

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Use of information sources and need of information literacy among students in Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh

Javed Khan

Department of Library and Information Science, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University Meerut, India.

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**Librarian and information centres are the mediating agencies connecting information to the right users. The main objective of the present study is to find out the students' use of various information sources and need of information literacy education in Aligarh Muslim University. 100 users were selected for the study in which 55 are post graduate students and 45 are research scholars. The questionnaire was developed by users. Percentage was used for data analysis. The main findings of the study revealed that users need information to prepare their assignments and study material and they are aware about the basic concept of information literacy. Some of the users have vague concept about information literacy.**

**Key words:** Information, information literacy, information sources.

## INTRODUCTION

Information, in the present day context, is not merely a 'piece of data' but rather the "life blood" of the scholarly world. Information is power; it is the great national and international resource. According to Shera, "Information is used by the biologist in the sense we librarians use it as a 'fact'. It is the stimulus we receive through our senses. It may be an isolated fact or a whole cluster of facts but it is still a unit; it is a unit of thought"

The vital factor that affects research is 'Information'. The amount and type of information received would directly have its impact on the research work. Today, the entire global concentration is on how to catch-up with the ever-increasing load of information. The need to know

more and more in any specific area is growing simultaneously with the various sections of the society being well-aware whether it be student, academicians, politicians, administrators or the like. They all look forward towards acquiring more data to keep themselves up-to-date.

Since, libraries and information centres are the mediating agencies connecting information to the right users, it becomes their (library staff) prime responsibility to acquaint the student of Library and Information science and information scientists, with the importance of information, as well as, the ways to organize and disseminate it to users, at the right time.

E-mail: [javedsaim@gmail.com](mailto:javedsaim@gmail.com).

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## Information literacy

The concept of information literacy was first introduced by Paul Zukowski as far back as 1974 (Bruce, 1997). Currently there is no single definition of this concept, and the term is often used interchangeably with computer literacy and bibliographic instruction. However according to Mutch (1997) the use of the term IL, generated by both computing and library science literature, is found wanting because it does not fully address the skill associated with the process of knowledge creation. Information literacy must be placed above computer literacy because whereas the latter focuses on the ability to use a computer, the former is strongly linked to lifelong learning.

## About the library (Aligarh Muslim University)

Maulana Azad Library is the central library of the Aligarh Muslim University which is World famous for its invaluable collections of manuscripts and rare books available in oriental languages. The library caters to the educational and research needs of the academic community and its resources are consulted by scholars from all over the country and abroad. With its largest collection of printed Urdu books, it serves like the National Library of Urdu for scholars.

## Objectives of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine the information literacy skills of the Students of Aligarh Muslim University Library. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate the new information.
2. To examine the information seeking strategies of the students.
3. To know the awareness of the respondents about different sources of information.
4. To assess the ability of the students in acquiring, organizing, evaluating and using information effectively.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Baikady and Mudhol (2013) studied the computer literacy skills of medical faculty and students of six medical colleges of Coastal Karnataka and found that 76.1 percent of the faculty members and PG students who had expert computer literacy skills used the web resources such as Pub Med, and Medical databases frequently; while the faculty and PG students who had above average computer literacy skills used web resources less frequently to gain a better understanding of the information literacy skills of the PG students in the information

resources. Kishore and Padmaja (2013) studied the Information Literacy Skills of the PG students towards the use of Electronic Information Resources. Sixty five percent of the postgraduate students rate their computer literacy level average while 16.25 percent rated their computer skills below average. For searching relevant articles, 52.5 percent of the students gave first preference to the Medline database while second preference was given to PubMed databases by 33.12 percent of the students. Moghaddaszadeh and Nikam (2012) conducted a research on faculty members and research scholars and found that the 20 respondents were able to express their information need and their mean score was 14.56; whereas 24 respondents were able to identify different types of potential sources for information with 16.48 mean scores. The attitude of the respondents towards nature and extent of information needed was 39.12 out of 56. In access to information, the mean score was 61.76 out of 88, and in the evaluation of information, it was 70.52 out of 100 respondents.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been conducted through the survey method of research. A structured questionnaire was designed and used for collecting the data from the users. 125 questionnaires were distributed in AMU Library, Aligarh; 100 respondents responded to the questionnaires. The received questionnaires were analysed using MS-Excel.

## Data analysis and interpretation

Table 1 shows that 25.45% of PG students and 13.33% of researchers do not know the actual meaning of IL while 20% respondent of each category said that they have heard about IL but do not understand what it is. A majority of respondents i.e. 38.18% of PG students and 46.67% of researchers have vague concept about the information literacy. Besides these, only 16.36% of PG students and 20% of researchers were actually aware about it.

According to Table 2, 25.45% of PG students and 13.13% of researchers said that IL is related with user education; while only 5.45% of PG students said the basic concept of IL is related with bibliographic instruction; 32.73% of PG students and 33.33% researchers said IL is related with only retrieved information with acute techniques. Besides these, 36.36% of PG students and 53.34% of researchers know about the basic concept of information literacy.

Table 3 shows that in the opinion of 34.55% of PG students and 40% of researchers, an information literacy literate person is that who is able to identify, retrieve and find information in the most advanced and appropriate way while 12.73% of PG students answered for information retrieval techniques; whereas no one researcher opted this option. 5.45% of PG students and 6.67% of researchers said that they always deal with information. Besides these, 47.27% of PG students and 53.33% of researchers know the abilities of an information literate person.

Table 4 reveals that 34.55% of PG students and 24.44% of researchers require information for preparation of their assignments whereas the purpose of information requirement for 10.91% of PG students and 8.89% of researchers is presentation of seminars. 18.18% of PG students and 6.67% of researchers are that who want information for their examination. 27.27% of PG students and

**Table 1.** Awareness about Information Literacy.

S/No	Awareness	PG Students N=55	Research scholars N=45
a.	Don't know the actual meaning of information literacy	14 (25.45%)	06 (13.33%)
b.	Have heard, read but don't understand	11 (20%)	09 (20%)
c.	Have a vague concept	21 (38.18%)	21 (46.67%)
d.	Have clear concept	09 (16.36%)	09 (20%)

**Table 2.** Concept of information literacy.

S/No.	Option	PG Students N=55	Research scholars N=45
a.	User education	14 (25.45%)	06 (13.33%)
b.	Bibliographic instruction	03 (5.45%)	0 (0%)
c.	Retrieved information with acute techniques	18 (32.73%)	15 (33.33%)
d.	All of the above	20 (36.36%)	24 (53.34%)

**Table 3.** Parameter of an information literacy person.

Sl.	Option	PG students N=55	Research scholars N=45
a.	An information literate person is able to identify, retrieve and find information in the most advance and appropriate	19(34.55%)	18 (40%)
b.	He knows all the information retrieve techniques (IRT)	07 (12.73%)	0 (0%)
c.	He always deals with information and evolves	03 (5.45%)	03 (6.67%)
d.	All of the above	26 (7.27%)	24 (53.33%)

**Table 4.** Purpose of information requirement.

Sl.	Option	PG Students N=55	Research scholars N=45
a.	Preparation of assignment	09 (34.55)	11(24.44)
b.	Presentation of seminar	06 (10.91)	04 (8.89)
c.	Examination	10 (18.18)	03 (6.67)
d.	General subject	15 (27.27)	12 (26.67)
e.	Research & development	05 (9.09)	15 (33.33)

26.67% of researchers require information for their general subjects. Besides these, 9.09% of PG students and 33.33% of researcher require information to support their research.

Table 5 depicts that 10.91% of PG students dispose the retrieved information off. 54.55% of PG students and 93.34% of researchers save information in their computers in proper folder and files form for future use. 27.27% of PG students and 6.67% of researcher prefer to keep a photocopy of the information, while 7.27% of PG students are that who always keep a copy of information but they do not remember where it is.

Table 6 reveals that 38.91% of PG students and 13.13% of researcher think their university has all facilities to run information literacy programmes, 16.36% of PG students and 20% of researchers think only some facilities are available. In the opinion of 23.64% of PG students and 46.67% of researchers, the university should be improving some more facilities, while 29.09% of PG students and 20% of researchers were those who did not say

anything about all of these. Besides these none of the respondents in both categories tick the option.

## FINDINGS

1. The study reveals that most of the PG users (38.18% and 46.67% RS) have vague concept about information literacy.
2. It indicates that a majority of the users were aware about the basic concept of information literacy.
3. It is clear from Table 3 that maximum users were aware about the abilities of an information literate person.
4. Majority of the PG students needed information to prepare their assignments whereas maximum numbers of

**Table 5.** Organization of information.

Sl.	Option	PG Students N=55	Research scholars N=45
a.	Dispose it off	06 (10.91%)	0(0%)
b.	Save it in your computer in form of files & folders	30 (54.55%)	42(93.33%)
c.	Keep a photocopy of the same in a file cover	15 (27.27%)	03 (6.6%)
d.	Always keep a copy but don't remember where	04 (7.27%)	0 (0%)

**Table 6.** Facilities for running IL programmes.

Sl.	Option	PG students N=55	Research scholar N=45
a.	Have all facilities	17 (38.91%)	06 (13.33%)
b.	Some of facilities are available	09 (16.36%)	09 (20%)
c.	Need more facilities	13 (23.64%)	21 (46.67%)
d.	Have serve shortage of all facilities	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
e.	No comments	16 (29.09%)	09 (20%)

researcher used information to support their research work.

5. Maximum number of PG students and researchers were those who preferred to save the information once acquired in their computers organised in form of files and folders.

6. A majority of research scholars stated that there is a need of improvement of more facilities to running IL programmes in the campus, whereas in the opinion of mostly PG students their university has all the facilities to do this.

## Conclusion

Information literacy has gained importance as we become more immersed in the information age. The ability to assess, evaluate and use information is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and education. Whenever it comes to the internet, the library or any other source, the most important thing is the ability to understand and evaluate information. This study shows that information literacy concept of Aligarh Muslim University's post graduate students is not in a good position, and they are facing considerable challenges in the area of information literacy parameter, courses, awareness and facilities. Some recommendations were proposed for improving and increasing IL, competency of AMU's post graduate students and research scholars.

## Suggestions

1. Need information literacy guidelines for the students so that they become more information.
2. More modern equipment should be incorporate in the lab and also give emphasis to extend practical programme in information retrieval techniques.

3. Information should be handled by the library personnel as a valuable business commodity.

4. University library should start alerting services such as e-mail alert or sms-alert to all its members about the new addition of the library.

## Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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