CHAPTER- 6

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION
6.1 Suggestions

The emergence and growth of knowledge society has compelled the library users and public at large to develop their information handling capacity through computer literacy, electronic literacy, digital literacy, and internet literacy. Libraries in general and academic libraries in particular have more user population consisting of students, teachers and research scholars. College libraries being part of higher education the students and teachers need to be information literate so as to develop their career in building a strong foundation of higher education and research.

The research problem undertaken by the scholar addressed a number of challenging problems and issues with regard to information literacy in college libraries in Lower Assam. Based on the data analysis and findings the researcher has made the following suggestions for an integrated development of information literacy in college libraries under study.

At the Institutional Level

- As the library is the part of the educational institution, it can not function independently. To impart information literacy in the college level, the higher authority/parent organization should be convinced by the librarian/library professionals about the need and benefits of ILP to the user community and to optimize the use of the library resources.

- In most of the Colleges, lack of adequate staffs in general and trained staffs in particular has been revealed. Therefore additional staffs with professional and technical knowledge is sought to guide and train the students in this fast moving world of information.

- Along with the traditional collections, priority should also be given to e-resources, and raise the awareness about its access, use and the related aspects.

- Specific time should be allocated for the ILP (other than the course in the curriculum) and it should be compulsory for the students otherwise levied penalty.

- Adequate number of resources/materials needed for the purpose of ILP should be made available so that hands-on practice/training can be provided, as theory and practice must go hand in hand.
Staff engaged for imparting ILP should be made free from other responsibilities or duties of the library as and when needed.

In college level, introducing information literacy course through the regular curriculum is quite unimaginable as this approach should be imposed from the concerned university. In disposal of the college authority, it can be delivered as a short training programme meeting the academic informational need of the users.

Most of the faculties use printed journals therefore the use of e-journals provided through N-LIST should be encouraged.

Designing an information literacy programmes should not be confined to the librarian/library professionals only. Rather, participation of faculties and media experts is also sought to design, suggest and explore resources pertaining to their respective subjects for more effective programmes.

Before implementing information literacy in a curriculum as a policy, college authority can organize training programmes to serve the purpose by allocating separate fund by inviting guest professionals, and publisher/agents/aggregators.

Professionals as well as the users should be conscious about the copyright/intellectual property right and evaluation of electronic information available in various domains. Moreover, they should also be made aware of different consortia and its benefit in the academic pursuit.

At the Governmental Level

World is moving towards global knowledge economy and to function effectively, every individual needs to be information literate, and this can be only possible or achieved if the government include information literacy in its national policies as a panacea to combat the rapid technological changes, proliferation of information sources and information overload.

In college level, library professionals are mainly concerned with information literacy programmes (short term courses, etc.). Through consensus in the higher level it should be included in a course curriculum.

University Grants Commission plays an important role and is responsible for the overall development of the higher education in our country. Therefore, the
commission can make an effort to introduce information literacy in higher education though some provisions or acts.

To design and develop plausible information literacy standard/framework/guidelines, there must be a brainstorming and collaborative efforts encompassing library professionals, academics, professional associations and media experts so that the product can be proposed to the competent authority.

A group or forum should be formed in national level under the Ministry of Government of India to take initiative in national level and state level to check the information literacy programmes and activities in the respective states.

Government of India has initiated many e-governance programmes to give G2C (Government to Citizen) services, likewise there should also be a portal for information literacy to guide and make aware about different aspects and developments in the domain of information literacy.

6.2 Planning for Information Literacy in College Libraries of Lower Assam

To start any programme, planning is prerequisite. Therefore to guide the professionals for implementing information literacy in the academic libraries the following models have been suggested:
Institutional Support

Trained Staff

Identify the Need of the Target Group

In-Service Training to the Staff

Identify the Goals/Objectives of the Programme

Designing of the Course Content

Workshop/Training/Demonstration, etc.

Self Learning Packages (CD/DVD), Guides, Brochures, etc.

Modes of Delivery

Online

Separate Course

Integrated within the Curriculum

Acquisition/Development of Instructional Materials

Implementation of the Programme

Evaluation

Redesigning of Course Content/Material, etc.

Need Up gradation

Yes

No

Stop

Stop
To thrive in this information era, having just a basic knowledge is not an end. The real survival factor is being abreast with the latest information and happenings around the world. Today’s student is the tomorrow’s responsible citizen provided if they are well nurtured and zeal to be a lifelong learner. And this particular spirit is well maintained through information literacy only. It is a self-motivated and self-directed learning process. In the academic environment, information literacy is a recent concept. Before implementing it in the colleges for the greater benefits of the users, librarian should be the torch bearer in this endeavor which may involve various steps and quite interrelated to each other. To plan an information literacy programme in an academic library, feasibility study is prerequisite which are explained below:

- **Institutional Support**: Like any other activities in the college, the concerned authority does not take much interest in the library activities. Therefore to draw attention and support of the authority, the librarian has to convince them in all possible ways.

- **Trained Staff**: Human resource is one of the strong pillars of any institution, which may soar up the institution to an unmatched excellence. To lead the information literacy programme, having a trained staff in the latest technology is a must. As most of the colleges do not have the trained staff in the library, at least one staff depending on his/her qualification should be provided “training for the trainers” and dedicated for the purpose by releasing from other duties/responsibilities.

- **Identify the Need of the Target Group**: As we are concerned to the academic libraries, the main target groups are students and faculties. According to the category of users their needs also differs. Therefore keeping in view the need of the target group consideration should be made in framing the goals/objectives of the programme.

- **Identify the Goals/Objectives of the Programme**: As the time pass on, the need also changes accordingly. Today’s latest happening may be obsolete tomorrow. Therefore, depending on the current need of the users goals/objectives of the programme should be considered.

- **Designing of the course content**: Course content is one of the important aspects of the information literacy programmes. Regarding this, the scholar is concern with the off line mode. Users generally hail from different
backgrounds having different attributes and learning experiences. It should be need based encompassing the resources, facilities of the library and quite understandable. Based on performance indicators provided in different information literacy models by different groups, one can be adopted as a framework in designing the content of the information literacy programme. While designing the content of the programme, it is quite advisable to consult/include subject experts to make the programme plausible. Information literacy programmes can not be successful in a real sense without the hands-on practice to the users. Therefore, there should be an equal priority to both the theory and practices with different multimedia aids. But as far as Online mode is concerned, for the development of various modules along with library professionals, it demands different experts- subject experts, programmer, graphic designer, content developer, etc. In other words, it is a team work and a joint venture.

- **Modes of delivery:** It is interrelated to the previous step. After designing a suitable course, based on the feasibility study any one of the mode can be taken for the delivery of the course i.e. Online; Special Course: short term courses etc.; Integrated within the Curriculum; Self Learning Packages (CD/DVD), Guides, Brochures; Workshop/Training/Demonstration, etc.,

- **Acquisition/Development of Instructional Materials:** After deciding on the mode of delivery, the required material for the instruction is either acquired or developed jointly in companion of different experts to serve the purpose.

- **Implementation of the Programme:** After the designing of course content and the availability of appropriate materials for the delivery of the instructional programme, eventually the course/programme is implemented. Indeed successful implementation of the programme largely depends on the way the authority consents over the importance of the course/programme.

- **Evaluation:** To assess/determine the effectiveness of any programme, evaluation of the same is of utmost importance. Depending on the mode of delivery of the programme, different ways/methods of evaluation can be employed i.e. based on the suggestions and feedbacks received from the users/participants varied evaluation model can be used.

- **Need Up gradation:** After the assessment of the programme based on the different findings, if the need persist to accommodate the various loopholes in
the programme, the same is updated or reviewed. It is a continuous process to make the programme current and popular among the participants/users.

Once the programme gets started, it does not require to undergo the second step again, but may be considered in some exceptional circumstances. While the other succeeding steps needs to be reviewed from time to time.

6.2.1 Course Content

The course content given below can be adopted in any information literacy training programmes either in short term courses or as a curriculum. Depending upon the level of users some of the sub contents may be delimited.

- Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom.
  Information-Definition, Characteristics, Need.
  Role of Information
  Types of Information, Different Sources of Information-primary, secondary and Tertiary
- Introduction to Library Facilities and Services
- Information Technology-Definition, Need/Use of Information Technology, Components, Impact.
  Computer-Components- Hardware, Software (word processing, spreadsheet etc.), Storage Devices
  Network-Library Network (JANET, OCLC, etc), Library Consortia (INDEST, INFLIBNET, CSIR, FORSA), Information Systems- Components (Libraries, Documentation Centers, Data Banks, Referral House, Clearing House, etc)
  Internet-Components, Different Services (email, Chat, Telnet, Video Conferencing, etc.), Downloading, Copying, Printing etc.
- Search Engines- Use, Importance and Techniques (search strategies-keyword, phrase search, wild card/truncation, Boolean search, etc)
  Different Information Retrieval Tools- Subject Gateways, Portals, Online Databases, etc.
Use of Different Digital Resources-OPAC, Web-OPAC, CD-ROMs, E-Journals, E-Books, Open Sources, etc.

- Effective and Ethical Use of Information
  - Copyright
  - Intellectual Property Right
  - Plagiarism
- Understanding and Providing Citations Using Various Styles of References- MLA, APA, Harvard, etc.

- Evaluation of Information- Need, Different Ways- Authoritativeness, Authenticity, Currency, Usability, Reliability, etc.

6.2.2 Information Literacy Model for Library Staff

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<th>Ability</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Content</th>
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This is the information handling capacity of library staff to create use and store information for users at large (for example creating local databases, institutional and knowledge repositories etc.)

Information/Database so created need to be accessed instantly with proper security. Remote and unlimited access (any time, anywhere and any format) allow users to make use of information resources according to their convenience (for example access to library website, library e-resources, library consortia, web OPAC, etc.)

Content creation in electronic environment and uploading the same in the library website. Library staff should be acquainted with various formats, standards, protocols including legal issues and to make it more user friendly for uploading and down loading (for example OCR technology, metadata creation, interoperability, MARC-21 and Dublin Core etc.)
Evaluation

Library staff should evaluate usefulness of electronic information resources through usage of particular journals, maintaining user statistics etc.

6.2.3 Information Literacy Model for Library Users

Computer Literate

Ability or capacity to handle hardware and software, creating and accessing files, data security, uploading and downloading stored files etc.

Electronic Literate

Computer literacy will lead to use of electronic databases like CD-ROM, CD-DVD, and other information resources available in electronic format.

Internet Literate

A computer and electronic literate shall prompt the users to access and use internet and its vast information resources.

Digital Literate

A regular user of internet could access digital resources available in various websites, accessing e-resources like UGC-Infonet digital library consortia or N-LIST.

6.3 Scope for Further Research

The promotion and propagation of information literacy in the developed countries have taken a sea change by the irrespective of libraries. This concept is just picking up in the developing country like India. Since India is visualizing a knowledge society by 2020, the government has recognized the value and importance of information and knowledge. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) also emphasized the
development of libraries to serve as “gateway to knowledge”. Therefore it is in this context information literacy plays an important role in accessing, storing, retrieving and handling information available through different sources. Equally important is to develop the ability or capability of users at large and the library staff associated with.

The trends and developments in information literacy and its application in the libraries in general and college libraries in particular have created serious concern to explore different areas of research avenues for its effective and efficient implementation. Few of the emerging thrust areas of research which can be undertaken by the scholars of Library and Information Science are as follows:

- Identifying parameters and guidelines for enhancing the information handling capacity of different categories of library professional “academic, public and special.”
- Impact of information literacy on social, educational and economic development.
- Information Literacy for community development.
- Assessment and evaluation of information literacy on library staff and library users.
- Information competence development of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students in education process through ICT means.
- Organizational and pedagogical dimensions in providing information literacy instructions to the library users.
- Design and development of information literacy instructions for library staff and library users.

6.4 Conclusion

Use of Information Technology (IT) i.e. application of computers and other technologies in the libraries has eased the different house keeping operations of the library. Likewise the application of ICT in libraries has dramatically changed the services rendered by the libraries. It plays a pivotal role in harnessing emerging technologies and provides value added services to the users. Application of ICT is
also instrumental to design and develop online information system, website
development, and virtual library.

To capitalize the varied services and its effective use, users must understand ICT –
ability to select appropriate techniques and technology, evaluation of the retrieved
information, its use and understanding /obeying of one important aspect in the use of
information in this information age i.e. IPR/copyright. On the other hand library
professionals must develop their ICT skills and should play a vital role in educating
the users.

Many developed countries have embedded information literacy in their respective
national policies. In the international scenario phenomenal advances are taking place
in academic field, promoting IL through library acts and some are introducing it in the
institutional levels.

It is evident from the present study that information literacy for college libraries can
not be developed in isolation. It requires a holistic approach to integrate all the
libraries under the library system which includes public, academic and special
libraries. The government either at state or central level should formulate an
appropriate plan or policy to recognize the value and importance of information
literacy in libraries. It is equally important that the information literacy should spread
over library users, library staff, attitude of the library authorities and supporting ICT
infrastructure including Internet. Appropriate competency development models,
guidelines, strategies need to be framed and adopted at state and national level which
has a great impact on societal development and nation building.

It is in this context that the colleges which figure the maximum number as compared
to universities in India should address the issues and challenges for development of
information literacy in college libraries.