

## “EVALUATING INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS A CASE STUDY OF THE COLLEGE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE NAGPUR.”

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### **Abstract :**

*Information Literacy is a vital skill for academic success and lifelong learning, particularly for postgraduate students who are expected to engage with scholarly content critically and independently. This study aims to evaluate the information literacy skill among postgraduate students in the department of library and information science. Using a mixed method approach data was collected through structured questionnaire, conducted with 150 postgraduate students from selected LIS colleges.*

*The research focused on assessing students' abilities to identify information needs, locate relevant sources. Evaluate the credibility of information, and use information ethically and effectively. The finding revealed that while most students demonstrate basic searching skills. Significant gaps exist in evaluating sources. Understanding plagiarism, and citing information properly. Moreover many students rely heavily on internet search engines over academic databases, indicating a lack of awareness of library resources.*

*The study concludes that there is a pressing need for integrating information literacy instruction into the postgraduate curriculum. It recommends the organization of regular workshops, collaboration between librarians and faculty members and development of interactive learning modules to enhance students' competencies in information literacy. These initiatives can empower students to become more independent, ethical, and effective users of information in their academic and professional pursuits Academic libraries can promote access, diverse knowledge resource, encourage research , foster critical and creative thinking skills , digital literacy skills, development to among users.*

**Keywords :** Information Literacy, postgraduate students, library science, academic skill, research skills, digital literacy, user education.

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### **Introduction :**

In the era of the information explosion and digital transformation, the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information has become more critical than ever, information literacy, defined

as the set of skills required to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate and use it effectively, is now considered a core competency for academic success, research quality and informed decision -making. For postgraduate students, especially those pursuing studies in library and information science, information literacy is not only essential for their own academic progress. But also foundational to their future professional roles as information managers and facilitators. LIS students are expected to be proficient in various aspects of information handling, including online research, database usage, and referencing and ethical information use.

Despite the increasing emphasis on digital and information skills, several studies have indicated that many students still struggle with evaluating the credibility of information, using scholarly database, and properly citing sources. Although there has been substantial research on information literacy in general, very few studies have focused specifically on postgraduate LIS students, particularly in the Indian academic context.

This study address this gap by evaluating the information literacy skills of postgraduate students in the Colleges department of Library and Information Science at Nagpur RTMNU University. It seeks to understand how well these students can navigate the complex information environments they operate in and what improvements are needed to enhance their competencies.

### **Information Literacy :**

“People trained in using the application of information sources for their work can be called literates.” (Paul Zurkowski, 1974).

**According to Webber,”** Information Literacy is the adoption of appropriate information behavior to certain, through whatever channel or media, information well one’s to information needs together with a critical awareness of the importance of wise and ethical use of information in society.” (2008)

### **Information Literacy Skills :**

“Information Literacy Skills assessment helps to reflect upon the teaching learning process, provides input for revision and development of the curriculum and helps to measure and monitor student performance.” (ACRL2000).

### **Importance of Information Literacy in LIS :**

Information literacy (IL) is a foundational skill for postgraduate students in library and information Science (LIS). As future information professionals, they are expected to not only possess IL skills but also teach and promote them among others. Information literacy is not just a desirable skill for postgraduate students –It is essential. It underpins their academic success, professional, effectiveness, and their future role as educators, researchers, and Information managers. Without strong IL skills, LIS professionals cannot fulfil their role in supporting an informed and information literate society.

**Literature review :**

This section presents a review of literature related to information literacy, its importance in higher education, and the current status of IL skills among postgraduate students, particularly in the field of Library and Information Science. The aim is to understand existing research findings and identify research gaps that this study seeks to address. The reviewed literature highlights the critical role of information literacy in higher education and the need for better IL instruction, even among LIS students. However, limited studies have focused on postgraduate LIS students using both subjective and objective measures of IL. This study attempts to address this gap by evaluating their actual competencies through a structured assessment.

The term "Information Literacy" was popularized by the American Library Association (ALA) in 1989 and later expanded by the ACRL (2000, 2016) which provided widely used frameworks for assessing IL in academic settings.

**According to UNESCO (2008)**, IL is essential not only for academic success but also for lifelong learning despite its importance, several studies indicate that postgraduate students, including LIS students. Face challenges in higher – order IL skills such as critical, evaluation, ethical use, and advanced database search.

**Kumar and Singh (2019)**. According to postgraduate students are aware of digital resources like Google and Wikipedia, their use of scholarly database such as JSTOR, SCOPUS, and Web of Science remains limited. Their research titled "Information Literacy Competency among postgraduate students in Indian Universities: A study." The study involved a survey-based approach across multiple universities evaluating students' abilities in areas such as information searching evolution of sources, referencing awareness of plagiarism and use of academic database.

**Das & Maharana (2013)**. Examined the awareness and practices of information literacy (IL) among Postgraduate students in Indian academic institutions particularly focusing on how students and research purposes. Their titled "Access, Awareness and use of Electronic Information resources by research scholars or Berhampur University, A study." Researcher are use of survey method. Research scholars and postgraduate students to assess their information seeking behavior and digital resources usage.

**Munshi, A.S. & Nagar, P. (2017)**. Explored IL skills among postgraduate students at Aligarh Muslim University. While students were aware of library resources and preferred using Google, they lacked advanced search knowledge and recommended workshops and hands on training for improvement.

**Karsiddappa (2012)**. Strongly recommended that IL and capacity building should be included in the LIS curriculum. Author has even mentioned the probable ways of implementing IL programs in Indian context.

**Oakleaf (2009)** emphasized that citation and reference management software tools like Zotero, Mandely, and Endnote has become common practice in postgraduate research. These tools help students organize and cite sources correctly manage bibliographies and collaborate on shared research Libraries teaching students how to use these platforms enhance their academic writing and promotes ethical use of information.

**The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy (2016)** has shifted focus from checklists to conceptual understanding through six "frames", such as "Authority is Constructed and Contextual". Similarly, the **SCONUL (2011)** model emphasizes skills like identifying, planning, evaluating, and presenting information.

**Swapna & Biradar (2017)**. Described the significance of information literacy in higher education and analyzed some IL models developed around the world in added the author also described various Information Literacy models for higher Education in India.

**Singh and Joshi (2013)**. Conducted a pilot study at Haryana Agricultural University to access IL competencies among the postgraduate students. They found that instructional initiatives positively impacted students ability to locate, evaluate, and ethically use of information.

**Patil and Desai (2022)** Studying female post graduate students at Karnataka University Dharwad, reported that although most students used basic search methods, only few prioritized Peer-reviewed sources on understand citation practice . Overall these studies revealed significant gaps in IL skills especially in source evaluation, citation and ethical use of information.

**(Eisenberg & Berkowitz, 1990)**. Big 6 Information Problem solving model. Which outlines six stages: task definition, information seeking, location, and access use of information synthesis and evaluation. This framework is relevant because it provides a structured approach to analyzing how students acquire and apply information literacy skills in academic and research contexts.

**Bruce's (1997)**. seven faces of Information Literacy highlights the conceptual diversity in understanding IL, which is important for evaluating students perceptions and competencies.

**Lokesha & Aditya Kumari (2024)**. Conducted a survey on digital literacy skills of postgraduate students in Karnataka, while Gulbarga, University (2018), assessed female PG students using a structured questionnaire to measures IL competencies These methods provide a broad understanding of students strengths and weakness but they may not fully capture higher –order skills or practical applications .

**Jatto, Fasola, and Abioye (2024)**. Examined LIS postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan Nigeria, and found that while students possessed adequate skills in locating and using information, their overall research productivity remained low. The study revealed a moderate positive correlation between information literacy competencies.

**Manjunatha & Sampath Kumar (2024)**. Investigated postgraduate LIS students in Karnataka

University focusing on their awareness and use of advanced technologies and software. The study showed that although students were familiar with basic tools such as file compression software and plagiarism detectors, their actual usage of advanced research tools and statistical packages was inconsistent, underscoring the need for curriculum integration of digital proficiency.

**Purpose of the study :**

To assess and evaluate the Information literacy competencies of LIS postgraduate students and identify areas for improvement.

**Objectives of the study :**

1. To assess the level of IL skills among LIS postgraduate students.
2. To evaluate their ability to locate, evaluate, and use information.
3. To identify challenges students face in applying IL skills.
4. To provide suggestions for improving IL instruction in LIS education.
5. To identify the sources and tools commonly used by them.

**Methodology :**

A structured of Survey method and questionnaire containing both closed and open - ended questions was distributed among 150 postgraduate students from the Department of library and Information Science colleges of RTM Nagpur University. The researcher analyze of statistical technique of percentage and also uses the APA style manual for reporting and presenting the study. This study limited to LIS department colleges in Nagpur city.

**Identifying Information Needs :**

In the complex information world it is very important to recognize the need of information and have the ability to locate the information.

Table 1. Ability to know the need for Information

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	142	94.66%
No	8	5.33%

From the Table no1 is shows that (94.66) of respondent have need the information and only (5.33%) respondent where find the needed information .So majority of students have recognized to and need to information.

**Table 2. Places where information was searched**

Response	Respondent	Percentage
Your college Library	150	100%
Other libraries	22	14.67%
Internet	135	90%

From table no.2 is revealed that all the respondents make use of library for getting the required information along with 90% percent of respondents also making use to internet as the popular source at information gathering and 14.67% percent using Other Libraries available in the locality.

**Table 3. Information Searching skills**

Response	Respondent	Percentage
Keywords	93	62%
Boolean Operator	42	28%
Databases	15	10%

From Table no.3 is shows that respondents above the preferred to search strategies of information use simple keywords 62% and Boolean Operator use of 28% and only 10% respondents uses of databases.

**Table 4. Understand and ethically use of information.**

Response	Respondent	Percentage
Plagiarism	63	42%
Referencing style	130	86.67%
Copyright	100	66.67%

From Table no.4 is shows that respondent are understand and ethically use of information for referencing style 86.67% use copyright use 66.67% and plagiarism use only 42% respondents.

**Table 5 Ability to Evaluate of Information**

Ability to Evaluate of Information and its authenticity	Response	Percentage
To evaluate the information in terms of currency, authority and appropriateness	87	58%
To investigate various view points of the literature	150	100%
To consult other sources to verify the information gathered	90	60%
To evaluate information available on the internet	150	100%



From table no 5 is shows that 100% respondents believed that important to evaluate information available on internet and 60% of them evaluated the gathered information by consulting other sources of information. To evaluate the information in terms of currency, authority and appropriateness respondents of 58% .Online access to information is available in different formats. Everything available online is not always correct and authentic. Therefore it is very important to evaluate the online information for its usefulness.

Table 6. **Problem faced about information sources**

Problems	Respondent	Percentage
Lack of knowledge to use	70	46.67%
Lack of accessibility	50	33.33%
Slow internet bandwidth	15	10%
Technical issues (server down)	2	1.33%
Frequent power cut	5	3.33%
Lack of relevant information sources	3	2%
Lack of assistance of library staff	5	3.33%

From Table no.6. Is shows that 46.67% respondents of problem faced about the information sources. Lack of accessibility of 33.33% of respondents slow internet bandwidth10%, frequency power cut and lack of assistance of library staff 3.33% , lack of relevant information sources 2% and technical issues of 1.33% of respondents.

### Findings :

1. Majority of the students (around 94.66%) were aware of the basic concept of information literacy and its importance in academic and research activities.
2. Most of the student relied heavily on general internet search engine (Google) for information retrieval, however only 14.67% regularly used academic database such as J-STOR , Scopus and Web of Science.
3. Only 28% students were familiar with advanced search techniques such as Boolean Operators, Truncation and filters. .Most of the students used in Simple keyword-based search.
4. Around 60% students lacked proper understanding of How to evaluate for the credibility and reliability of online Information sources.
5. Approximately 55% of the students were confident in using proper citation styles (APA, MLA) and had limited awareness of plagiarism issues.
6. Majority of the students (around 70%) different problem faced to required information.

**Conclusion :**

This study explore the potential of information literacy skill for postgraduate. Students of LIS department. A survey conducted among postgraduate students based on Nagpur University colleges department of library and information science, The findings reveal that while most students demonstrate a basic understanding of information sources and searching techniques, there remains a significant gap in advanced information, evaluation ethical use of information , and the application of digital tools for the application management.

It was observed that students are proficient in identifying and locating relevant resources, especially through academic databases and library catalogues. However, challenges persist in areas such as critically evaluating, the credibility of online sources. Proper citation practice, and using reference management tool. These gaps indicate the need for a more structured and practical approach to teaching information literacy within the curriculum.

Furthermore, the study highlights the role of academic libraries and faculty members in strengthening these skills by incorporating hands -on training sessions, workshops, and interactive modules. As information environments continue to evolve rapidly, developing strong information literacy is essential for academic success and lifelong learnings.

In conclusion, While the postgraduate students in LIS possess foundational information literacy skills, continuous efforts are required to enhance their competencies, particularly in critical thinking, ethical use of information, and digital literacy, future research can explore the effectiveness of specific instructional interventions in improving these skills.

**Recommendation/Suggestions :**

1. Information Literacy workshops should include hands on training on how to access and use Scholarly database.
2. Postgraduate students must be guided to use authenticated sources rather than relying safely on Google search or Wikipedia
3. 30 The Department of Library and Information Science should integrate of compulsory course on Information literacy in the first semester.
4. LIS Postgraduate students should be encouraged to take active part in information literacy programs and online tutorials offered by the college library.
5. Faculty members should be provided assignments that involves evaluation of information sources and referencing techniques.
6. University libraries should organize regular workshops on database searching, citation tools and ethical use of information.
7. College libraries must subscribe to key LIS database and ensure students access with proper training.
8. Postgraduate students of LIS Department can strictly enhance to IL skills, Digital skills, and research skills.
9. Technological infrastructure needs to be implemented to enable better utilization of the online resources being subscribed.



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