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## Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs) in Aided Science Degree Colleges in Karnataka State: Librarians' Perspectives

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### Preeti S Patil

Research Scholar  
Department of Library and Information Science  
Karnatak University, Dharwad.  
Email: [preetip722@gmail.com](mailto:preetip722@gmail.com)

### B. D. Kumbar

Professor(Rtd)  
Department of Library and Information Science  
Karnatak University, Dharwad.  
Email: [bdkumbar@yahoo.com](mailto:bdkumbar@yahoo.com)

### Gururaj S Hadagali

Associate Professor  
Department of Library and Information Science  
Karnatak University, Dharwad.  
Email: [gururajhadagali123@gmail.com](mailto:gururajhadagali123@gmail.com)

#### Abstract

*The study investigates Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs) conducted by librarians in 20 aided science degree colleges at Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka State. The survey method and questionnaire tool were used to collect data. 18 (90%) libraries conducted ILPs, with 88.89% identifying information needs and a majority agreeing that assessing IL skills helps develop effective programs.*

#### Keywords

Information Literacy Programmes (ILP); Librarian Perspective;; Science Aided Colleges; Karnataka State.

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## INTRODUCTION

Information Literacy is a crucial skill in today's world, where we are constantly bombarded with information from various sources. With the rise of the internet and social media, it has become easier than ever to access information on any topic imaginable (Julien and Barker, 2009). However, not all information is reliable or accurate, and it can be challenged to distinguish between trustworthy and unreliable sources. This is where information literacy comes in. By developing information literacy skills, individuals can learn how effectively locate, evaluate and use information from various sources. This includes critical thinking skills, the ability to identify biases and misinformation and the capacity to communicate ideas effectively (Cunningham and Lanning, 2002). Information literacy is essential for academic and professional success, as well as for making informed decisions in everyday life.

Information literacy is becoming more and more crucial as a result of the quick development of technology and the wealth of information resources readily available nowadays. Because of the complexity of the advancement, people must make a wide range of informational decisions on their educational goals, professional jobs, and personal lives. These information resources are available in various formats through libraries, media, the internet and e-resources. Information literacy has been referred by a variety of names, user education, library orientation, bibliographic instruction, and information seeking behaviour, information skills training (Kingori, Niraine & Maina, 2016). Keeping in view the importance of Information Literacy Programmes in mind a study of this magnitude is conducted in Aided Science Degree Colleges in Karnataka.

## NEED FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

The main goal of information literacy education in academic environment is to empower students to enhance their knowledge by acquiring and applying essential skills. It seeks to foster critical thinking, enable students to proficiently locate and evaluate information and ultimately prepare them for a lifelong learning. According to American Library Association (ALA), the objective of information literacy is as follows:

“Information Literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines to all learning environment and to all levels of education. It

enables learner to master and extend their investigation become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning” (Syamalamba, 2011). Information literacy also aims to teach students how to find information and prepare them for life-long learning because they can always find information needed for any task or decision at hand (ACRL, 2000).

Information literacy is very important for cultural, social, and personal well-being, as well as for economic development and educational success. It places a focus on the abilities, mindsets, and principles needed to find, access, assess, manage, synthesize, and utilise information efficiently (Martzoukou and Sayyadabdi, 2017). The digital divide and bridging the gaps are particularly closely related to information literacy. It also promotes education initiatives at all levels, the development of skills in the workplace and community, including regional, economic development, e-commerce and e-government (Doyle, 1992).

In today’s world information literacy is playing an important role due to various reasons:

- The amount of information available is vast and constantly growing, making it challenging to guide and find relevant and reliable information.
- The information environment is increasingly complex, with the development of new technologies and communication channels.
- The changing patterns of work, family and community relations require individuals to be able to access and use information effectively.
- Information Literacy is a key factor in achieving personal empowerment and economic development, making it an important skill for lifelong learning and success in the workplace.

#### **SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The present study is conducted taking into account of twenty aided science degree colleges affiliated to Karnatak University, Dharwad. Further, the study is limited to Librarians of these colleges.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The primary goal of this study is to know the conduct of Information Literacy Programmes in Aided

Science Degree colleges affiliated to Karnatak University, Dharwad. The other objectives are to:

1. study the conduct of Information Literacy Programmes by the LIS professionals working in aided science degree colleges affiliated to Karnatak University, Dharwad.
2. know the frequency of Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs) conducted by Librarians;
3. determine the areas of Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs);
4. Identify the problems encountered while conducting Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs);
5. Elicit opinion on accessing Information Literacy skills.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

For the present study, the authors adopted a survey method and questionnaire tool to collect the data from the Librarians. Online questionnaire was also prepared using Google Form and sent via email to all the Librarians. Sufficient time was given to Librarians. One of the authors personally visited some of the colleges and collected the data. The authors distributed questionnaires to twenty librarians and all the librarians returned questionnaires with duly filled in. No ambiguities in questionnaires were found and all the twenty questionnaires were considered for the study. The data further was fed into MS-Excel for its simple frequency calculation.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **Conduct of Information Literacy Programmes**

In today's digital age, the ability to find, evaluate, and use information effectively has become crucial. Information literacy is a fundamental skill that equips students with the tools they need to succeed academically and in their future endeavours. A question was posed to the LIS professionals on whether they conduct Information Literacy programmes in their libraries or not. The data reveals that 18 (90.00%) libraries conduct Information Literacy Programmes for the benefit of users’ community, whereas, 2 (10.00%) libraries have not conducted IL programmes which is essential now a days.

**Table 1:** Conduct of Information Literacy Programmes

Sl. No.	IL programme	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	18	90.00
2	No	02	10.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Frequency of IL Programmes

Information Literacy is a “set of skills” that can be learned. That set of skills include a certain attitude towards learning itself, the use of tools, like online tutorials, the use of techniques, such as working with groups and the use of methods, such as mentors. Frequency of IL programmes also matters in the higher educational institutions. Librarians were posed a question about the frequency of IL programmes conducted in their respective libraries. A positive note was observed that 15 (83.33%) libraries have conducted IL programmes on various aspects beginning of every year, whereas, 2 (11.11%) libraries have conducted IL programmes as and when required, followed by 1 (5.56%) library believes in conducting IL programme half-yearly.

**Table 2:** Frequency of IL Programmes

Sl. No.	Frequency IL programmes	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Beginning of Every Year	15	83.33
2	As and when required	02	11.11
3	Half-Yearly	01	5.56
4	Monthly	00	00.00
5	Quarterly	00	00.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Areas of IL Programmes

The authors have identified some of the areas where IL programmes are arranged for the benefit of the users’ community. It is evident from the data that 16 (88.89%) libraries each conducted IL programmes on access / use e-resources and facilities available in the library, whereas, 14 (77.78%) libraries each have

conducted IL Programmes on how to use information sources, information services and use of websites, followed by 13 (72.22%) libraries each have conducted IL programmes on the internet resources and search strategies / techniques, 11 (61.11%) libraries have conducted IL programmes on how to make use of library catalogue and only 9 (50.00%) libraries have conducted IL programmes on plagiarism.

**Table 3:** Areas of IL Programmes

Sl. No.	Areas of IL Programmes	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Access / use e-resources	16	88.89
2	Facilities available in Library	16	88.89
3	Information sources	14	77.78
4	Information services	14	77.78
5	Use of Websites	14	77.78
6	Internet resources	13	72.22
7	Search strategies / techniques	13	72.22
8	Library Catalogue	11	61.11
9	Plagiarism	9	50.00

### Method of conducting IL Programme

Information Literacy (IL) is basically a library instruction program which helps in lifelong learning (LL) through formal, non-formal and informal mode of education. A method or mode of conducting of IL programme also plays an important role in IL programme. The study reveals that 16 (88.89%) libraries have opted lecture cum demonstration method for delivering IL skills, whereas, 10 (55.56%) libraries have conducted seminars / conferences / workshop, 6 (33.33%) libraries each have opted for off-site mode and library tour. The other methods like online tutorials, on-site and through you tube videos have given less importance and the data is presented in table 4.

**Table 4:** Method of conducting IL programme

Sl. No.	Method of IL programme	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Lecture cum demonstration	16	88.89
2	Seminars / conferences /	10	55.56

	workshops		
3	Off-site	06	33.33
4	Library Tour	06	33.33
5	Online tutorials	02	11.11
6	On-site	01	5.56
7	You Tube video	01	5.56

**Importance of IL skills / competencies**

Information Literacy equips students with the skills to assess the reliability, objectivity, and bias of sources. By analyzing the authority, currency, relevance, and accuracy of information, students can make well-informed judgments and avoid falling prey to misinformation. The table 5 presents the data on the opinion on the importance of IL skills / competencies

**Table 5:** Importance of IL skills / competencies

Sl. No.	Description	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Uncertain	Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	Identifying the information need	16 (88.89)	02 (11.11)	00	00	00
2	Accessing information effectively and efficiently	14 (77.78)	02 (11.11)	02 (11.11)	00	00
3	Evaluating information before considering it	14 (77.78)	02 (11.11)	00	02 (11.11)	00
4	Using information effectively for a specific purpose	16 (88.89)	00	02 (11.11)	00	00
5	Using information ethically and judiciously	15 (83.33)	01 (5.55)	00	02 (11.11)	00
6	Analyzing information	15 (83.33)	01 (5.55)	02 (11.11)	00	00
7	Synthesizing information	14 (77.78)	02 (11.11)	00	02 (11.11)	00

for students' community. 16 (88.89%) librarians said that it is very important to identify the information need, whereas 14 (77.78%) librarians opined that accessing information effectively and efficiently is very important from students' perspectives. 14 (77.78%) librarians opined that they develop skills while evaluating information before considering it and it is very important, using information effectively for a specific purpose (16, 88.89%) is also very important as felt by the professionals. For other options like using information ethically and judiciously, analysing information and synthesizing information are very important which help the information seeker to develop skills and competencies.

**Opinion on Necessity of Organizing Library Orientation / IL programmes**

Gone are the days when there was a dearth of information sources. Due to the proliferation of electronic resources now a day's selective elimination of information has become almost impossible to the professionals. Both print as well as electronic resources have created and become necessity to organize orientation / IL programmes in higher educational institutions. The data presented in table 6 reveals that 7 (38.89%) librarians strongly agreed and 9 (50.00%) librarians agreed to the statement that both print as well as e-resources have created necessity for organizing library orientation / Information Literacy programmes, whereas, 2 (11.11%) librarians are uncertain about the statement.

**Table 6:** Opinion on necessity of Organizing Library Orientation / IL programmes

Sl. No.	Opinion on conducting IL programme	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	07	38.89
2	Agree	09	50.00
3	Uncertain	02	11.11
4	Disagree	00	00.00
5	Strongly Disagree	00	00.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Problems encountered while conducting IL programmes**

Information Literacy (IL) is the set of skills that allows us to find, evaluate and use the information we need. Libraries have long been involved in training their users in library use, its services and sources. Programmes such as library orientation, user education, etc. organized by libraries to teach the user how to use library, how to search information sources and how to access information in the digital age. A question was posed to the librarians on the problems encountered while providing IL programmes and the data is presented in table 7. 12 (66.67%) librarians each found lack of students’ interest and lack of student technology skills are the main problems encountered by them, whereas, 9 (50.00%) librarians faced lack of sufficient personal expertise. Limited fund and facilities was the problem faced by 7 (38.89%) librarians. The other problems like lack of space / equipment, lack of coordination between library staff and faculty and lack of external support are some of the other problems faced by the librarians while conducting IL / orientation programmes in their college libraries.

**Table 7:** Problems encountered while conducting IL programmes

Sl. No.	Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Lack of students interest	12	66.67
2	Lack of student technology skills	12	66.67
3	Lack of sufficient personal expertise	9	50.00
4	Limited fund and facilities	7	38.89
5	Lack of space / equipment	4	22.22
6	Lack of coordination between library staff and faculty	4	22.22
7	Lack of external support	3	16.67

**Opinion on assessing IL skills**

Assessing of Information Literacy skills will help the librarians to develop effective information literacy programmes. A declarative question was raised to the

librarians and the same is presented in table 8. The data reveals that 12 (66.67%) librarians agreed and 6 (33.33%) librarians strongly agreed that assessing of IL skills will help the librarians to develop effective IL programmes.

**Table 8:** Opinion on assessing IL skills

Sl. No.	Opinion on assessing IL skills	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	6	33.33
2	Agree	12	66.67
3	Uncertain	00	00.00
4	Disagree	00	00.00
5	Strongly Disagree	00	00.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. A positive note was observed from the study that 15 (83.33%) librarians have conducted IL programmes on various aspects beginning of every year, whereas, 2 (11.11%) librarians have conducted IL programmes as and when required, followed by 1 (5.56%) librarian believes in conducting IL programme half-yearly. Information Literacy is a “set of skills” that can be learned. That set of skills includes a certain attitude towards learning itself, the use of tools, like online tutorials, the use of techniques etc. Hence, it is suggested to the library staff or librarians of these colleges to organize Information Literacy Programmes at least twice a year on latest technologies which may help them to improve their IL skills / techniques or develop their IL competencies.
2. The study also points out that 12 (66.67%) librarians each have found lack of students’ interest and lack of student technology skills are the main problems encountered by them, whereas, 9 (50.00%) librarians have faced lack of sufficient personal expertise. Libraries have long been involved in training their users in library use, its services and sources. All these problems encountered by the students questions library staff’s involvement in providing services to the users. The study also reveals that the users demand that information resources should be made available in e-form since they are comfortable using e-resources. Hence, it is

recommended to the library staff of the twenty colleges that such IL programmes / orientation programmes be conducted regularly to create awareness among the students which is need of the hour.

## CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the information environments in which learning and research are taking place continue to change rapidly. The situation demands that librarians to shift their approach to teaching information literacy from primarily focusing on skills and behaviours to focusing on the complex concepts that underpin the information systems and structures themselves. The need to determine what information is needed, where to obtain it, how to select and evaluate it and utilize it to advance individual and collective progress is of critical importance. In the Information age, the concept of literacy needs to be expanded to embrace information literacy. The ability to view information in its widest context, to determine needs, and then locate, evaluate, organize and apply it are key skills required for students as well as professionals.

The present study is conducted on Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs) in aided science degree colleges in Karnataka State. The data reveals that out of twenty colleges, 18 (90.00%) librarians have conducted ILPs, 16 (88.89%) librarians each have conducted ILPs on access / use e-resources, and facilities available in library, 16 (88.89%) librarians said that it is very important to identify the information need, majority of the librarians agreed that it is necessity of organizing library orientation / IL programmes. 12 (66.67%) librarians each have found lack of students' interest was the main problem faced by the librarians and majority of the librarians strongly agreed that assessing IL skills will help librarians to develop effective IL programmes.

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