Information Literacy Skills among Faculty Members in the College of Horticulture, Bagalkote, Karnataka: A Study

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Abstract - **The present study explores the information literacy skills among the faculty members of the College of Horticulture, Bagalkote, Karnataka. A survey method was adopted in the study. The structured questionnaire was designed for data collection. A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed and 90 questionnaires were received back. The total response rate was 81.81 percent. The study found that the majority of the faculty members have better knowledge and skills about the use of different types of sources, tools, and services. The respondents suggested that the college library should conduct seminars, workshops, and training programmes from experts to improve information literacy skills.**
Keywords: **Information Literacy Skills, Horticulture, Electronic Information Sources**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the present age of the information revolution, there is no doubt that the Internet and other Web technology has improved access to information. As more information is available on the Web, people need the skills and knowledge to find access and use it effectively. Information literacy is the basic need of everyone in the modern technological era because every day there is a new technological challenge coming out of the soil of technological experiments. Information literate people must develop information technology skills to meet information needs using related technologies (Association of College and Research Libraries, 1997). Information literacy makes faculty members reach their objectives, expand their knowledge and capability, and play a multidisciplinary role in the diverse society. The faculty ornamented with information literacy can approach to the required information accurately and timely. They can evaluate information competently and use information precisely and productively. To enhance the research, teaching quality and growth of faculty knowledge, information literacy is very necessary. Therefore, there is a need to assess and to develop the information literacy skills among faculty members in colleges. (Rafique, 2014)

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sing (2009) conducted a study among faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students of Delhi University to describe and demonstrate the set of information literacy skills that make a person a competent lifelong learner to find, evaluate, filter and use information in an effective manner. Bansode (2012) explored a study among the research students working in various science departments located in the Pune University Campus to identify the areas of strengths and weakness in ICT literacy skills and their search strategies. The study also revealed that the majority of the students are having ICT skills in finding and using the information available on the Web but when it comes to using various search strategies they rely upon making simple search, they need to learn/orient about the use of Boolean operators for better output and the majority of the research students are not aware of the copyright issue, also there is a need to teach them about plagiarism. Rafique (2014) conducted a study on information literacy skills of faculty members of the University of Lahore, Pakistan. The study found that the majority of the faculty members were deficient in searching the catalogue and its use, choice of information sources, selection of relevant sources and formulation of search strategies. Likewise, many faculty members did not become successful users of the university libraries. Khan (2015) examined the use of information sources and need for information literacy among students in Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

The main findings of the study revealed that users need the information to prepare their assignments and study material and they are aware of the basic concept of information literacy. Some of the users have a vague concept of information literacy. Ramamurthy, Siridevi, and Ramu (2015) investigated the knowledge of information literacy and search skills of students in five selected Engineering Colleges in Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh. It was found that preponderance of respondents have low knowledge of information literacy skills, showed a high deficiency in identifying diverse information sources. The various information literacy programmes to the respondents in institutions lacked hands-on training. Thus, the need for an enhanced and continuous library user education geared towards empowering students to be sufficiently familiar with information sources. Ramaiah and Ramya (2015) conducted a study among the 106 research scholars of Pondicherry University to assess the information literacy training needs covering several subjects of nine schools. They identified that all the research scholars agreed that they need information literacy training course and the suitable agency to deliver the course may be a combination

of the Department of Library & Information Science, subject teachers, and central library. In this study, they have also suggested the topics to be covered under the course.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has made an attempt to:
1. To find out the research contributions of faculty members
2. To identify the information literacy skills among faculty members.
3. To know how faculty members search, locate and evaluate the information sources.
4. To obtain the opinion of the faculty members towards the need for a training programme on information literacy.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study has been carried out by survey method by administering the questionnaires to the faculty members of the College of Horticulture, Bagalkote, Karnataka. A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed and 90 duly filled questionnaires were received back. The rate of response was 81.81 percent. The data collected has been analysed, interpreted and presented in the form of tables.

V. RESULTS

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Demographic information		Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	83.33
	Female	15	16.67
	Total	90	100.00
Designation	Professors	18	20.00
	Associate professors	20	22.22
	Assistant professors	52	57.78
	Total	90	100.00
Age	Up to 25 years	1	1.11
	26-35 years	40	44.44
	36-45 years	31	34.44
	46 years and above	18	20.00
	Total	90	100.00
Social background	Urban	85	94.44
	Rural	5	5.56
	Total	90	100.00

The above table I shows the demographic details of the respondents. As per table I, it is found that 75(83.33%) were male and 15 (16.67%) were female. Regarding the designation of the respondents, it is found that 52(57.78%) were assistant professors, 20(22.22%) were associate professors and 18 (20%) were professors.

Further, 40(44.44%) respondents belong to the age group of 26-35 years, 31(34.44%) respondents of the age group of 36-45 years, 18(20%) respondents are in the age group of 46 years and above and 1(1.11%) respondent is below 25 years of age. 85(94.44%) respondents are from an urban background and 5(5.56%) respondents from the rural background.

TABLE II RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS OF RESPONDENTS

S. No.	Research contributions	Respondents N=90	Percentage
1.	Journal articles	80	88.89
2.	Research projects	66	73.33
3.	Conference papers	60	66.67
4.	Editors in books	20	22.22
5.	Books authored	10	11.11

Regarding research activities of respondents, out of 90 faculty members, 80 (88.89%) have written journal articles, 66 (73.33%) respondents were involved in research projects, 60 (66.67%) have written conference papers, 20 (22.22) were served as editors in books and 10 (11.11%) respondents were written books.

TABLE III FACULTY PREFERENCES IN FINDING THE REQUIRED INFORMATION IN THE ARTICLE

S. No.	Options	Respondents N=90	Percentage
1.	Abstract	52	57.78
2.	Introduction	33	36.67
3.	Methodology	31	34.44
4.	Findings / results	46	51.11
5.	References	30	33.33

Regarding the relevance of the topic in the research article, 52 (57.78%) respondents preferred abstract of the article, 46 (51.11%) respondents were interested in findings/results, 33 (36.67%) respondents preferred introduction, 31 (34.44%) respondents preferred methodology and 30 (33.33%) respondents preferred references.

TABLE IV ABILITY TO DETERMINE THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF INFORMATION NEED

S. No.	Set of skills	Yes	No	Total
1.	Identify the need for information	90 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)	90 (100.00%)
2.	Recognize the types of information	85 (94.44%)	5(5.56%)	90 (100.00%)
3.	Knowledge of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources of information	70 (77.78%)	20 (22.22%)	90 (100.00%)

The above table IV shows that out of 90 respondents, all the respondents could identify the need for information, 85 (94.44%) respondents could recognize the types of information wherein 5 (5.56%) respondents could not recognize the types of information. Regarding the knowledge of primary, secondary, and tertiary information sources, 70 (77.78%) respondents identified and 20 (22.22%) respondents could not identify the different types of information sources.

TABLE V ABILITY TO ACCESS NEEDED INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

S. No.	Set of skills	Yes	No	Total
1.	Identification of different document formats	90 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)	90 (100.00%)
2.	Access the information using a suitable search options	90 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)	90 (100.00%)
3.	Selecting the most appropriate search strategy	90 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)	90 (100.00%)
4.	Identification of keywords	85 (94.44%)	5 (5.56%)	90 (100.00%)
5.	Barriers faced while accessing information	60 (66.67%)	30 (33.33%)	90 (100.00%)

Table V shows the ability to access needed information effectively and efficiently. All respondents are able to identify the correct document formats, access the information using a suitable search options, and selecting the most appropriate search strategy such as author, title subject, etc.,. 85 (94.44%) respondents identify the correct keywords and 5 (5.56%) not 60 (66.67%) respondents faced different barriers while accessing the information and the remaining 30 (33.33%) respondents don't face any barriers while accessing the information.

TABLE VI PREFERRED SEARCH APPROACHES USED FOR SEARCHING INFORMATION

S. No.	Search approaches	Respondents N=90	Percentage
1.	Subject	88	97.78
2.	Title	82	91.11
3.	Keyword	81	90.00
4.	Author	52	57.78
5.	Publisher	10	11.11
6.	ISBN	5	5.56

Regarding search approaches preferred by the faculty members, 88 (97.78%) respondents prefer subject to approach, 82 (91.11%) of the respondents prefer title approach, 81 (90.00%) of the respondents prefer keyword approach, 52 (57.78%) of the respondents prefer author approach, 10 (11.11%) of the respondents preferred publisher approach and least preferred approach is ISBN to search for information.

TABLE VII PREFERRED SEARCH TECHNIQUES USED FOR SEARCHING INFORMATION

S. No.	Search techniques	Respondents N=90	Percentage
1.	Advanced search techniques	81	90.00
2.	Boolean search technique (AND, OR, NOT)	60	66.67
3.	Phrase search ("....")	50	55.56
4.	Wildcard truncation (*/?)	6	6.67

With regard to the search techniques used to search information, 81 (90.00%) respondents preferred advanced search techniques, 60 (66.67%) respondents preferred Boolean search technique, 50 (55.56%) respondents preferred phase search and least preferred search technique is wildcard truncation.

TABLE VIII CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF PRINT AND ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SOURCES

Criteria for evaluation of information sources		Respondents N=90	Percentage
Print information sources	The accuracy of the information	82	91.11
	The credentials of the author/s	50	55.56
	The timeliness of information	48	53.33
	The length (size) of the information sources	20	22.22
Electronic information sources	Responsibility for the website	72	80.00
	The date of publication	68	75.56
	Easy accessibility of the site	50	55.56
	Flashing of information / more pictures	50	55.56
	The author /authority	48	53.33
	Attractiveness/colourful	42	46.67
	Domain name (.org., .com., .edu. etc)	41	45.56

Table VIII shows the criteria for the evaluation of information resources. 82 (91.11%) of the respondents use the accuracy of the information, 50 (55.56%) respondents used the credentials of the author/s, 48 (53.33%) of the respondents used the timeliness of information, and 20 (22.22%) of the respondents used the length (size) of the information sources as criteria for evaluation of print sources. Regarding the criteria for evaluation of electronic resources, 72 (80%) of the respondents stated that they prefer the responsibility for the website as a criteria, 68 (75.56%) of them the date of publication is their criteria, 50 (55.56%) respondents are flashing of information / more pictures, and easy accessibility of the site, 48 (53.33%) of the respondents preferred criteria is the author /authority, 42 (46.67%) of the respondents are attractiveness/colourful and 41 (45.56%) of the respondents prefer domain name (.org., com., edu.etc) for criteria for electronic information sources.

TABLE IX RESPONDENTS AWARENESS IN THE ETHICAL USE OF INFORMATION

Criteria	Preferred information sources	Respondents	Percentage
Awareness about citation	Yes	70	77.78
	No	20	22.22
	Total	90	100.00
Awareness about referencing standard/style manuals	Yes	50	55.56
	No	40	44.44
	Total	90	100.00
Use of referencing style manuals	APA	19	38.00
	MLA	15	30.00
	Chicago	12	24.00
	IEEE	4	8.00
	Total	50	100.00
Awareness about plagiarism	Yes	70	77.78
	No	20	22.22
	Total	90	100.00
	Extremely Aware	7	10.00
	Very Aware	7	10.00
	Moderately Aware	46	65.71
	Slightly Aware	10	14.29
	Total	70	100.00

This table IX indicated that, out of 90 respondents, 70 (77.78%) respondents were aware of citation and 20 (22.22%) of them were not aware. 50 (55.56%) of the respondents were aware of referencing standard/style manuals and 40 (44.44%) of respondents were not aware. 19 (38%) of the respondents use APA, 15 (30%) use MLA, 12 (24%) use Chicago and the least number of them use IEEE referencing style manuals. With regard to plagiarism, 70 (77.78%) of the respondents were aware of plagiarism and 20 (22.22%) of the respondents were not aware. With regard the level of awareness, 46 (65.71%) of the respondents are moderately aware, 10 (14.29%) are slightly aware, 7 (10%) each are extremely aware and very aware.

TABLE X OPINIONS ABOUT THE NEED FOR THE INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMME

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	60	66.67
No	30	33.33
Total	90	100.00

The table X reveals the opinion about the need for training on information literacy skills. Out of 90 respondents, 60 (66.67%) respondents are in need of information literacy training programme and remaining 30 (33.33%) respondents feel that they don't need information literacy training programme.

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Out of 90 respondents, 75(83.33%) faculty members were male and 15 (16.67%) were female.
2. 80(88.89%) faculty members were writing journal articles.
3. All the respondents of the study identified the need for information.
4. 88(97.78%) respondents prefer a subject approach to search for information.
5. 81(90%) respondents prefer advanced search techniques to search for information.
6. 82(91.11%) respondents preferred the accuracy of the information as evaluation criteria in print resources.

72(80%) of the respondents preferred responsibility of the website as the criteria for evaluation of electronic information sources.

7. 70(77.78%) respondents were aware of citation, 50(55.56%) respondents were aware of referencing standard/style manual and 70(77.78%) respondents were aware of plagiarism.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

1. The library should arrange special lectures to create awareness on the basic concept of the ethical use of information and also they can provide hands-on experience to manage references by using the software such as Zotero or Mendeley.

2. Regular orientation programme and workshop on information literacy skills should be conducted in the Horticulture College Library for faculty members.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study indicates that information literacy is a very important skill needed in all categories of academic people in all fields. In horticulture field, faculty members should be aware and update their existing knowledge regarding access and locate a different kind of tools and services, various types of sources and resources, search strategies, copyright, the fair use of intellectual property right, and social issues. They should have continued updates on the skills, and current information in specific and general fields.

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