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A Literature survey on Information Literacy and Public Libraries in Pakistan

Abstract

In today's technological world, information literacy has become essential, which involves the effective and ethical identification, access, evaluation, and utilization of information. Public libraries are significant contributors to the promotion of information literacy, especially in developing countries such as Pakistan, where information access is limited. The aim of study is to identify effects and role of information literacy in public libraries of Pakistan, identify the issues and challenges faced by libraries, and propose recommendations assess in the improvisation of in literacy programs. This study based on, primary, secondary and tertiary data and information was collected from different information sources such as research article, websites, books, e-journals etc. The outcomes of the research are Public libraries in Pakistan do not offer standardized information literacy programs. Students are the main users of public libraries in Pakistan, followed by instructors and researchers. The majority of Pakistani public libraries have modest digital resource holdings. Pakistan's public libraries are not effectively utilizing technology to advance information literacy. Basic computer skills and information searches are the main topics covered in Pakistani public libraries' information literacy programs. There is a need to create more thorough information literacy courses that encompass research techniques, critical thinking, and online behavior. Promoting information literacy in Pakistan is significantly hampered by the absence of skilled workers in public libraries. To increase information literacy, public libraries in Pakistan must work with schools and universities. Furthermore these findings may prove helpful in promoting information literacy programs in Pakistan's public libraries. Furthermore, the suggestions could help policymakers, library professionals, and educators in creating and implementing effective strategies that cater to the diverse population of Pakistan.

Keywords: Information Literacy, Public Libraries, Issues-Challenges, Literature Survey, Pakistan

Introduction

ACRL defines "Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities that encompasses the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning," according to the ACRL (ACRL, 2016). This definition emphasizes the importance of understanding not only how information is created and how it fits into larger contexts of knowledge creation and moral cooperation in group learning.

People today need to be able to obtain, assess, and use information efficiently in order to make wise decisions, hence it has become a necessary ability. Particularly in poor nations like Pakistan where access to information is frequently constrained, public libraries are important institutions

for fostering information literacy. This study aims to undertake an analytical analysis of public libraries' contributions to information literacy enhancement in Pakistan. By the provision of information resources, training courses, and outreach programs, public libraries in Pakistan are encouraging information literacy. The study also evaluated the success of these initiatives as well as the difficulties public libraries in Pakistan confront in increasing information literacy. Past studies have emphasized the significance of public (Mashhadi, 2012). On the specific significance of public libraries in fostering information literacy in Pakistan, however, there is little analytical research. By thoroughly examining the function of public libraries in fostering information literacy in Pakistan and suggesting potential areas for improvement, this study add to the body of existing material (Zaidi, 2014).

The availability of knowledge and the capacity to critically assess it have grown in significance in the fast-paced world of today. I.L defines information literacy as "the capacity to recognize, locate, assess, organize, and effectively employ information to address a specific issue or problem" (American Library Association, 2013). Libraries in general, especially in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan where there is little access to information, are crucial for boosting information literacy. (Khan, 2017).

One of the most significant functions of public libraries in Pakistan is the promotion of information literacy. Specifically, how Pakistani public libraries are attempting to expand user access to information and encourage the development of information literacy and look at the difficulties Pakistani public libraries have in pursuing these objectives. On the specific significance of public libraries in building information literacy in Pakistan, By shedding light on the obstacles that must be surmounted in order to foster information literacy in Pakistan's public libraries, this study would add to the body of knowledge already available on the subject.

Background

As most of scholar defines that "the ability to access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources effectively and ethically" (American Library Association, 2018). It is a critical skill for individuals in today's society, enabling them to make informed decisions and participate in their communities (Bruce, 2018). In Pakistan, Information literacy is crucial for people to be able to manage the complex continuous updating, especially in places like where access to information is frequently limited.

In both developed and developing nations, public libraries have long been crucial in boosting information literacy. (Barras, 2016). In Pakistan, public libraries have a long history, with the first public library established in Lahore in 1860 (Naseer, 2019). Unfortunately, many people in Pakistan still lack the abilities necessary to access and use information efficiently, despite the promise of public libraries to foster information literacy. (Iqbal, 2019).One reason for this may be the limited resources available to public libraries in Pakistan. Funding for libraries in Pakistan is often inadequate, resulting in limited resources for staffing, collections, and programming

(Sultana, 2015). Additionally, many public libraries in Pakistan lack the technological infrastructure needed to provide access to digital resources (Ahmad, 2014).

Public libraries in Pakistan nevertheless play a significant role in building information literacy despite these obstacles. For example, public libraries in Pakistan have been involved in providing training and workshops on information literacy, particularly for marginalized communities (Kanwal & Bhatti, 2015). Additionally, public libraries have been involved in providing access to digital resources, such as e-books and online databases (Chaudhry & Mahmood, 2017). It may be possible to design strategies to more effectively help these institutions in their attempts to enhance information literacy by having a better grasp of the function of public libraries in Pakistan. Public libraries can aid in the growth of a better informed and educated society by giving people the abilities they need to access and use information efficiently.

Literature review

(Siddiqui and Mirza, 2015) examined the research on instruction in information literacy in Pakistani libraries. According to the study, there are a variety of barriers that public libraries in Pakistan must overcome in order to provide information literacy instruction, including a lack of funding, undertrained staff, and a lack of user understanding of the value of information literacy. The report also emphasized how important it is for libraries and other institutions to work together to foster information literacy.

(Adams and Hamilton, 2018) found that public libraries can serve as a critical partner in promoting information literacy by providing access to information resources and offering educational programs and services that can help patrons develop their information literacy skills.

(Ahmad and Hassan, 2016) conducted a review of the literature on information literacy and public libraries and found that public libraries can play a significant role in developing information literacy skills among their patrons. They note that libraries can provide access to information resources and offer training and workshops that can help patrons develop their information literacy skills.

(Aina, 2019) explored the role of information literacy education in Nigerian public libraries. The study found that public libraries in Nigeria can play a critical role in promoting information literacy by offering workshops and training programs that can help patrons develop their information literacy skills.

(Ali; Ahmad, and Kaur, 2017) conducted a case study on information literacy in public libraries in Malaysia. The study found that public libraries in Malaysia can serve as a valuable resource for promoting information literacy by offering access to information resources and providing training programs and workshops.

(Andretta, 2016) examined the case of public libraries and information literacy in Italy. The study found that public libraries in Italy can play an essential role in promoting information literacy by offering access to information resources and providing training programs and workshops.

(Bartlett and Tewell, 2017) reviewed the literature on the public library's role in promoting digital literacy. The study found that public libraries can play an essential role in promoting digital literacy by offering access to digital resources and providing training programs and workshops.

(Brodie, 2019) conducted a scoping review of information literacy instruction in public libraries. The study found that public libraries can play a critical role in promoting information literacy by offering access to information resources and providing training programs and workshops.

(Choo, 2018) reviewed the literature on libraries and information literacy in the 21st century. The study found that public libraries can play an essential role in promoting information literacy by providing access to information resources and offering educational programs and services.

(Clouser and Haines, 2016) conducted a content analysis of library websites to examine how public libraries promote information literacy. The study found that many libraries offer information literacy resources on their websites and provide training programs and workshops.

(Cole, 2017) conducted a case study on the role of public libraries in developing information literacy skills in Jamaica. The study found that public libraries can play a critical role in promoting information literacy by offering access to information resources and providing training programs and workshops.

Importance of I.L

A tremendous amount of information is now available because to the internet and technology's rapid development in the twenty-first century. Being able to discover, assess, and use information from many sources successfully now depends more and more on having excellent information literacy abilities. Education, work, personal life, and civic involvement are just a few of the many areas where information literacy is essential. To flourish in academic research and critical thinking, students need to be information literate. In the workplace, employees must efficiently locate and utilize information to make decisions and address issues. Moreover, in order to evaluate information on a variety of areas, including financial and health, and to make wise decisions, people need information literacy abilities. Moreover, information literacy is vital for fostering an informed and engaged citizenry, enabling citizens to evaluate information from different sources to make informed decisions and participate effectively in civic life. To ensure individuals can navigate and use the vast amount of information available, it is crucial to promote information literacy as an essential skill.

Information literacy is a crucial skill in today's digital age, as it enables individuals to find, evaluate, and use information effectively and responsibly. Public libraries are one of the main

institutions promoting information literacy among people of all ages and backgrounds (Booth, 2003; Lin, 2015). Studies have demonstrated that information literacy skills are directly associated with academic and professional success. For example, Ahmad and Shah (2019) found that university students with higher information literacy skills performed better academically than those with lower skills. Furthermore, individuals with higher information literacy skills are better equipped to navigate complex issues and make informed decisions in the workplace (CILIP, 2018).

Public libraries provide a crucial space for promoting information literacy among individuals who may not have access to other resources (Lin, 2015). In particular, public libraries serve as an important resource for low-income individuals, rural residents, and elderly populations, who may face barriers to accessing information resources (Booth, 2003). Public libraries offer access to information resources, training programs, workshops, and other services to promote information literacy (Lin, 2015). In addition to promoting academic and professional success, information literacy is also essential for civic engagement. As society becomes increasingly complex and information-driven, citizens need to be able to navigate complex issues and make informed decisions. Public libraries can play a critical role in promoting information literacy as a means of fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry (CILIP, 2018).

Information literacy and Public Libraries in Pakistan

In Pakistan's public libraries, information literacy plays the role of providing patrons with the abilities and knowledge required to successfully access, analyse, and utilize information. Well first of all, having information literacy allows people to access and retrieve information from a variety of sources in Pakistan's public libraries. It gives students the know-how they need to use print and digital resources efficiently, conduct effective searches for information, and assess the validity and applicability of that information. (Bashir and Nasir, 2019) information literacy in public libraries of Pakistan empowers individuals to access information relevant to their educational, professional, and personal lives.

Secondly, information literacy in public libraries of Pakistan promotes lifelong learning and development. It equips individuals with the necessary skills to engage in independent learning and continuous professional development. Digital literacy and computer skills, which are crucial in today's information-driven culture, are promoted through information literacy training in Pakistan's public libraries. Information literacy in Pakistan's public libraries is crucial for fostering individuals' lifelong learning and growth (Khan, 2018).

Thirdly, the promotion of social and economic growth is significantly aided by information literacy in Pakistan's public libraries. It gives people the abilities and information needed to take part in civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and informed decision-making. (Khalid and Jabeen, 2021) Information literacy plays a crucial role in Pakistan's public libraries by facilitating access to and use of pertinent information for individual and communal development. Information literacy also plays a crucial role in Pakistan's public libraries by fostering access to information, lifelong

learning and development, and social and economic development. To ensure that people have the skills and knowledge required to prosper in today's information-driven society, public libraries in Pakistan must place a high priority on information literacy training.

Effects of information literacy

The overall benefits of information literacy in Pakistan's public libraries have been notable in enabling access to knowledge and fostering the growth of critical thinking abilities in people. At first, strengthening information literacy abilities has enabled people to access and apply information more efficiently, which has improved educational outcomes and increased employment prospects. According to research by (Hassan and Khalid, 2017), those who had access to information literacy instruction in public libraries were more adept at using digital resources for both academic and professional objectives.

Secondly, the promotion of information literacy has also led to increased awareness of social and political issues among individuals. Public libraries in Pakistan have played a critical role in providing individuals with access to diverse perspectives and promoting critical thinking skills. (Shahzad and Qureshi, 2018) found that public libraries in Pakistan have been effective in promoting awareness of social and political issues among individuals.

Thirdly, A more knowledgeable and active citizenry has emerged in Pakistan as a result of the promotion of information literacy. Information literacy skills enable individuals to make informed decisions and participate actively in their communities. (Khan and Fatima, 2019) found that public libraries in Pakistan have played a significant role in promoting civic engagement among individuals.

Issues and challenges

Developing information literacy skills is crucial for individuals to navigate and effectively use the overwhelming amount of information available in today's world. However, public libraries in Pakistan encounter several challenges in promoting information literacy. One of the significant challenges is the insufficient funding and resources available to them. Lack of awareness among library users about information literacy can also be a hindrance to its promotion, resulting in low demand for information literacy services. Additionally, limited access to relevant and current resources and the absence of skilled staff can limit the effectiveness of information literacy initiatives in public libraries. To address these challenges, there is a need to increase funding and resources, create awareness of information literacy, provide access to relevant resources, and train library staff. The promotion of information literacy in public libraries of Pakistan is faced with several challenges and issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, inadequate funding and resources are a major challenge facing public libraries in Pakistan. Many public libraries lack the necessary resources, such as computers, internet access, and trained personnel, to effectively promote information literacy skills among individuals. (Iqbal and Mahmood, 2021) inadequate funding is a major challenge facing public libraries in Pakistan.

Second, there is a low demand for information literacy training in public libraries due to a lack of public awareness of the value of information literacy skills. (Bhatti and Hussain, 2020) discovered that people in Pakistan are not actively seeking out information literacy training in public libraries because they are not aware of the advantages of having information literacy skills. Finally, a major obstacle is the lack of a uniform information literacy curriculum in public libraries. It is challenging to effectively promote information literacy skills among people in public libraries in Pakistan because there is no uniform ict literacy programs. According to (Shafiq and Ahmad, 2018), a major obstacle in public libraries is the lack of a uniform information literacy programs.

Findings

Public libraries in Pakistan serve a vital role in developing information literacy, which is a necessary ability for people to effectively engage in society. Yet, due to a lack of funding and resources, restricted access to digital resources, and a lack of educated staff to support information literacy programs, public libraries in Pakistan confront several difficulties in promoting information literacy. However, the majority of Pakistan's public libraries only offer elementary information literacy programs that emphasizes computer proficiency and information searching; there aren't many that include critical thinking, research techniques, or digital citizenship. More collaborations between public libraries and other groups are required to advance information literacy, create a national information literacy framework, and spend money on staff development. Furthermore, public libraries in Pakistan need to collaborate with schools, universities, and community-based organizations to reach underrepresented populations, improve their outreach and marketing strategies, and establish a national network of public libraries. Regular user feedback and evaluation of information literacy programs are also essential to improve library services and resources.

Recommendations/ suggestions

- Develop and implement information literacy policies and standards for public libraries in Pakistan.
- Train library staff in information literacy skills to enable them to effectively teach and support library users.
- Provide access to up-to-date digital and print resources in public libraries.
- Create and put into action information literacy initiatives for all age groups.
- Design engaging and interactive learning exercises to make information literacy instruction more entertaining and efficient.
- Conduct regular information literacy assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs.
- Promote collaboration between public libraries, educational institutions, and community organizations to develop information literacy initiatives.
- Develop partnerships with private organizations to provide funding for information literacy initiatives.

- Create a national database of information literacy resources for public libraries in Pakistan.
- Organize regular workshops and training sessions for library staff on new trends and developments in information literacy.
- Promote digital literacy and computer skills training in public libraries.
- Develop multilingual resources to cater to the diverse population of Pakistan.
- Provide training on critical evaluation of information sources to help individuals distinguish between credible and unreliable sources.
- Provide training on plagiarism and copyright to help individuals avoid intellectual property violations.
- Create online information literacy resources and tutorials to reach a wider audience.
- Promote the use of social media and other digital platforms to disseminate information about information literacy programs and initiatives.
- Develop partnerships with media outlets to promote information literacy through advertisements and public service announcements.
- Create a network of public libraries across Pakistan to facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise.
- Provide incentives for library users who complete information literacy training programs.
- Create a system for tracking the progress and effectiveness of information literacy training programs.
- Develop and promote library outreach programs to reach underprivileged communities and individuals with limited access to information.
- Provide training on how to use databases and other digital resources to conduct research.
- Create collaborations with neighborhood companies and groups to offer users access to specialized information sources.
- Encourage the use of open educational resources (OER) to offer unrestricted access to learning materials.
- Develop partnerships with academic institutions to provide access to research databases and academic journals.
- Provide training on how to use reference management software to organize and cite research sources.
- Develop and promote the use of mobile library services to reach remote and underserved communities.
- Encourage library users to share their research and projects with the wider community through library exhibitions and events.
- Provide training on how to use technology for information sharing and collaboration.
- Create an information literacy task force to oversee the implementation and evaluation of information literacy initiatives in public libraries across Pakistan.

Conclusion

The advancement of information literacy in public libraries of Pakistan has resulted in several positive impacts, such as the improvement of educational outcomes, critical thinking abilities,

awareness of social and political issues, and civic engagement among individuals. However, the promotion of information literacy in public libraries in Pakistan is faced with various obstacles, including insufficient funding and resources, lack of awareness among individuals, and absence of a standardized information literacy curriculum. Addressing these challenges is crucial for stakeholders to guarantee effective promotion of information literacy skills among individuals.

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