CHAPTER - 6

FINDINGS – SUGGESTIONS

- FUTURE AVENUES OF RESEARCH
FINDINGS

The study has made a modest attempt to spot out the best practices that are followed in the centres of higher learning and research in the context of information literacy. Specifically the study has focused on information literacy as a means of maximising the research productivity. In the process of research, the scholar has made an elaborate collection of data and analysis of the same using normal statistical operations. The summation of the study has paved the way for enlisting the following finding which are in a way helping to give some constrictive suggestions. The data collected through the questionnaire and its subsequent interpretation in Chapter 5 lead to the following major findings of the study.

1. The first objective of the study is to know the availability of information technology infrastructure in the selected library and information centres of higher learning and research. From Table-1 it is clear that majority of respondents have moderate and good information technology infrastructure facilities. Gadgets such as computers, printers, scanners, barcode reader/scanner and reprographic machines are available in large number. Some of the libraries even revealed the availability of latest electronic equipments such as laptops, electronic check point system, portal data terminals, book scanners, terabyte server, access control system and compact storage devices.
2. Majority of libraries have developed sizeable and need based print collection taking into consideration the core research areas of the organisation as many of the respondents are attached to research and development organisations. The collection in the form of books, bound volume of journals, reports, patents, standards and even preprints/reprints are available in good number. Almost 65.22% of respondents have developed their institutional repositories which are accessible through Internet or Intranet, in addition newspaper clippings and thesis/dissertations have formed part of such repositories.

3. The impact of electronic publishing is changing the entire scenario of scholarly communication and libraries are no exception to this. Though 95.65% of libraries are subscribing for good number of print journals, electronic journals are also being subscribed by 91.30% of respondents in respectable numbers. The shift from print to electronic is clearly visible.

4. The audio-visual sources such as film strips, slides, audio and video cassettes, films, and videotapes etc. are now being replaced by CD-ROMs and DVDs. Considerable (65.22%) respondents have preserved the audio-visual sources and 91.30% of respondents have non-print materials in the form of CD-ROMs and DVDs. Few, 34.80% respondents have the access to e-books. Floppies which are treated as obsolete technology with the advent of CDs and pen drives they are surviving in few libraries (43.48%).
5. All (100.00%) the respondents provide library services such as lending/circulation, reading hall, reference, inter library loan and photocopying. Large majority (91.30%) respondents provide referral services also along with only 30.43% of libraries having microfilm reader service.

6. Internet based services such as access to library networks (91.30%), document delivery service (86.95%), E-journals (95.65%), E-mail facility (100.00%), network printing facility (82.61%), online information search service (86.95%) and Web OPAC (91.30) are the most popular. Whereas bulletin board service (47.83%) and current events/news (56.52%) are just picking-up.

7. Nearly 43.48% of respondents are conducting information literacy training only for new users of the library. Whereas 26.10% each conduct when requested and annually. Only 17.40% of respondents conduct information literacy training at regular interval. It is believed that information literacy is treated as an integral part of the libraries.

8. Nearly 82.61% of the libraries it is the librarian who conducts information literacy training programmes. There is a need for having collaboration with other experts in the organization.

9. About 65.22% of respondents don’t receive any formal technological training. Among those who receive, 87.50% receive it from the product vendors and 12.50% receive it from outside trainer/consultant. There is a need for taking training as a serious issue. As the percentage state, there are sincere
efforts to prepare the instructional materials in different forms.

10. It is commonly observed that the respondents are offering information literacy training in various areas such as catalogues (100.00%), library website (86.95%), Internet search (86.95%), E-journals (95.65%) and databases (86.95%). Only few (47.83%) libraries are offering information literacy training in evaluation of information sources.

11. It is notable feature that 86.95% of libraries information literacy programmes are developed in house by team of library professionals as part of a range of duties.

12. In majority (86.95%) of libraries existing staff provides updates and enhanced services followed by 65.22% where existing staff develops new services. In only 13.04% of libraries consultants are briefed by staff for updates and new developments and only 4.35% has additional staff to support developments.

13. About 86.95% respondents opined that interaction is the best technique in developing information literacy programmes.

14. As it is evident that interaction is the best technique, face-to-face or one to one (82.61%) is the best method used for information literacy programmes followed by Intranet portals (60.87%), just-in-time or point-of-contact (56.52%), lectures/demonstrations (56.52%) and printed training manuals (43.48%). Seminars/workshops (21.74%) and online tutorials (30.43%) are other preferred methods of delivery of information literacy programmes among the respondents.
15. Majority (91.30%) of respondents indicated that Internet services are used in designing information literacy programmes. Large majority (90.48%) respondents use the Internet services for database searches followed by 85.71% respondents using it for delivering information literacy programmes through e-mails.

16. Large majority (82.61%) of respondents says that access to Internet plays an important role while designing and delivering information literacy programmes.
SUGGESTIONS

A thorough examination of the analysis of the data and findings enabled the researcher to enlist the following suggestions to the respondents for the effective information literacy programmes.

1. The information technology infrastructure plays a very important role in the successful planning, designing and delivering the information literacy programmes. Though some of the respondents have good infrastructure facilities, the initiation for the information literacy is not making the head way.

2. As more and more information is available through networks such as World Wide Web and Internet, respondents have to design a workable strategy to explain the situation. There is an urgent need for starting bulletin board and current events/news services.

3. Though information literacy instruction activities are more in academic environment, research and development libraries need to develop a culture of conducting information literacy programmes at regular intervals instead of when requested and for new users.

4. There is an urgent need for training the trainers apart from constant exposure to the newly emerging technology. This enables the professionals to be proactive teachers.

5. As information seeking behaviour and information needs differ from person to person, there is strong need to develop different information literacy programmes for different category of users. The subsequent use behaviour in selecting a particular
information source by the individuals or user groups should be
given due importance while planning, designing and delivering
information literacy programmes.

6. The credibility of Internet information is a crucial problem. While
the credibility of information in general is an issue, the Internet
presents a new set of challenges. Libraries should develop
interactive tutorials to teach users how to evaluate the quality of
information on the Internet.

7. There is a need to develop guides for citing electronic
information and resources. Instead, information literacy
programmes that deal with citing e-mail communications,
websites, citations and quotations in text, references for specific
documents on a website and references for articles and abstracts
obtained from electronic databases will be of great use to the
library clientele.

8. Very few libraries have good staff strength. For successful
implementation of information literacy instruction across the
institution, there must be adequate library professional staff for
providing new services and updating the existing services.

More important suggestions:

1. Formulation of standards and guidelines
2. Formation of National Information Literacy Mission
3. Need for major role to be played by the National Knowledge
   Commission
4. Under the Right To Information Act, the Information Literacy
   Commission be formulated by the Government
5. Launching of National Information Literacy Website
FUTURE AVENUES OF RESEARCH

Information literacy research is still in its infancy in India. Much of the research in information literacy around the world is concentrated on the higher education sector. It includes work that investigates information literacy in a specific discipline, information literacy experiences, induction of information literacy and evaluation of information literacy programmes. Along with these aspects, information literacy as a generic skill and information literacy as expressed in information seeking behaviour are also carried out. India is in urgent need of the National Information Literacy Forum where issues related to Information Literacy can be discussed at National level and solutions can be obtained for the emerging questions/problems. Government sponsored dedicated Information Literacy website be launched where in the information regarding Information Literacy programmes can be made available. Government should also make efforts in preparing policy guidelines and standards at National level. Countries like United States, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Turkey, Denmark and Canada have their own standards and guidelines, it is essential for India to go for such guidelines and standards. Library Associations at National and State levels should come forward and organize workshops/conferences/seminars related to Information Literacy policies, programmes, implementation and evaluation. The authorities at different levels of planning and programme implementation should also come forward and formulate a national commission to promote the cause of Information Literacy programmes. University Grants Commission (UGC) should take initiative in
directing the higher educational institutions to integrate the Information Literacy across the curriculum by designing a separate paper at the undergraduate/post graduate level. Universities should undertake a systematic assessment of student information competence to develop benchmarks, which will help in preparing model list of information competence skills for students entering the University and graduating from the University. There is a strong need of number of projects, conferences, workshops, working groups, developing information literacy standards, teaching initiatives (including information literacy component in curriculum and designing information literacy courses), development of websites and web-based tutorials.

Information literacy should become a movement to be started in all kinds of libraries. The new education must aim at teaching the individuals how to classify and reclassify information, how to evaluate its validity, how to change categories when necessary, how to move from the concrete to the abstract and back, how to look at problems from a new direction, how to teach himself. Tomorrow's illiterates will not be the man who can't read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn i.e., in other words, the man who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn. Information professionals are at the gateway of the new age, as mediator, interpreter, guide and navigator to more diverse media, technologies and resources. Information professionals have a crucial role to play in the direction of development and implementation of global information infrastructure. What is needed is new skills, new learning pathways and new learning options. Education and training in this regard become a key ingredient and increasingly knowledge-based.
Higher education therefore is critical to the future of this country in creating a "learning society". Therefore, there is a strong need for collaboration among library and information professionals, educators, administrative faculty, researchers, technologists, media specialists and library associations for taking information literacy initiatives in libraries. A shift in libraries and institutions is necessary for major re-orientation to information literacy and lifelong learning. The importance of information and learning is increasingly being recognised in the government policies. This has been neatly demonstrated by the Government in the form of enacting the "Right To Information Act" and also formulation of the "National Knowledge Commission". A national information literacy and lifelong learning vision and sufficient investment in the nation’s library system and higher education are necessary for an effective implementation.

Following is the list of problems that can be tapped by the future researchers.

- A comparative study of standards and guidelines developed by some of the developing and developed countries. Subsequent framing of standards and guidelines for India taking into account the policies, research needs and educational setup available in the country.

- Information literacy and its impact at the elementary educational level and designing a workable curriculum.

- Case studies related to information literacy can be carried out in different library settings and information literacy programmes along with instructional strategies in such environments.
- Information literacy and its relevance in the workplace is another area for the future researcher.
- Developing information literacy teaching tools and kits in different library settings may be a good area to tap.
- Information literacy competency among researchers, teachers and practitioners may be periodically examined to formulate national standards.
- Information literacy instruction opportunity for distance education is a hot topic of research.
- The impact of technology on information literacy education in different library set-ups is the useful area of research.
- Evaluation of information literacy programmes already in practice in different library set-ups may be periodically conducted to workout the models.

There is a large scale demand for the studies in Information Literacy. It is like a gold mine, more and more one digs, much more one can get. Only problem is that, it requires the combination of expertise to assess the problems of prospects of information literacy.