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Information Literacy Among Students of Regional Institute of Paramedical and Nursing Science (RIPANS) Aizawl, Mizoram.

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ABSTRACT

The research looks into the information literacy skills of students at RIPANS Aizawl, Mizoram. To accomplish the goal, structured questionnaires were distributed to 150 respondents, of which 144 received questionnaires. There were 6 departments, and 25 questionnaires were distributed to students from each department. The results show that several students understand how to access and use information to meet their needs. They go on to say that they needed more information literacy awareness to become information literate, and that they needed a large number of books with the most recent editions in the library to have reliable information. They also needed good cooperation among students and library staff to share and appeal their problem.

Keywords: information literacy, students, lifelong learning, higher education, RIPANS

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of human efficiency has brought about numerous changes in society, which have been found to have an impact on the lives of all humans. Everyone requires information for their daily lives, their future, and their progress in everyday life. The ability to access, use, and identify specific information is referred to as information literacy. There could be different categories, such as media literacy, computer literacy, library literacy, and so on.

Being information literate prepares a person to be a lifelong learner; it enables a person to master their content and become self-sufficient.

Most youth in the twenty-first century have a lot of advantages because they are most familiar with information technology and know how to accommodate it, while there is plenty of information to be found in every corner due to the explosion of information. It can be difficult to find accurate and reliable information when looking for the correct information. As a result, students in this era must have information literacy skills in order to be able to eliminate useless information from a plethora of information scattered and to obtain the exact information required in the form of both physical and electronic forms, which may shape them to become independent learners as well as lifelong learners. Due to that, students who are expected to be the long-term administrators of society are in desperate need of information literacy skills, both for academic purposes and for the development of communities. Knowing the significance of this thought, Paul Zurkowski, President of the Information Industry Association in 1974, introduced the concept of 'information literacy.'

ALA defines information literacy as a "set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."(ALA, 1989). Also, the UNESCO defines "Information literacy empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use, and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals"(UNESCO, 2017)

INFORMATION LITERACY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

An information literate student is expected to be an independent learner, they know how to identify their exact information needs and knows where to locate them, they understand how to utilize different technology tools for getting their information needs and also used for communication, they need confidence and greater skills to unravel their problem, they also build their creativity and locate to carry a high standard, they can easily adapt themselves and are flexible in any group. For students to effectively use the information, they are required to own information literacy skills in this Information technology era.

Information literacy competency standards for Higher Education developed by the Association of college and Research Libraries (ACRL) focus on executing information literacy

concepts across higher education curriculum. According to ACRL information, a literate student should:-

- 1) Determines the character and broaden the information needed.
- 2) Accesses needed information well and professionally.
- 3) Evaluates information and its sources significantly and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge found and value system
- 4) Individual or as a member of a group uses information well to achieve a specific purpose.
- 5) Understands several forms of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and uses information decently and with permission. (Eisenberg, et. all 2004)

BRIEF SUMMARY ABOUT RIPANS

Regional Institute of Paramedical and Nursing (RIPANS), Aizawl was established in 1996, located in Zemabawk, Aizawl on the slope of a hill donated by Govt. of Mizoram, with a distance only 10 km off from Aizawl City. It is surrounded by National Highway 54 on the South-East and a Hospital and a Health Department Store on the North-West. The institution was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India in 1995-1996 under North Eastern Council (NEC). In 2007, the institution was transferred to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The main objective of the institution is to create and provide adequate Paramedical Man Power to the assorted health sector of the North Eastern Region and other parts of India and abroad.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Due to the advancements in various fields, being information literate is essential for standing out from the crowd. In this day and age, when everyone is busy looking for their own information needs, students in this competitive world cannot rely solely on their teachers; they must search on their own to figure out their dissertation, assignment, making notes, and so on,

which is why they must have the ability to search for information. Students from RIPANS enroll in their courses after finishing higher secondary school and are expected to understand how to gather their information needs. There has previously been research on information literacy conducted in several colleges in Aizawl, but no research has been found conducted in RIPANS or within the area of medical colleges, which is why the author is motivated to conduct this research, hoping to make visible the current state of the students' information literacy skills, identify their needs, and make recommendations for their development

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dorvlo and Dadzie (2016) in their study highlight that a lot of the students are information illiterate. They further suggest keeping the information literacy program as a curriculum will be helpful for the student and if information literacy was taught from the graduate level will help the student a lot in selecting their needed information. Banik and Kumar (2019) also mention the impact of information literacy skills on student's performance, knowing they suggest that government and non-government organizations should develop student information literacy skills by providing them with proper quality education and training both in academic and vocational aspects. Manthiramoorthi, M., et. all., (2019) conducted a study that finds that both Undergraduate and Postgraduate students are aware of information literacy and that they both know how to acquire their required information. The librarian should conduct a seminar or any program associated with information literacy for the improvement of student's information literacy skills. Zeeshan, et. all (2020) mention that a lot of the students are aware of information literacy and the important role plays in their academic achievement. For collecting their information they preferred library, subject, and research-related content to identify and access information to satisfy their needs. As per their finding, they suggest that LIS professionals should prepare an information literacy awareness program.

METHODOLOGY

For collecting data survey method was used, a structured questionnaire with the total number of 150 questionnaire which was framed using Likert Scale which was randomly distributed among student of RIPANS, to understand their awareness about information literacy and the total number of 144 (96%) questionnaire was received from the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Course wise distribution of respondent

| Course Name | Number of Respondents (N=144) |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| B.Sc (N) | 24(16%) |
| B. Pharm | 25 (17%) |
| B. Option | 25(17%) |
| B.Sc RIT | 24(16%) |
| B.Sc MLT | 25 (17%) |
| M. Pharm | 21 (14%) |
| Total | 144(96%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Table 2: Gender wise distribution of respondent

| Gender | B.Sc (N) | B.Pharm | B.Option | B.Sc RIT | B.Sc MLT | M.Pharm |
|---------------|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| Female | 22 (15%) | 19(13%) | 15 (10%) | 14 (9%) | 13 (9%) | 10 (7%) |
| Male | 2 (1%) | 6 (4%) | 10 (7%) | 10 (7%) | 12 (8%) | 11 (7%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Table 3: Age-wise distribution of respondent

| Age Group | Respondent (N=144) |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Below 22 | 83(57.63%) |
| 23 to 27 | 61(42.36%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Information literacy program

Attending training, workshops, or awareness programmes makes everyone more informed than they were before, and the knowledge we gain can help us improve in a variety of fields of work. To determine whether the respondent had ever attended or received any information literacy awareness programme, they were asked to select any two options from the

table below. The result shows that 27(18%) have attended such kind of program whereas 117(78%) of them never attend the program.

Table 4: Information literacy program

| Information literacy program | Respondent (N=144) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Yes | 27 (18%) |
| No | 117(78%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Opinion on information literacy awareness program

To determine whether they needed an information literacy programme, they were asked to choose one of the options listed in the table.. 50 (33.33%) respondents find it very important 42 (28%) find it to be average importance, 38 (25%) respond it as absolutely essential, 11(7.33%) give of little importance and 3(2%) find not at important at all. According to the findings, the majority of students understand the importance of having an information literacy programme, implying that an information literacy programme should be organised.

Table 5: Opinion on information literacy awareness program

| Opinion | Respondent (N=144) |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Absolutely essential | 38 (25.33%) |
| Very important | 50 (33.33%) |
| Of average importance | 42 (28%) |
| Of little important | 11 (7.33%) |
| Not at important at all | 3 (2%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Their ability to get their information need

To be an information literate person, one must be able to obtain the information they require. The respondents were given the option of rating themselves on whether or not they received the information they required. 93 (61.33%) choose average, 36 (24%) choose above average, 11 (7.33%) select excellent, 4 (2.66%) were below average and 1 (0.66) choose very poor. The result shows that the majority of them know they way to search their information need and are aware of it.

Table 6: Their ability to get their information need

| Ability level | Respondent (N=144) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Excellent | 11 (7.33%) |
| Above Average | 36 (24%) |
| Average | 93 (61.33%) |
| Below Average | 4 (2.66%) |
| Very Poor | 1 (0.66%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Tools used for accessing information

To determine what types of tools they primarily used to access their information needs, respondents were given a selection of different types of tools and asked to choose one. 135 (90%) used mobile phone, 81 (54%) used book, 31 (20.66%) used laptop and 18 (12%) used computer.

Table 7: Tools used for accessing information

| Tools | Respondent (N=144) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mobile Phone | 135 (90%) |
| Computer | 18 (12%) |
| Laptop | 31 (20.66%) |
| Book | 81 (54%) |

Source Questionnaire method

The search strategy used for finding the document

Breaking down our search method makes it simple to obtain the specific information required and to possess accurate information, rather than searching in multiple locations to obtain the exact information required. Here, the respondent was also asked to select their way of searching information 72 (48%) select from the title, 51 (34%) from subject concern, 37 (24.66%) used keyword for searching and 14 (9.33%) search in author ways.

Table 8: Search strategy used for finding the document

| Source | Respondent (N=144) |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Subject | 51 (34%) |
| Title | 72 (48%) |
| Author | 14 (9.33%) |
| Keyword | 37 (24.66%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Awareness about searching technique

Having knowledge of searching techniques such as Boolean Search, Truncation, and Wildcard can help and save an individual time when looking for information. The respondent was asked if they were aware of different searching techniques. The findings show that 73 (48.66%) are not aware of it, 17 (11.33%) are aware of it and 53 (35.33%) are not sure about it.

Table 9: Awareness about searching technique

| Awareness | Respondent (N=144) |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Yes | 17 (11.33%) |
| No | 73 (48.66%) |
| Not Sure | 53 (35.33%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Search Strategy tools used in library

Libraries have a large number of books; knowing the right step to take before searching saves us time, and not knowing the steps to take leads to time waste. 124 (82.66%) search information by heading straight to the department stack area, 11 (7.33%) first consult the library staff, 9 (6%) first search their needed information from the OPAC.

Table 10: Search Strategy used in library

| Search Strategy | Respondent (N=144) |
|--|-------------------------------|
| By searching from OPAC | 9 (6%) |
| Consultation with the library staff | 11 (7.33%) |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| By heading straight to the department book section | 124 (82.66%) |
|---|--------------|

Source Questionnaire method

Way of selecting information

When we need information, we find it difficult to cut off and select the exact information we require due to the abundance of information available. Due to that, the respondent was asked on how they select their information, 125 (83.33%) select if it is related to their search topic, 21 (14%) have preferred website or page for selecting their information and 7 (4.66%) select on the latest publication or work.

Table 11: Way of selecting information

| Way of selecting information | Respondent |
|---|-------------------|
| If it's related to your search topic | 125 (83.33%) |
| Have preferred website or page used for collecting information | 21 (14%) |
| Selecting only the latest publication or work | 7 (4.66%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Information process

We obtain and collect information from various sources; we may have a large amount of information collected; however, knowing how to process information after it has been collected is critical for having reliable information. The respondent was asked how they process their information collected before they used 83 (77%) checks whether it is reliable or not 35 (21.33%) used information as it is and 29 (19.33%) check the relevancy of the information before use.

Table 12: Information process

| Information process | Respondent |
|---|-------------------|
| Used information as it is | 35 (21.33%) |
| Checking whether it is reliable or not | 83 (77%) |
| Verifying if it is relevant or not | 29 (19.33%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Difficulty in getting information

To determine whether they have difficulty getting their information needs met, respondents were asked to select the most appropriate answer from table 13 to assess their difficulty in finding information. The result shows that 119 (79.33%) have a problem some of the time 13 (8.66%) rarely have problem 8 (5.33%) have difficulty most of the time and 4 (2.66%) never have problem in getting information.

Table 13: Difficulty in getting information

| Difficulty | Respondent (N=144) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Most of the time | 8 (5.33%) |
| Some of the time | 119 (79.33%) |
| Seldom | 13 (8.66%) |
| Never | 4 (2.66%) |

Source Questionnaire method

Problem faced in getting information

There could be several reasons why the problem is an issue when searching for information; to determine the problem faced by the respondent, they were asked to choose any of the following matters to clarify their problem face. From the results it shows that 74 (49.33%) are having problem in selecting information from a large amount of information overload, 31 (20.66%) are facing problem due to poor internet connectivity, 19 (18.66%) face problem due to limited time, 11 (7.33%) did not know how to search the required information and 10 (6.66%) face problem due to language barrier.

Table 14: Problem faced in getting information

| Problem faced in getting information | Respondent (N=144) |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Limited Time | 19 (18.66%) |
| Language barrier | 10 (6.66%) |
| Poor internet connectivity | 31 (20.66%) |
| Now knowing how to search the required information | 11 (7.33%) |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Difficulty in selecting information from a large amount of overloaded information | 74 (49.33%) |
|--|-------------|

Source Questionnaire method

SUGGESTION

1. The student requires information literacy program-related seminars, conferences, and other events hosted by the institution to help them search for, locate, and use the information they require.
2. Students who are in the process of gathering information understand the importance of developing literacy skills; therefore, they require the assistance of an expert to guide them through the process of gathering information.
3. Good wifi connectivity is required throughout the campus to assist them in finding the information they require at any time.
4. Due to time constraints, students required library classes in order to spend more time in the library searching for information.
5. The student required books with the most recent publications as well as good computer facilities for accessing information within the library.
6. Aside from their subject-related book collections, the library should also have collections on politics, public administration, and other topics that may aid them in their job search.
7. There must be good cooperation between the library staff and the students in order for them to assist one another in their search for information.
8. To have a better interaction with the students who come to the library, the library staff must be well trained and brief.

CONCLUSION

The advancement of technology has made information available at our fingertips, allowing everyone to share their ideas and increasing the amount of information available. Users must also have information literacy skills in order to search for and select reliable and precise

information. This means that knowing how to search for books in a library is not enough; the user must also upgrade and adjust to new technology, as well as have skills in order to get the exact information they require.

The knowledge of having information literacy skills enables the student to be an independent learner and to obtain the information they require in a short period of time. If students have good information literacy skills, they will undoubtedly improve their academic performance as well as their future studies. According to the findings of the study, many of the students are aware of information literacy and have the ability to obtain the information they require. The students are in desperate need of information and want to learn more about subjects other than their own, which is why they require assistance in sharpening their information-searching skills.

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