the students where instructions are provided online by tutorials which make them self-sufficient in their quest for information. Fifth one is providing computer or electronic resource assisted instructions where librarian provides general session guidance to search online

where users are instructed to search, retrieve and analyse information. Last one is library guides which are helpful method to assist and instruct the students about the use of a library. It may be in the form of pamphlet or booklet which generally includes library collection, provide various types of services and facilities provided by the library, provide instructions in using library, rules and regulations, timing, arrangement of books etc. All of these can be used as information literacy tools for students to make them information literate.

### Conclusion:

The ultimate goal of any library is to ensure that the students and staff are able to access the information which they need for a particular purpose. There is need raised for making library users as information literate so they can identify, retrieve, evaluate, organise and use the information properly. Library professionals should take initiative in conducting various information literacy programmes in every library whether it be public, academic or other libraries and must update their skills and knowledge by attending seminars, workshops organised by different organisations.

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