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## AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE OF INFORMATION LITERACY AMONG THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF NORTH INDIA

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### **Abstract**

Information plays a very significant role in the economic and social development of a country. The present study deals with the awareness and use of Information Literacy (IL). The study is based on a primary data collated with the help of a structured questionnaire. The study reveals that majority of LIS students are aware of information literacy but the students from the other group are not. Majority of students confuse information literacy with information search skills, computer literacy, digital literacy, network literacy, and cultural literacy. The study also discussed the inclusion of information literacy as a part of syllabus in higher education

**Key Words:** Information Literacy, Computer Literacy, University Library, Library and Information Science

### **Introduction**

Dr. Ranganathan has stated very clearly in his first law of library science that 'Books are for use'. In the present day context, it means knowledge and information are for use. But with the emergence of the Internet, problems of accessing and using information have increased significantly. Otherwise also, there is a shift from rote learning the resource-based student centred learning. Information Literacy is the ability to identify one's information needs, access, process, evaluate and use that information for success and self-actualization. IL has different meaning to different people. People need to learn also about 'how to learn'. They have to acquire a set of abilities to recognize what and when information is needed, identify and locate the needed information, use, and

communicate it ethically and effectively. This set of abilities is called IL which is actually the vehicle for autonomous and life-long learning

### **Information Literacy: Definitions**

- CILIP 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.” CILIP have also created more in depth guidance on the skills required to be information literate.
- The Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) defines 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."
- Jagtar Singh (2010) has defined Information Literacy as, “the ability to define one’s information needs and then to access, process, create and use the retrieved information ethically, legally, and strategically for obtaining one’s goals."

### **Review of Literature**

Smith and Dailey (2013) discussed the role of academic libraries in providing the information literacy instruction. The study focused on to organize the training programme to guide students through the research process, teach students how to think critically, evaluate resources, and use resources ethically. The authors also suggested the ways to assess the effectiveness of integrating information literacy into college courses.

Bhupinder (2014) discussed paradigm shift from rote learning to resource-based student-centered learning (RBSCL) and role of information literacy in supporting RBSCL. The study is based on a survey undertaken to ascertain student awareness of information literacy and role of IFLA and UNESCO in promoting information literacy. The study suggested the integration of information literacy as a part of curriculum in universities and colleges.

Keshalu and Srinivasulu (2016) conducted a survey to find out the awareness of information literacy concept among undergraduate students of P.S. Government Degree College, Penukonda. The data was collected through a questionnaire from 178 students on different parameters related to information literacy. The findings of the study, emphasizes of information literacy programmes in a college library setup for better usage of library resources.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To ascertain the awareness of Information Literacy among the library and information science and other students of north India
- To explore the student's perception on Information Literacy
- To identify the presence of Information Literacy modules in student's curriculum
- To check the participation of student's in workshops and seminars on Information Literacy
- To identify the student's familiarity with other related literacies

### **Research Methodology**

Both primary as well as secondary sources of literature related and relevant to study have been taken into consideration. Primary sources include research papers, reports, white papers and websites while the secondary sources include various indexing and abstracting services and databases. A structured questionnaire is prepared and distributed among the university students. A sample of 500 students was chosen from all the universities under study. Out of the 500 students, 250 were LIS students and 250 were students from other courses. In fact, 40 questionnaires were distributed to LIS students and the other category students in each university under study. On careful scrutiny, it was found that questionnaires of 30 LIS students and 35 other category students were lacking in vital data. Hence these were not included in data analysis and discussion. But in order to maintain uniformity of the sample, 05 questionnaires were got filled again from the other category students.

### **Scope of the Study**

The present study is based on the sample of 500 students from 07 universities (University of Kashmir, Sri Nagar; Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshla; Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Punjabi University, Patiala; Panjab University, Chandigarh; Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra; and University of Delhi, Delhi) of north India.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Sample for the study has been taken only from 07 universities of northern India. No effort has been made to present the data analysis course wise and subject wise at micro level. Students were divided into two broad categories of library and information science students as one group and other category students as the second group. Faculty and the university library staff has also been excluded to make this study more focused and informative.

**Data Analysis**

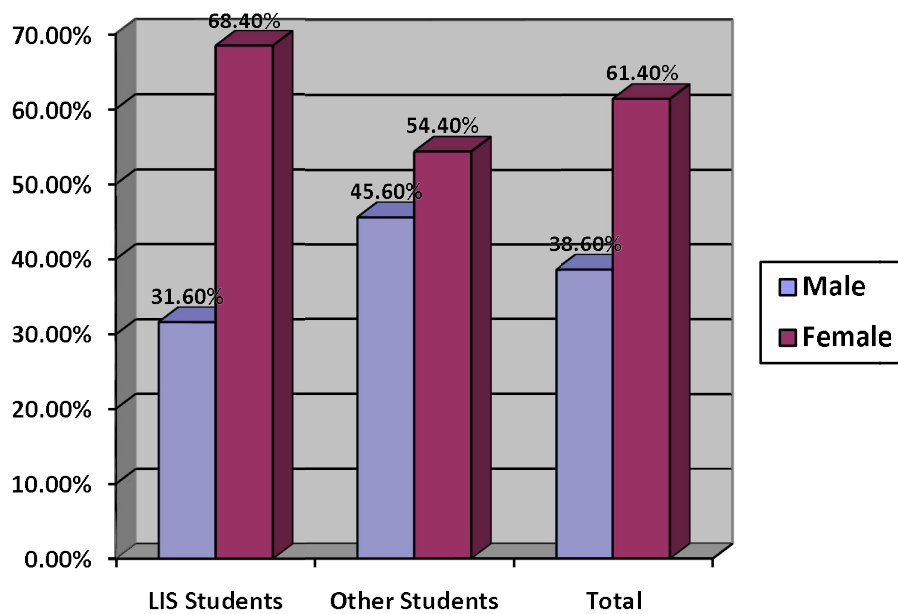
Demographic Profile and Student Participation in Library Promotion Strategies

The gender wise distribution of the students and their participation in library promotion strategies are presented below:

**Table 1: Gender wise distribution of the students**

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Male	79	31.6	114	45.6	193	38.6
Female	171	68.4	236	54.4	307	61.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The above table shows demographic characteristics of the students. It can be seen from the table that 31.6% of LIS students are male and 68.4% are female. Amongst the students of other courses, 45.6% are male and 54.4% are female. The female population is more in the sample.



**Fig. 1: Demographic Profile**

Table 2: Participation in Library Promotion Strategies

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Library Orientation	219	87.6	203	81.2	422	84.4
Reference Work Session	31	12.4	0	0	31	06.2
No Response	0	0	47	18.8	47	09.4
<b>Total</b>	250	100	250	100	<b>500</b>	100

When asked about participation in any library initiation activity, it was encouraging to find that majority of LIS students (87.6%) have attended library orientation programme and 12.4% have undergone reference work session. The data of students from other courses reflects that 81.2% have attended orientation but 18.8% provided no response.

**IL Awareness, Student Perception, Inclusion of IL in Syllabi and Type of IL Course Offered**

The questions were asked to students to explore their awareness and perception of information literacy. Also they were asked about inclusion of IL in syllabi. The results obtained are given in the above table.

Table 3: Information Literacy Awareness

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	186	74.4	51	20.4	237	47.4
No	64	25.6	199	79.6	263	52.6
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

It was found that majority of the students (52.6%) are not aware about information literacy, only 47.4% are aware of IL. The figure reveals that the LIS students have a high level (74.4%) of awareness about IL but the students belonging to other courses are largely (79.6%) not aware of IL. The high level of awareness amongst LIS students could be due to the incorporation of IL as a part of LIS syllabus in universities under study.

Table 4: Students Perception of IL

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Information Search Skills	36	14.4	28	11.2	64	12.8
Computer Literacy	21	8.4	42	16.8	63	12.6
Digital literacy	34	13.6	15	6	49	9.8
Network Literacy	00	0	00	0	00	0
Cultural Literacy	08	3.2	19	7.6	27	5.4
All of these	151	60.4	146	58.4	297	59.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

When asked about students' perception of information literacy, majority of them (59.4%) said that it deals with information search skills, computer literacy, digital literacy, network literacy and cultural literacy. This perception is held by 60.4% of LIS students and 58.4% of students from other courses.

Table 5: Inclusion of IL in Syllabi

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	183	73.2	00	0	183	36.6
No	67	26.8	250	100	317	63.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The majority of students (63.4%) reveal that IL is not taught to them as part of their syllabus. The students of other courses completely (100%) reported that IL is not part of their syllabus majority of LIS students (73.2%) said that IL is included in their syllabus. Among 183 students, 56.8% reported that IL is taught as a component of discipline based course, 31.7% as course related IL sessions and 11.5% said that it is taught as credit-based IL specific course.

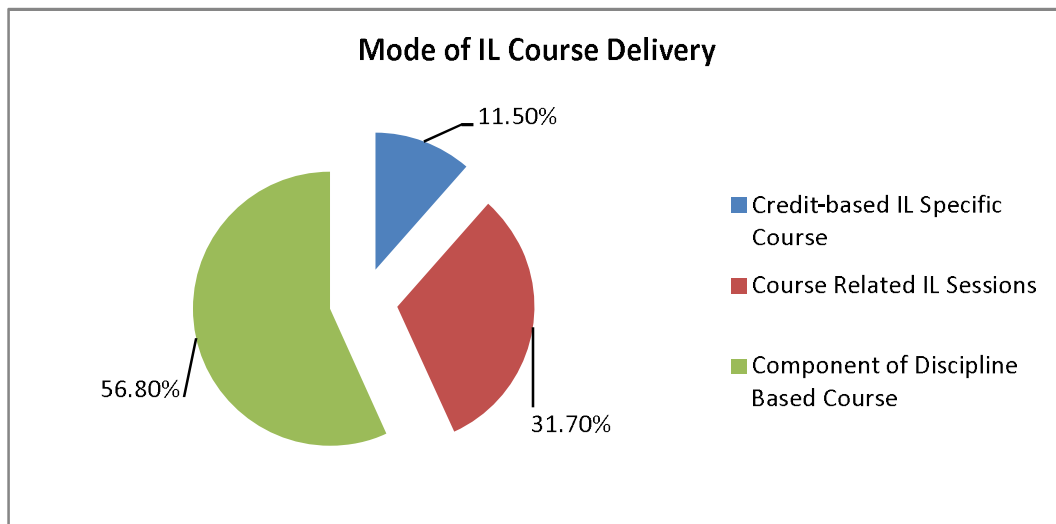


Fig. 2: Mode of IL Course Delivery

**Organization of and Student Participation in IL Seminars/Workshops**

Information literacy can be taught to students through seminars/conferences/workshops. An attempt was made to know about the organization of any such programme. Table below highlights the results:

Table 6: IL Seminars/Workshops Organized by their Departments

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	57	22.8	00	0	57	11.4
No	190	76	00	0	190	38
Don't know	03	1.2	250	100	253	50.6
<b>Total</b>	250	100	250	100	500	100

The students were asked about the organization of any seminar/ workshop by their department and it was found that majority of LIS students (76%) said that no such programme was organized whereas 22.8% said that it was organized and all of them participated in that programme. All the students belonging to other courses said that they don't know if any such programme was organized.

**Awareness of Other Literacies**

Information Literacy is an umbrella term that includes other type of literacies like basic literacy, visual literacy, media literacy, computer literacy, technology literacy, network literacy, business literacy, digital literacy, e-literacy and many

more. Students were asked to report their familiarity with various literacies. The table below presents the results:

Table 7: Familiarity with related literacies

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Media Literacy	140	56	109	43.6	249	49.8
Digital Literacy	91	36.4	74	29.6	165	33
Network Literacy	00	0	00	0	00	0
Visual Literacy	00	0	00	0	00	0
Mobile Literacy	208	83.2	186	74.4	394	78.8
Critical Literacy	82	32.8	54	21.6	136	27.2
Health Information Literacy	56	22.4	42	16.8	98	19.6
Agricultural Literacy	31	12.4	112	44.8	143	28.6
Cultural Literacy	03	1.2	15	06	18	3.6
Ethical Literacy	00	0	00	0	00	0

It has been found that 83.2% of LIS students are familiar with mobile literacy, 56% with media literacy, 36.4% with digital literacy, 32.8% with critical literacy, 22.4% with health information literacy and 12.4% with agricultural literacy. In case of students from other courses it was seen that 74.4% are aware of mobile literacy, 44.8% agricultural literacy, 43.6% media literacy, 29.6% digital literacy, 21.6% critical literacy and 16.8% health information literacy.

### Findings and conclusion

Demographically speaking, female population is more in the sample constituting 38.6% male and 61.4 % female. Library orientation and reference service are the main strategies adopted by the students and library staff to promote the use of library resources and services. It has been found in this study that majority of LIS students are aware of information literacy but the students from the other group are not. Majority of students confuse information literacy with information search skills, computer literacy, digital literacy, network literacy, and cultural literacy. Information literacy has not yet gained ground in the academic set-up as it has not found place in the syllabi of most of the courses being studied by both the groups.



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