

Assessment of Information Literacy Skills among Research Scholars of Mizoram University: A Study

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Abstract - *The present study is an attempt to make an assessment of Information Literacy Skills among Research Scholas of Mizoram University. Information literacy comprises the competencies to recognize information needs and to locate, evaluate, apply and create information within cultural and social context. A structured questionnaire was designed and randomly distributed to 232 research scholar for data collection, out of which 175(75.43%) filled questionnaire was received for data analysis. In general it was found that research scholar had adequate skills in handling information for their basics needs. Majority of the scholars were aware with the basic background information of library and enable to access information through print and electronic forms but improvements are required in handling information especially in evaluation of electronic sources. This study urges the inclusion of an information literacy program in the course curriculum and more awareness is required among students that will make the students more information literate.*

Key words: Information literacy, Information Skill, User study, ICT Skills, Library Professional, Mizoram University.

INTRODUCTION:

A person is called to be information literate when he can identify his information need and locate, evaluate and use the information effectively. An information literate person knows to use the information in most effective and ethical way. As everyday life becomes increasingly digitized, Internet users faced new challenges as they endeavour to solve information problems. Mainly the information explosion has created anxiety among information users on how to reduce the information overload and use information in a more efficient way to complete the task in minimal period of time. The growth and development of information society and leading to a knowledge society has given rise to information literacy as the core of lifelong learning. Information literacy is basically empowering people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. This is considered as basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations. Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to

meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all.

INFORMATION LITERACY:

Information Literacy may be defined very simply as "the ability to access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources." Information literacy is a skill, ability, expertise, capability and competency of a person that makes him able to find the right information from the right source (Mahadevand Prasad, 2016). It basically knows information about information and the source of information. Information Literacy is not only a machine for Information dispensing; we can claim it as a skilled navigator of a complex landscape. A person equipped with all the necessary skills for handling information enable to enrich himself and his environment with most sophisticating information needs.

Information literacy comprises the competencies to recognize information needs and to locate, evaluate, apply and create information within cultural and social contexts. It is important to the competitive advantage of individuals, enterprises especially small and medium enterprises, regions and nations and provides the key to effective access, use and creation of content to support economic development, education, health and human services, and all other aspects of contemporary societies, and thereby provides the vital foundation for fulfilling the goals of the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on the Information Society. It further extends beyond current technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking and interpretative skills across professional boundaries and empowers individuals and communities (Chanchinmawia and Verma, 2017). Information literacy forms the basis of lifelong learning which is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments and to all levels of education. It enables learners to find the right information from authentic sources and extend their investigations, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning. It has become the responsibility of higher educational to make the students as lifelong learners (Kelvin, 2014). Students are expected to be well-informed and continuously grow higher in their career ladder as individuals. Information literacy plays a vital role in fostering this growth and helps students to become independent and lifelong learners.

DEFINITION OF INFORMATION LITERACY:

According to the American Library Association (1989) -"Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals' to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

CILIP (2013) defines IL as "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."

Doyle (1992) defined an information literate person as one who:

- Recognizes the need for information;
- Recognizes that accurate and complete information is the basis for
- Intelligent decision making;
- Identifies potential sources of information;
- Develops successful search strategies;
- Accesses sources of information, including computer-based and other technologies;
- Evaluates information;
- Organizes information for practical application;

- Integrates new information into an existing body of knowledge
- Uses information in critical thinking and problem solving.

TYPE OF INFORMATION LITERACY:

The following types of literacy are discussed below:

1. Information Literacy: According to National Forum on Information Literacy, “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.”

2. Computer Literacy: Computer literacy preceded digital literacy, and refers to knowledge and skills in using traditional computers (such as desktop PCs and laptops) with a focus on practical skills in using software application packages.

3. Digital Literacy: Digital Literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

4. Media Literacy: Media Literacy when individuals retrieve, assemble and evaluate media. It rests on the use of tools present in technology literacy and is intertwined with the interpretation and creation of images in visual literacy.

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

Mizoram University is a central university and was established on July 2, 2001, by the Mizoram University Act (2000) of the Parliament of India. According to the Act, the objectives of the university are "to disseminate and advance knowledge by providing instructional and research facilities in such branches of learning as it may deem fit, to make provisions for integrated courses in humanities, natural and physical sciences, social sciences, forestry and other allied disciplines in the educational programmes of the University; to take appropriate measures for promoting innovations in teaching-disciplinary studies and research; to educate and train man-power in the development of the state of Mizoram; and to pay special attention to the improvement of the social and economic conditions and welfare of the people of that State, their intellectual, academic and cultural development". Keeping these objectives in view, Mizoram University has embarked on various programmes for academic and administrative development. At present there are 35 departments under eight schools. The central library of Mizoram University has a collection of 1,06,658 Books, 378 Ph.D. theses, 303 M. Phil dissertations, 336 master degree dissertations/project work, 11,364 Bound volumes of journals, 242 current Journals and 20 General magazines (5 English, 14 Mizo and 1 Hindi).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Nicholas and Wallis (2005) discussed the dynamic role of library and information association to enhance the information literacy. They also discuss about many professional association of world who is working to make awareness about IL among the people. Betsy (2006) discusses the perception of first year college students that campus libraries are largely irrelevant to their lives. Suggest ways to make library instructions an integral part of the courses. Mutula et.al (2006) revealed that impartation of information literacy through the

online mode could improve students' competencies perhaps more than the face-to-face instruction approach. Furthermore, respondents preferred a blended instruction approach to a single learning mode. Emmett and Emde(2007) obtain preliminary evidence over a three-year period on the efficacy of a curriculum designed to foster information literacy skills in graduate students in chemistry bibliography course.Zahid andShoeb(2010) argued that digital media literacy is related to the ability to use a computer, social media, and the Internet, and people with high levels of digital media literacy are more active social affairs and better able to express their opinions.Sakthi (2011) attempted to bring out a standardized tool to assess information literacy competency. This study was set in the Indian environment and attempted to assess information literacy competency among the full-time research scholars of the University of Madras and its affiliated colleges. It is revealed from the study that a great majority of the respondents have high levels of information management competency and respondents doing Doctor of Philosophy have a higher mean score of information literacy competency compared to the candidates doing Master of Philosophy.Eyal (2012) elaborate the main functions of a teacher in a digital environment and focus on the skills, abilities, and perceptions required of the teacher in the digital environment with respect to assessment, and will demonstrate the importance of adapting the various technologies to the different assessment purposes and define the term “Digital assessment literacy” is based on a doctoral thesis that examined the relationship between the technological environment and the teaching, learning and assessment processes in online courses. Vasudevan (2012) revealed that the information literacy capabilities of postgraduate students and faculty of university of Kerels are comparatively low and hence they are not in the position to utilize the potential of online databases and indices. Also they have to develop corrective measures in the form of information literacy training sections to enhance their capabilities. This will positively affect the research capabilities and the output in the long run. Singh and Joshi (2013) examined various instruction initiatives taken for positive impact upon the ILC of PG students and found satisfactory along with significant difference between the first and second year students. Results of the paper distinguish between the first and second year students in the light of five information literacy (IL) standards along with other considerations.Lata and Sharma, (2013).Examine the IL skills of the faculty and students of postgraduate institute of medical education and research, Chandigarh and Pt. B.D. Sharma university of health science, Rohtak and found that majority of the faculty and students rated their skills high in accessing information in print and electronic format and comparison to students, the faculty members of both the medical colleges were more familiar with the bibliographical tools. Verma and Rajiv (2013) elaborate information literacy in academic environment in Indian prospective and highlighted the librarian’s role in IL program in academic institutions. Maidul and Rahman, (2014) examine the information literacy competency (ILC) of the arts faculty students at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and determine their strengths and weaknesses and it was found that students had limited skills in the area of information literacy and reasons behind it is not discussed extensively in their academic course curriculum. Nicholas and Jake (2015) revealed the dynamic role of associations for the library and information profession in a variety of countries world-wide gives an indication of how the profession should use its own national association. Tridib, (2017) revealed that information literacy is the only solution for the development of any socio-economically disadvantaged community and regular IL program should be organized by the public libraries in regular interval.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

The objective of present study is to:

1. Identify the level of information literacy awareness among respondents under study
2. Analyses the frequency and purpose of library visit
3. Assess the ability of respondents in acquiring, organizing, evaluating and using information effectively
4. Determine the ICT based information literacy and explore the perceptions on it
5. Identify the ability to use ICT for information communication by the respondents

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The study mainly focuses on Information Literacy skills of research scholar of Mizoram University to identify, locate, search, access, retrieve and using information from both print and electronic sources of information to satisfy the information needs. The scope of present study is further limited to only Ph.D Scholar of Mizoram University.

METHODOLOGY:

For collection of data for the study, survey method of research was used. A structured questionnaire was prepared and randomly distributed to 232 research scholar of Mizoram University to obtain required information with regards measure their information literacy competency and total 175 (75.43%) filled questionnaire were received from respondents for data analysis and draw the result of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS:**Analysis of respondents**

Personal profile of the respondents has been studied in term of age, gender, educational profile and academic performance and the details have been presented in this section.

Table-1: Age-wise analysis of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent
below 25 yrs	47	26.85%
between 26-35yrs	98	56%
between 36-45	24	13.71%
46 year above	6	3.42%
Total	175	100%

It is evident from table 1 that majority of the research scholar (56%) belongs to the age group of 26-35 years, followed by the age group below 25 year (26.8%) and 36-45 year (13.71%). while only 3.42% of respondent are above 46 years. It is observed that majority of the research scholar are between 26 to 35 years age.

Table-2: Gender wise analysis of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	96	54.85%
Male	79	45.14%
Total	175	100%

Table 2 shows the gender wise analysis of respondents and after analysis, it was resolved that majority of respondents 96(54.85%) were female and 79(45.14%) were male respondents.

Frequency to visit library

The frequency of library visit was a parameter to measure the utilization of library resources as well as the satisfaction of users about library collection and services. The analysis of responses about the frequency of visits made to the college library reveals interesting finding. Table 3 shows the respondents frequency to visit library and after analysis it resolved that majority of respondents (42.8%) visited library monthly and 37.14% respondents visited library occasionally. Only 3.53% respondents reported that they visited library daily and 14.28% respondents visited weekly. It is apparent from analysis that research scholars visited library monthly basis or according to their need of information and they are not regular user of library.

Table-3: Frequency to visit library

Frequency to visit library	Respondent (N=175)
Daily	11(6.28%)
Weekly	25(14.28%)
Monthly	74(42.8%)
Occasionally	65(37.14%)
Total	175(100%)

Purpose of library visit

Purpose of Library visits gives essential information about the reading materials that are required for the library users. This helps the librarians in developing the library collection as well as the services and facilities to provide better services to its user. The purpose of Library visits can be used to ascertain the value of the library facilities to the user various options were given to describe various reasons for visiting Library. Table-4A shows the purpose of information needs of respondents and depict that about half of respondents (49.14%) visit Library to borrow and return book, followed by study(32%) and journal /periodical consultation(19.42%).

Table-4 A: Purpose of library visit

Purpose	Respondent (N=175)
To borrow/return books	86 (49.14%)
To study	55(31.42%)
To Journal/periodicals consultation	34(19.42%)
Total	175(100%)

Research scholar may use the library resources and services for various academic reasons. Various options were given for respondent to indicate the nature of their dependency on the library for various academic purposes. Table-4B shows the dependency on library for academic purpose by respondents and it resolved that all respondents (100%) visited library for writing research papers, while 102(58.28%) respondents visited library for preparing a bibliography and 65(37.14%) respondents for preparing the notes. 78(44.57%) respondents visited library regarding their project work and 45(25.71%) respondents visited library for preparing assignment.

**Table-4B: Purpose of dependency on library
(Respondents given more than one option)**

Nature of Dependency	Research Scholar (N=175)
Preparing note	65(37.14%)
Writing research paper	175(100%)
Preparing a bibliography	102(58.28%)
Preparing an assignment	45(25.71%)
Project work	78(44.57%)

Familiarity with Information Literacy

It is clearly reflect from review of literature that information literacy is an essential skill in present digital environment especially for research scholar because it may lead to independent and student centric learning, rather than dependence. In order to find out the respondents' familiarity with information literacy, the respondents were asked to give their opinion whether they are familiar with IL and shown in table-5. After analysis it resolved that 121(69.14%) respondents are familiar whereas 54(30.85%) are not familiar with Information Literacy concept.

Table-5: Familiarity with information literacy

Familiarity	Research Scholar (N=175)
Yes	121(69.14%)
No	54(30.85%)
Total	175(100%)

Finding current Information:

In order to find out the respondents' level of awareness with finding the most current information, the respondents were asked to opt for the most appropriate answer for finding out their level in finding the current information and shown in table-6. The analysis shows that 3(1.71%) of the research scholar opted for Book to find current information while majority of respondents (95.42%) opted for journal. Also, 2(1.14%) of the research scholar opted for encyclopaedia, whereas 3(1.71%) respondents opted for bibliography. Because, majority of the respondent choose the correct answer journal, we can say that the respondents are aware with choosing the current information source.

Table-6: Source of current information

Source	Research Scholar (N=175)
Book	3(1.71%)
Journal	167(95.42%)
Encyclopaedia	2(1.14%)
Bibliography	3(1.71%)
Total	175

Search capabilities on broad topic

In order to find out the skill of the respondent to look for a broad introduction to a topic such as 'Climate change' the researchers had made four opted answer to choose. The respondent

give their preference in the three given option such as Journal Article, Encyclopedia and Book. Whereas, none of the respondent opted for the parameter ‘Video,’ to look for a broad introduction to a topic such as ‘Climate Change’ and their feedback was shown in table -7 and found that 9(5.14%) respondents opted for journal article to look for a broad introduction to a topic such as ‘Climate change’. Follow by 45(25.71%) respondents who opted for Encyclopedia, whereas majority of respondents, 121(69.14%) choose books which is the correct answer to look for a broad introduction.

Table-7: Search capabilities on broad topic

Source	Respondent (N=175)
Journal article	9(5.14%)
Encyclopedia	45(25.71%)
Books	121(69.14%)
Video	-

Use of library catalogue search

Having knowledge on catalogue search is very essential now because it saves the time and helping the information seekers to find out right document among library collections. The respondents were given four options i.e. Govt. publication, videos, books and articles and asked them that which document is not searchable in OPAC and their response shown in table-8. The result shown that 155(88.57%) respondents have given correct answer i.e. articles whereas 12(6.85%) respondents opted the answer for Govt. publication follow by video 8(4.57%) and none of the respondent opted for books. Thus it is clear from analysis that majority of the respondents are literate and aware with the use of Library catalogue.

Table-8: Use of library catalogue

Source	Respondent (N=175)
Govt. publication	12(6.85%)
Videos	8(4.57%)
Books	-
Articles	155(88.57%)
Total	175(100%0

Section of the book to consult to find others documents on the topics

A complete book has different sections and each section have a specific use to satisfy the information need of users. In order to find out the level of literacy about book parts among researchscholar of MZU, four options where given i.e. glossary, table of content, bibliography and index and asked them that to find out the section of book to find other document on same topic and their responses shown in table-9 and found that 11(6.28%) respondents opted Glossary and 55(31.42%) respondents opted Index. Whereas majority of respondents 109(62.28%) opted for bibliography which is correct answer. None of the respondents opted for the answer the table of the content.

Table-9: Knowledge about the parts of the book

Responds	Research Scholar (N=175)
Glossary	11(6.28%)
The index	55(31.42%)
The Bibliography	109(62.28%)
The table of content	-
Total	175

Catalogue Search Capabilities

To ascertain the level of skill the respondent's possess to use the library catalogue for identifying and locating a particular book which were placed in library and respondents were asked to identify the correct search option to locate all documents on Dr 'B.R. Ambedkar'. The responses of respondents depict their search capabilities in finding out the required documents on a given subject from the catalogue. The opinion was shown in table-10 and found that majority of the respondents 142(45.65%) said they search by author to locate the book on Ambedkar which is right answer while 20(12%) respondents reported that search by title and 16(9.14%) respondents opted for search by publisher.

Table-10: Catalogue search capabilities:

Source	Research Scholar (N=175)
By Title	20(12%)
By Author	55(31.42%)
By Publisher	16(9.14%)
By Subject	84(48%)

Rating Computer Literacy Skills

Computer Literacy skill is one of the most important tools in handling information. It assumed that everyone must be aware computer to accomplish his Information needs at research level degree in present digital environment. The Computer Literacy skills of respondents are shown in table-11 and after analysis it resolved that nearly all respondents 172(98.28%) rated their skill high in opening in and saving files in a computer, Printing document and files, similarly, for copy and transfer files while 128 (73.14%) respondents rated their skill average for searching in OPAC; 134(76.57%) respondents rated their skills average in writing research paper using MS-word and . 131(74.58%) respondents rated their skill average in making Power Point Presentation (PPT). Thus in overall respondents have sufficient literacy about computers use.

Table-11: Computer Literacy Skills

Computer Skills	Level	Respondent (N=175)
Open & Save	High	172(98.28%)
	Average	3(1.71%)
	Low	-
Print document /file	High	172(98.28%)
	Average	3(1.71%)
	Low	-
Copy/ transfer files	High	172(98.28%)

	Average	3(1.71%)
	Low	-
Search in OPAC	High	15(8.57%)
	Average	128(73.14%)
	Low	32(18.28%)
Write a research paper using word	High	39(22.28%)
	Average	134(76.57%)
	Low	2(1.14%)
Make a Power Point Presentation (PPT)	High	44(25.14%)
	Average	131(74.58%)
	Low	-

Rating Internet Literacy Skills

Internet Literacy skill is one of the most powerful tools to access, evaluate and disseminate information. Table-12 show the respondents’ Internet literacy skills and resolved that majority of respondents having average level of Internet skills in web browsing, write and send e-mail, search in the web OPAC and download scholarly article from Internet. Whereas the students are having high level skills in copy and download files from Internet. Overall majority of respondents have Internet literacy skills.

Table-12: Internet Literacy Skills:

Internet Skills	Level	Respondent (N=175)
Web browsing	High	155(88.57%)
	Average	20(11.42%)
	Low	-
Copy/download files from Internet	High	149(85.14%)
	Average	26(14.85%)
	Low	-
Write and send e-mail	High	155(88.57%)
	Average	20(11.42%)
	Low	-
Attached a file to email message	High	145(82.85%)
	Average	30(17.14%)
	Low	-
Download scholarly article from Internet	High	41(23.42%)
	Average	95(54.28%)
	Low	39(22.28%)
Search in the Web OPAC	High	39(22.28%)
	Average	134(76.57%)
	Low	2(1.14%)

Competency to access information from different formats

In order to find out the respondents skill in access information in different formats, the respondents were asked to give their level of accessing skill for print and electronic formats and their responses shown in table-13. After analysis it resolved that 124(70.85%) respondents rated their skills very high in accessing information in print format while 51(29.14%) rated their skills average in accessing information in print format. In another

hand, 118(67.42%) respondents rated their skills very high in accessing information in electronic format and 57(32.57%) respondents rated their skills average in accessing information in electronic format. Most of the respondents are aware in accessing information in print and electronic forms, where as the percentage of access rate decreased in electronic formats

Table-13: Access Information in Different Formats

Format	Level	Research Scholar (N=175)
Print	High	124(70.85%)
	Average	51(29.14%)
	Low	-
Electronic	High	118(67.42%)
	Average	57(32.57%)
	Low	-

MAJOR FINDINGS:

1. Majority of respondents (72%) are young and below the age of 35 years and more than half 96(54.85%) were female and only less than half 79(45.14%) of the respondent are male.
2. Majority of respondents (42.8%) visited library monthly basis. About half 86 (49.14%) of the respondent visit library to borrow and return of books. Research paper writing, preparing bibliography and notes preparation are the main purpose of dependency on library.
3. Majority of the research scholars are familiar with the word information literacy. Majority of them are found to be having satisfactory search capabilities to find out their required documents from library.
4. Respondents having good literacy to find out current information, search capability on broader topic, library catalogue and catalogue search capability. There literacy shows that they have good library orientation program from their library.
5. Majority of respondents are having high level of computer skills in Open and Save, print document/file, copy/pest and transfer file, whereas average skills in search OPAC, write a research paper using word and make a power point presentation.
6. Majority of respondents having average level of Internet skills in web browsing, write and send e-mail, search and download scholarly article from Internet. Over all respondents having good Internet literacy.
7. Respondents having good skills and competency to handle print and electronic sources of information.

CONCLUSION:

Information Literacy is a major prerequisite for academic society in present ICT era because the skills and abilities are the main characteristic that enables research scholar to retrieve the right information from the right source without wasting their valuable time. Keeping in view the various specializations in the area, it is necessary for research scholars to be equipped with Information Literacy competencies that can help them to effectively search, locate, evaluate, and use the required information. It is good that research scholars of Mizoram University having the satisfactory IL skills information search capability. They are well aware to use library resource and finding of study shows that central library of Mizoram University are providing good library orientation to research scholars. Further it is also found

that research scholars of MZU having good computer and Internet literacy which is essential in present knowledge based academic society..

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