

## INFORMATION LITERACY IN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY: AN OVERVIEW

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### **Abstract:**

*The present paper introduces Information literacy including need and use of Information literacy. Information literacy is embedded in the curricula in a paradigm shift from computer literacy to Information literacy. Higher education and is hard to ensure the enhancement of learner's intellectual abilities, reasoning, and critical thinking power. Library science course in information literacy need to clarify position in context student learning in the knowledge society. This paper is also indicate an integration of Information literacy in library and Information Science course curriculum and It is a call for a collaborative approach to teaching and learning for promotion of librarians/faculty for collaboration and development.*

**Keywords:** Information Literacy, LIS Curricula, Skills Development, Knowledge Society.

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**Introduction:**

The society is changing day by day in many more dimensions; this is due to mainly excessive research contribution in multi disciplinary subjects. Research in ICT is very prominent which can be seen in almost in every sphere of life. The world has been immensely influenced by ICT,. The phrase *information literacy* first appeared in print in a 1974 report by Paul G. Zurkowski written on behalf of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Zurkowski used the phrase to describe the "techniques and skills" learned by the information literate "for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information solutions to their problems" and drew a relatively firm line between the "literate" and "information illiterates". The United States National Forum on Information Literacy defines information literacy as "... 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." Other definitions incorporate aspects of "skepticism, judgment, free thinking, questioning, and understanding..."or incorporate competencies that an informed citizen of an information society ought to possess to participate intelligently and actively in that society. Information literacy is a key component for lifelong learning. Information literacy is the ability to identify what information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information in solving day to day problems. It is a combination of all required skills for effective and maximum use of Information. Information literacy is related to the abilities pertaining to information, Selection, Searching, gathering, storing, using, and disseminating information. It is the ability to recognize when Information is needed, then locate and evaluate appropriate Information and use it effectively and responsibly. Information literacy skills are essential in the work place.

**Objectives:**

- To study scope of Information literacy in LIS curriculum
- To explore need of Information Literacy in LIS Curriculum
- To evaluate the use pattern of information literacy in LIS curriculum
- To analyze how effectively integrate information literacy in to the curriculum

**Information Literacy:**

Information Literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information. The beginning of the 21st century has been called the Information Age because of the explosion of information output and information sources. It has become increasingly clear that students cannot learn everything they need to know in their field of study in a few years of college. Information literacy equips them with the critical skills necessary to become independent lifelong learners. As the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy (January 10, 1989, Washington, D.C.) says “Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand.” It includes the technological skills needed to use the modern library as a gateway to information. It enables us to analyze and evaluate the information we find, thus giving us confidence in using that information to make a decision or create a product. It allows us to cope by giving us the skills to know when we need information and where to locate it effectively and efficiently. This is not just for college students but all of us, as professionals, in the workplace and in our personal lives. Being information literate ultimately improves our quality of life as we make informed decisions when buying a house, choosing a school, hiring staff, making an investment, voting for our representatives, and so much more.

**Relation between Literacy and Information Literacy:**

Information is a human product which can be facts, figures, diagrams, verbal, or recorded, processed and unprocessed, good or bad. Information is wealth of nation Right Information is to be provided when it is needed and where it is needed. Information improves the capability of an individual, a business, a government, and all governments together. UNESCO has drafted a definition of literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varied contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of teach in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society”. “A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in

all that activities in which literacy is required for effective function in his group and community. Whose attainment in reading writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community development". The Information literacy is related to Information Technology skills. Information literate individuals necessarily develop some technology skills. Information technology is an intellectual framework for understanding finding Information. Gaining skills in Information literacy multiplies the opportunities for individuals self directed learning as they become engaged in wide variety of Information sources to expand their knowledge, to obtain information seek various information retrieval system such as found in library and data bases accessible by computers from any location. Access to Information and ideas is indispensable to the development of human potential, the advancement of civilization and continuance of self government. Thus it can be said the seed of Information literacy is lies in literacy. Literacy is need to be refined as Information literacy.

#### **Efforts regarding Information Literacy:**

A number of efforts have been made to better define the concept and its relationship to other skills and forms of literacy. Although other educational goals, including traditional literacy, computer literacy, library skills, and critical thinking skills, are related to information literacy and important foundations for its development, information literacy itself is emerging as a distinct skill set and a necessary key to one's social and economic well-being in an increasingly complex information society. The Presidential Committee on Information Literacy released a report on January 10, 1989, outlining the importance of information literacy, opportunities to develop information literacy, and Information. In 1999, the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) in the UK, published "The Seven Pillars of Information Literacy" model to "facilitate further development of ideas amongst practitioners in the field ... stimulate debate about the ideas and about how those ideas might be used by library and other staff in higher education concerned with the development of students' skills." In 2003, the National Forum on Information Literacy, together with UNESCO and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, sponsored an international conference in Prague with representatives from some twenty-three countries to discuss the importance of information literacy within a global context. The resulting Prague Declaration described information literacy as a "key to social, cultural, and economic development of nations and communities, institutions

and individuals in the 21st century" and declared its acquisition as "part of the basic human right of lifelong learning". The Alexandria Proclamation (2005) linked Information literacy with lifelong learning. More than that, it sets Information Literacy as a basic Human right that it "*promotes social inclusion of all nations*". On May 28, 2009, U.S. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Executive Order S-06-09, establishing a California ICT Digital Literacy Leadership Council, which in turn, was directed to establish an ICT Digital Literacy Advisory Committee. "The Leadership Council, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, shall develop an ICT Digital Literacy Policy, to ensure that California residents are digitally literate." The Executive Order states further: "ICT Digital Literacy is defined as using digital technology, communications tools and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create, and communicate information in order to function in a knowledge-based economy and society..." The Governor directs "...The Leadership Council, in consultation with the Advisory Committee... [to] develop a California Action Plan for ICT Digital Literacy (Action Plan)." According to McTavish (2009), in order to increase and maximize people's contributions to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and maintain a prosperous and sustainable economy, governments and industries around the world are challenging education systems to focus people's attention on literacy. In Canada, because of a great focus on a supposed literacy crisis, it has caused some alarm in some educational sectors. Information literacy rose to national consciousness in the U.S. with President Barack Obama's Proclamation designating October 2009 as National Information Literacy Awareness Month. President Obama's Proclamation stated that "Rather than merely possessing data, we must also learn the skills necessary to acquire, collate, and evaluate information for any situation... Though we may know how to find the information we need, we must also know how to evaluate it. Over the past decade, we have seen a crisis of authenticity emerge. We now live in a world where anyone can publish an opinion or perspective, whether true or not, and have that opinion amplified within the information marketplace. At the same time, Americans have unprecedented access to the diverse and independent sources of information, as well as institutions such as libraries and universities, that can help separate truth from fiction and signal from noise."

### **Presidential Committee on Information Literacy**

The Presidential Committee on Information Literacy was formed in 1987 by the American Library Association's president at the time Margaret Chisholm. The committee was formed with three specific purposes

1. to define Information Literacy within the higher literacies and its importance to student performance, lifelong learning, and active citizenship
2. to design one or more models for information literacy development appropriate to formal and informal learning environments throughout people's lifetimes
3. to determine implications for the continuing education and development for teachers

In March 1998 the Presidential Committee on Information Literacy re-evaluated its Final Report and published an update. The update looks at what the Final Report set out to accomplish, its six main goals, and how far it had come to that point in meeting those objectives. Before identifying what still needs to be done, the updated report recognizes what the previous report and the National Forum were able to accomplish. In realizing it still had not met all objectives, it set out further recommendations to ensure all were met. The updated report ends with an invitation, asking the National Forum and regular citizens to recognize that "the result of these combined efforts will be a citizenry which is made up of effective lifelong learners who can always find the information needed for the issue or decision at hand. This new generation of information literate citizens will truly be America's most valuable resource" and to continue working toward an information literate world. One of the most important things to come out of the Presidential Committee on Information Literacy was the creation of the National Forum on Information Literacy.

### **Specific aspects of information literacy (Shapiro and Hughes, 1996)**

In "Information Literacy as a Liberal Art", Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shelley K. Hughes advocated a more holistic approach to information literacy education, one that encouraged not merely the addition of information technology courses as an adjunct to existing curricula, but rather a radically new conceptualization of "our entire educational curriculum in terms of information". Drawing upon Enlightenment ideals like those articulated by Enlightenment philosopher Condorcet, Shapiro and Hughes argued that information literacy education is "essential to the future of democracy, if citizens are to be intelligent shapers of the information society rather than

its pawns, and to humanistic culture, if information is to be part of a meaningful existence rather than a routine of production and consumption".

To this end, Shapiro and Hughes outlined a "prototype curriculum" that encompassed the concepts of computer literacy, library skills, and "a broader, critical conception of a more humanistic sort", suggesting seven important components of a holistic approach to information literacy:

- **Tool literacy:** or the ability to understand and use the practical and conceptual tools of current information technology relevant to education and the areas of work and professional life that the individual expects to inhabit.
- **Resource literacy:** or the ability to understand the form, format, location and access methods of information resources, especially daily expanding networked information resources.
- **Social-structural literacy:** or understanding how information is socially situated and produced.
- **Research literacy:** or the ability to understand and use the IT-based tools relevant to the work of today's researcher and scholar.
- **Publishing literacy:** or the ability to format and publish research and ideas electronically, in textual and multimedia forms ... to introduce them into the electronic public realm and the electronic community of scholars.
- **Emerging technology literacy:** or the ability to continuously adapt to, understand, evaluate and make use of the continually emerging innovations in information technology so as not to be a prisoner of prior tools and resources, and to make intelligent decisions about the adoption of new ones.
- **Critical literacy:** or the ability to evaluate critically the intellectual, human and social strengths and weaknesses, potentials and limits, benefits and costs of information technologies.

#### Skills required for Information Literacy:

- Need for Information
- Available resources
- How to find Information

- Need to evaluate results
- How to work with or exploit results
- Ethics and responsibility of Use
- How to communicate and share your findings
- How to manage your findings

### **Integration of Information Literacy in Library Science curriculum:**

Integration of Information literacy in to the curriculum is about building skills for independent and lifelong learning in a systematic way throughout a student's career. Library and Information Science deal with information, organization, control, searching, storage, dissemination etc. now question is arises how information literacy can be integrated in library science course curriculum. The ideal place to start is curriculum design stage. This will ensure Information literacy and skills are introduced and developed in library science appropriate subject and context in a logical and sequential way. Information literacy knowledge and skills are like other skills, best learned when they are developed in library science course curriculum.

### **Conclusion:**

Information literacy empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion in all nations. Information literacy enables people to interpret and make informed judgments as users of information sources, as well as to become producers of information in their own right. Information literate people are able to access information about their health, their environment, their education and work, empowering them to make critical decisions. It can be concluded that with the digital configuration in all sphere of life, Information literacy has become very much important and which is essential for proper planning, thinking, execution, in everyday life. Information literacy is a kind of soul searching of the Information professionals in enhancing our own capabilities. As knowledge is ocean, it makes ma man complete and there is no age limit for lifelong learning. The study of Information literacy is most exciting and also eminently profitable for all the library and Information Science. Information literacy can make a student independent learner. The pace of development , Information literacy can work well to bring this change and bridge the



gap between the students of development, Information Literacy can work well to bring this change and bridge the gap between the students of developed and developing country like India. Indian government should realize the importance and make necessary step to execute the same at the earliest which will not bring quality of education amongst the students but make them more participative in the electronic world which is required in day to day life. Further government should make efforts in preparing policy guidelines and standards at national level under National Information Literacy Programme and also should establish a national task force to monitor the Information Literacy programme at state and regional level. UGC also should take initiatives in directing the universities and higher educational institution to integrate the information literacy across the country by designing a separate curriculum at under graduation and post graduation level.

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