

# Evaluating Awareness and Usage of Library Services among Undergraduate Students of Silchar Medical College, Silchar, Assam

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**Abstract** - Information Literacy now-a -days plays a very important role in everyday life because it involves a combination of education, job related task social involvements and social cultural practice. Information literacy is important for individuals to reach their desired goal in any field. The present study has been undertaken with a view to promote information literacy among Special library users with Special reference to the Silchar Medical College, Silchar, Assam. The present work was carried out during March 2018 to July 2018. For that purpose, survey method has been adopted, which comprises of questionnaire, for knowing the opinion of the respondents in respect of Promoting Information literacy among the library users. The study result reveals that a few students were aware about the different sources of information and also the different search techniques. The study also reveals that the promotion of information literacy is required in many areas such as Library OPAC, Classification and cataloguing etc.

**Keywords:** Information Literacy, Library Services, Silchar Medical College, Special Library

## I. INTRODUCTION

We live in an information intensive world. Information has come to occupy a predominant position in the decision-making process. It is the need of the hour for all, to decipher the environment and make our way through the world. Economic political, technological, military and social power of information is easily noticeable. It is an important resource for overall development and is the most valuable possession any society has. Knowledge is culture, passed on from generation to generation (Khairah, 2005).

It is easier for individual to access information at any place, time and about anything. The reason being the recent developments in information communication technologies and globalization of information (Karisiddappa, 2014). The information social structure is witness to a vast and ever increasing variety of information, embodied in myriad formats and a distinct advancement of technology. To lead a successful life, it is a prerequisite for students to be information competent. Thus, it is a prerogative of educational institutions to help students develop this competency and become well-informed citizens of a society established on platforms of information and technology.

Over the past few years, information literacy skills form an integral part of a graduate's attributes. A gradual shift in

focus from content to critical thinking and lifelong learning has been noticed. It is a move from teacher-centered teaching to student-centered learning. In this shift, importance of information literacy is increasingly recognized within academic and non-academic communities.

### A. Background of the Study

Information Literacy now-a -days plays a very important role in everyday life because it involves a combination of education, job related task social involvements and social cultural practice. Information literacy is important for individuals to reach their desired goal in any field. It is pivotal factor in creating individuals who are effective learners and knowledge based societies. Information literacy needs to be considered not only in relation to education but also in the broader context of work, civil society, health and well-being (Garner, 2003). Information Literacy means to aid a person realizing the need for information.

The Silchar Medical College & Hospital (SMCH) remains the only referral hospital in the southern part of Assam and so, is the sole custodian of health care system of the entire Barak Valley. Being situated in a very strategic geographic location, it also renders its services to the ailing community of the neighboring states like Mizoram, North Tripura, West Manipur and South Meghalaya

The Central College Library of SMCH, Silchar is the only academic information distribution centre which provides access to the library facility for information needs of medical students as well as the faculty of SMCH. The college library acquires mainly text and reference books related to medical science. Apart from this it also possesses other different kinds of collections like Non-medical books, Index Medicus, AIIMS and other medical publications, Newsletters, CIBA collections, ICMR collection, WHO Collection, Health Information India, journals etc. The college library is also a member of National Medical Library ERMED Consortium with access to number of online foreign medical journals. Apart from traditional library service the library also provide internet service and automated library service with LIBSYS ILMS.

An attempt has been made in the study to evaluate the awareness of library services among the undergraduate students of Silchar Medical College and Hospital, Silchar Assam. The present study carried out during March to July 2018.

### *B. Objectives of the Study*

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the awareness of library services among library Users with Special reference to Silchar Medical College. The objectives of the study are summarized as follows:

1. To understand the user's ability and specify their information needs and level of awareness of the users about different sources of Information;
2. To understand the pattern of library usage by users of Silchar Medical College;
3. To know the Satisfaction level of the respondents are able to make use of the retrieved Information;
4. To know the opinion of the users regarding Present Information Literacy Programs (ILP) of the Library.

### *C. Scope & Limitation of the Study*

The scope of the study is limited to the Silchar Medical College, Silchar, Assam. The students of the institute have been taken into consideration for the purpose of the present study.

1. The study has been further delimited to the Library users of Silchar Medical College, Silchar, Assam;
2. The data pertaining to the study were collected through the Questionnaires, Interview-Schedule and Personal Observation.
3. The reliability of the facts depends on the honesty of the respondents.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Meltzer, Maughan & Fry (1995) conducted a case study of undergraduate students of University of California, Los Angeles to investigate the use of library among students and to determine students' perceptions of the library. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the students used the library to study their own material. Caravello, Herschman & Mitchell (2001) assesses information literacy skills of undergraduates at University of California, Los Angeles. Maughan (2001) conducted a survey to measure the information literacy competencies of graduating seniors in selected academic departments of University of California-Berkeley. Kavulya (2003) carried out a study at some selected university libraries in Kenya to identify and assess the information literacy programs offered by these libraries and also to investigate the problems faced by librarians in carrying out these programs Mittermeyer & Quirion (2003) conducted a survey of incoming first-year undergraduates in Quebec universities to determine their information literacy skills. Salisbury & Ellis (2003) conducted a project at the University of Melbourne to evaluate selected information literacy programs provided to

the students in the Arts faculty. Freeman (2004) conducted a survey of first-year undergraduate students at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia to investigate the relationship between undergraduates' self-assessment of library skills and their opinion of library instruction. Franklin (2005) conducted a study of doctoral students' opinion about the importance of seven information literacy competencies.

Julien (2005) conducted a study on professional librarians for assessing their information literacy instruction level. Ninety three schools of library and information science were examined from all over the world. Azmi (2006) undertook a survey to assess the IT course taught to students of Qatar University and also to know the most preferred skills acquired by the students through this 15course. The survey results revealed that finding information on the Internet was a favourable topic among the majority of the students. Coleman (2007) investigated the information literacy skills of first-year students of Barnard College. The results of the project revealed that almost half of the respondents used the library once or twice a month. Gross & Latham (2007) conducted a study on information literacy skills among incoming freshmen students at Florida State University. Proficiencies among the undergraduate arts students of the University of the Western Cape.

Singh (1988) reports the results of a survey conducted to study the career advancement of academic library professionals in New Delhi. The study intends to find out the factors leading to the advancement in library profession, to establish possible relations between some characters of professionals and their advancement in career. Vespry and Kitiyadisai (1992) survey the application of information technology (IT) among academic libraries in Thailand. Siddiqui (1997) reports the use of information technology in seven university libraries of Saudi Arabia. Tran and Gorman (1999) reports results of a survey questionnaire survey administered to 36 information professionals in Vietnamese libraries, which explores progress in the implementation of information technology (IT) in the library and information sector.

Kannappanavar and Vijayakumar (2001) survey the use of hardware and software facilities in University of Agricultural science libraries in Karnataka. The aim of the study was to evaluate the access of networks, information services and barriers in information technology applications. Al-Qallaf and Al-Azmi (2002) in a survey study the availability and use of information technology in public libraries in Kuwait. Jeevan and Saji (2004) present the results of a survey conducted among the premier libraries in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala to assess the Information Technology adoption in these libraries. Singh (2004), in his book "use of IT in Library and Information Science" state that the application of IT in modern libraries is helpful to obtain the right information at right time in right place at the right cost. Improved the status of the library and it reduces the work load of the professions.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Source of Data

The present study is based on the survey method of research using mainly questionnaire as a data collection tool and carried out interview of the respondents in some cases. Required data for the present study were collected from Silchar Medical College. The study is mainly based on the primary data collected from Silchar Medical College through a well designed questionnaire. Besides, the secondary data was collected from sources like text books, reference books, national and international journals and various e-resources.

#### B. Tools for the Collection of Data

The tools of data collection translate the research objectives into specific questions/ items, which will provide the data required to achieve the research objectives. The following tools were used for collection of data pertaining to the present study:

**Questionnaire:** A questionnaire comprising well structured questions were set up for response. It was assured that the information given by them would be used for the research purpose only and would be kept confidential.

**Personal Interview:** The interviewer used to have a face to face dialogue and to collect more reliable data, personal interviews were arranged with users of Silchar Medical College giving prior intimation to the respondents. The interviews were conducted according to an interview schedule.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND IMPORTANT FINDINGS

#### A. Response Rate

A total number of 100 questionnaires were distributed among the medical students of SMC, out of which 85 questionnaires duly filled by the respondents were received back. The overall response rate is 85% percent.

TABLE I RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE RESPONDENTS (N=100)

Questionnaire	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Received	85	85.0
Not received	15	15.0
Total	100	100.00

#### B. Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents

The survey result as shown in Table II shows gender –wise distribution of respondents which indicates that number of male respondents 49 (57.64%%) is more than that of female respondents 36 ( 42.35 %), although equal number of questionnaire were distributed amongst the male and female respondents. While making comparison between male and

female respondents, it reveals that the percentage of male respondents is high in comparison to female respondents.

TABLE II GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS (N=85)

Sex	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Male	49	57.64
Female	36	42.35
Total	85	100.00

#### C. Frequency of Library Visit

To know the frequency of library visit of user, questionnaire distributed to the respondents and the result reveals that 9 (10.58%) respondents visit library as daily basis, 17(20%) visit library once a week, 37 (43.29%) visits library twice a week, 4 (4.70%) visits fortnightly basis, 5 (5.88%) visits library on monthly basis and 13 (15.29%) respondents visits library occasionally.

TABLE III FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY VISIT (N=85)

Frequency	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	9	10.58
Once a Week	17	20.0
Twice a Week	37	43.29
Fortnightly	4	4.70
Monthly	5	5.88
Occasionally	13	15.29
Total	85	100.00

#### D. Purpose of Library Visit of Students

To know the purpose of library visit of Students, questionnaire send to respondents and the result reveals that out of 85 respondents, 42(49.41%) visits library for reading reference books and 17(20%) for reading text books whereas 15(17.64%) visits for searching internet only 11(12.94%) visits library for other purpose.

TABLE IV PURPOSE OF LIBRARY VISIT OF STUDENTS (N=85)

Purpose of Library Visit	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
For Reading Text Books	17	20
For Reading Reference Books	42	49.41
For Internet Search	15	17.64
Other Purpose	11	12.94
Total	85	100.00

#### E. Awareness with Different Sources of Information

Table III reveals that 25 (29.41%) users were aware that dictionary is the best source to find meaning of word, 23 (27.05%) users were aware that online databases that is the right source for locating subject information 19 (22.35%) users were aware that encyclopedia is the right source for

locating background information, 16 (18.82%) users aware that directory is the right choice for locate address and telephone numbers. where only 2 (2.35%) users aware about Atlas.

TABLE V AWARENESS WITH DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Different sources of Information	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Dictionary	25	29.41
Directory	16	18.82
Atlas	2	2.35
Encyclopedia	19	22.35
Online databases	23	27.05
Total	85	100

#### F. Search Strategies Used

Table VI reveals that search Strategies used for searching and retrieving information from databases. Simple Keyword search Technique used by most of the users i.e. 33 (38.82), while 25(29.41%) users used Field search technique, Truncation and Boolean operators used by users that is 12 (14.11%) and 9 (10.58%) where only 6 i.e. 7.05% used others technique.

TABLE VI SEARCH STRATEGIES USED

Search Strategies Used	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Simple Keyword Search	33	38.82
Boolean Operators(AND,OR,NOT)	9	10.58
Truncation	12	14.11
Field Search(title/URL etc)	25	29.41
Others	6	7.05
Total	85	100

#### G. Awareness about Method Followed for Shelving Books

Table VII illustrates that level of awareness among respondents regarding shelf arrangement in Silchar Medical College library, 24 (28.23%) users reported that books on the shelves according to the title of the book, 31 (36.47%) stated that books on the shelves arranged according to Author wise while 11 (12.94%) indicating that books are arranged according to accession number. Only 19 (22.35%) respondents choose the correct answer that books are arranged on the selves according to their call numbers.

TABLE VII AWARENESS ABOUT METHOD FOLLOWED FOR SHELVING BOOKS

Shelf Arrangement method	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Title	24	28.23
Author	31	36.47
Call No	19	22.35
Accession No	11	12.94
Total	85	100

#### H. User Satisfaction and Library Orientation

Table VIII shows the satisfaction level of the respondents with library orientation and training/ instruction provided by the library staff. The result shows that 32 (37.64%) users were very satisfied, 20 (23.52%) users were satisfied and 28 (32.94%) were neutral where only 5 (5.88%) respondents were dissatisfied with library orientation by the library staff.

TABLE VIII USER SATISFACTION AND LIBRARY ORIENTATION

User Satisfaction	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	32	37.64
Satisfied	20	23.52
Neutral	28	32.94
Dissatisfied	5	5.88
Very Dissatisfied	0	100
Total	85	100

#### I. Area where Information Literacy Promotions are Required

Table IX depicts that out of 85 respondents majority of the respondents 21 (24.70%) requires training in search Strategy, which is followed by Library OPAC that is 17 (20%), 16 (18.82%) requires training in E-Resources, 12 (14.11%) requires in Print resources, and 8 (9.41%) in computers, 2 (2.35%) in Internets.

TABLE IX AREA WHERE INFORMATION LITERACY PROMOTIONS ARE REQUIRED

Areas where ILPs are required	Nos.	Percentage (%)
E-Resources	16	18.82
Print Resources	12	14.11
Computers	8	9.41
Internets	2	2.35
Search Strategy	21	24.70
Library OPAC	17	20.0
Classification and Cataloguing	9	10.58
Total	85	100

#### V. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

On the basis of the present study it may be concluded that undergraduate students of Silchar Medical College need more specific library services to meet their information needs. Hence, to fulfill the objective, following suggestions should be taken into the consideration by library administration of Silchar Medical College-

1. Library should organize awareness/ orientation program for the users of Silchar Medical College Library on regular interval.
2. Library must adopt latest library technique and device in its operation. So that it provides service in order to save time of library users because the manual system is time consuming.

3. The library should conduct feedback / users survey to know the specific need of the users from time to time.
4. Library should conduct study on the use and usability of ICT by the users of professional institute libraries needs to be made on regular basis.

Thus we can say that user awareness is most important to make the maximum utilization of library resources available in the library and needs to be considered not only in relation to education but also in the broader context of work, civil society, health and well-being.

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