Information capability building : Role of Information Literacy Programmes – A study

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Abstract

The opportunities for implementing information literacy programmes in public libraries is explored in this paper. This paper reviews the status of information literacy programmes in three public libraries in Visakhapatnam, India and also analyzes user feedback. The role of the librarians of public libraries in enabling the citizens realize their goals has been highlighted. Suggestions have been made for making information literacy programmes more effective in a developing country like India.

Introduction

Information plays a very important role in the economic and social development of a nation. Access to information facilitates all-round development of individuals. Therefore the citizens' capability to use the available information in an effective manner to attain their goals is a key factor and assumes great significance in a developing country like India. The librarians of Public Libraries through effective Information Literacy Programmes have to play a transformational role in building the information capability.

Information Literacy has been defined as "the ability to locate, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources, to recognize when information is needed and to know how to learn" (Doyle, 1996). It has been identified as a 'core competence for the information age' (Australian Library and Information Association, 2001).

Information capability building can be described as building the competencies in handling information in a particular context or format. IL programmes impart information capability building to retrieve or communicate information.

Need for Information Literacy Programmes

In the contemporary information society it is increasingly becoming difficult to lead a qualitative and happy life without being information literate. The cultural and educational opportunities available in a community are often missed by people who lack the ability to keep informed of such activities. Information Literacy(IL), provides an opportunity to people to acquire knowledge and provides motivation to people to pursue learning throughout their lives. IL therefore is a means of personal empowerment.

The United States of America has led in information literacy initiatives with the establishment of best practices, standards and performance indicators drawn up by the Institute for Information Literacy, Association of College and Research Libraries to help librarians to develop, assess and improve their information literacy programmes. The Australian Library and Information Association also has well developed information literacy programmes which are implemented in most undergraduate programmes in Australia.

India's emergence as Information Technology powerhouse in the last decade has been rapid. The government of India attaches great importance to the growth and development of information infrastructure. Even though their information needs are varied, many people are not able to use the public library services in India due to lack of appropriate Information Literacy programmes.

Organisation of IL programmes

Many governments world-wide, are attempting a shift of emphasis from welfare provision and responsibility towards community and individual responsibility. UNESCO has published a white paper on Information Literacy for Active and Effective citizenship (Correia, 2002). This document reported the findings of a literature study on policies and strategies for the promotion of IL and it provides an insight into how these programmes have been implemented in different countries.

Public Library as an Information Intermediary

Studies have also emphasized the role of a group of information services that can package information to make it accessible to those who need it under a broad designation "Information Intermediaries". These include: Public libraries, consumer associations, civic associations and advisory services and government information services. (Correia, 2002)

The present study mainly focuses on the anticipated role of public libraries as promoting agencies of IL programmes in the society. The literature reveals a number of cases where public libraries are proactively engaged in providing information and services to individuals and groups that are suffering any form of discrimination, exclusion or that belong to disadvantaged groups in society – the unemployed, the non-qualified, those with low income, sick or disabled, minorities, women (Pateman, 1999)

Public libraries as community information service centres also can play a pivotal role in meeting the varied information needs of the community. Demographic features, climatic conditions,

availability of natural resources, economic, social and cultural variations of the community are important factors shaping their way of living, interests and attitudes. In order to perform their roles and responsibilities, individuals need various types of information inputs. Information is available through libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, media and the internet. In addition information is available through multimedia, which gives new challenges for individuals in accessing, evaluating and understanding it. Another challenge for the citizen is the uncertain quality and expanding quality of information available in the environment. Due to these challenges individuals are facing problems in fulfilling their responsibilities in personal, family, business, professional and community life. Thus there is considerable pressure on them to improve their skills and competencies required to make best use of the information available.

Profile of Andhra Pradesh

Located in the southern part of India, Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest state in the country in terms of population as per 2001 census. The state came into existence with Hyderabad as the capital city in the year 1956. From being a predominantly agriculture based economy, the state has made rapid progress in the past one decade and is in the forefront of restructuring and reforming the economy, developing information technology and promoting good governance. Andhra Pradesh is one of the first states to formulate a long term strategy for all round development of the state called Vision 2020 document. The state government has initiated a number of good governance initiatives particularly on decentralized and people centered governance and strengthening of Panchayat Raj Institutions. The state government is also encouraging the involvement of the poor and vulnerable groups particularly women through participatory and bottom approach to planning. The state has an impressive record in promoting women self-help groups and nearly half of the women groups in the country are located in Andhra Pradesh. The devolution of power to the local institutions and empowerment of women is strongly articulated in the Vision 2020 document.

A brief profile of the Andhra Pradesh state is given in the following table:

Sl.No.	Item	1991	2001
1	Geographical area (thousand sq.km)	275	275
2	Population (in thousands)	66508	75728
3	Males	33725	38287
4	Females	32783	37441
5	Rural population	48621	55224
6	Urban population	17887	20504
7	Density (per sq.km)	242	275
8	Literacy Rate (%)	44.1	61.1
9	Sex ratio (Females per thousand of males)	972	978
10	Percentage of urban population	26.9	27.08
11	Per capita income (base: 1990-91) (Rs.)	4531	NA
12	No.of Zilla Parishads	22	23
13	Gram Panchayats	19492	NA
14	Panchayat Samitis/Mandal Praja Parishads	1092	NA

Source: www.aponline.gov.in

Public Library System in Andhra Pradesh

Public libraries in India, came into existence based on the Public Library legislation. Out of the 29 states and 6 union territories, only 12 states have so far passed the library legislation.

In the state of Andhra Pradesh, the public library services are rendered through the provisions of the AP Public Library Act of 1960. The public library system of AP consists of a State Central Library at Hyderabad, capital city of the state, 6 Government Regional Libraries, 23 District Central Libraries and 2348 village libraries, branch libraries, mobile libraries and book deposit centres and 1455 other libraries. Thus nearly 5000 public libraries provide the services in the state. The present structure of the public library system is based on the AP Public Library Act to provide library services to the urban and rural population of the state covering a population of 3285092. In 1989, the state government constituted an apex body known as "Grandhalaya Parishad" (means Library Board) by amending the existing APPL Act, 1960. At the district level, District Central Libraries (DCLs) were constituted under section 9(1) of the Act which states that each municipal town having more than 50,000 population should have a main library. There should be an addition of a branch library for every 25,000 people in excess of 50,000. As per this norm, main libraries have been opened in 92 municipal cities and towns.

Profile of Visakhapatnam

Visakhapatnam, the second largest city in the state of Andhra Pradesh is situated on the shores of Bay of Bengal. Visakhapatnam is a hub of business, industrial and educational institutions. A giant steel plant, sea port, oil refinery, ship building yard, fertilizer and petro-chemical plants are located in and around the city. As per 2001 census, the total population of Visakhapatnam city was 982904 in which 501406 are males and 481498 are females. Out of the total population 69.42 per cent are literate (39.01% males and 30.49% females).

Profiles of the Public Libraries in Visakhapatnam city

i)   District Central Library, Visakhapatnam

The District Central Library (DCL), Visakhapatnam was established in 1952. DCL covers the entire district of Visakhapatnam with its 58 branch libraries and 8 village libraries, covering both urban and rural areas. Mobile library service is also run by the library to users in different parts of Viskhapatnam city on specified days. The library has a collection of 44,630 books and subscribes to 35 periodicals and 21 dailies in Telugu(Regional language) and English. The library has one TV and radio, VCR, Audio cassette player, a public address system and one computer. 82,429 citizens visited the library during 2003-04.

ii)   Government Regional Library, Visakhapatnam

The Government Regional Library, Visakhapatnam was established by the Govt. of AP in 1965 to cater to the information needs of citizens of three north coastal districts – Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam. The library holds a collection of 75,438 books in Telugu, Hindi and English languages. The number of registered borrowers is 3488 and 61,201 citizens visited the library during 2003-04. The library has one computer, one copier and one public address system.

iii)   Visakha Public Library, Visakhapatnam

The Visakha Public Library was established in 2003 by a group of philanthropists and senior citizens of the city with donations from Municipal Corporation, Visakhapatnam Port Trust and others. The library has a collection of 14948 books; and subscribes to 69

journals. Number of registered members are 2981 and the number of visitors during 2003-04 was 49557. The library has 12 computers; AV and CD-ROM collection covering children literature.

Literary and cultural events are held in the above public libraries.

User Survey

Information Literacy programmes are intended to address the promotion of general information literacy skills applicable to all categories of users and to promote the information skills required by specific target groups. Understanding the information needs of library users and their information seeking behaviour is necessary to plan and implement user oriented IL programmes. It is also equally important to assess the nature and composition of the population in the community for whom the services are meant for. Community analysis indicates not only the different groups of users but also those who are in real need of information and guidance but not using or approaching the local library for help.

Analysis of the demographic aspects of Visakhapatnam city and its suburbs reveals that the composition of the population represents varied socio, economic and cultural diversity.(Sasikala,1982).

For the present study, a survey of 150 users of the three public libraries has been conducted during December 2004. Following are the major findings of the user survey:

i)   Majority of the users visiting the public libraries are young persons (20-30   years of age).

ii)   College students are more among the library users followed by unemployed youth seeking jobs. Another group of users visiting the library frequently are retired employees in the age group of 60 to 70 years.

iii)   Daily visits to the library are found to be common among the library users followed by those who visited the library atleast once in a week. Two major reasons for visiting the library are :
An urge to know the current events and to know developments in different fields to succeed in various competitive examinations for employment or higher studies. Another significant percentage of users, mostly senior citizens have made it a habit to visit the library daily to spend their leisure time in reading general books, magazines and newspapers.

iv)   Library users are found to use various means to get required book/information from the library. Majority are found to be depending on the library staff for assistance. Other means used by the users include the library catalogue and friends who have acquaintance with the library.

v)   The extent of use of a particular library service depends on various factors like the ease of use, access, convenience associated with the service. Fifty per cent of the users did not face any difficulty in using the services offered by the library, while the rest experienced difficulty in using the existing library collection.

vi)   Majority of the users wanted to have copier, computer and Internet browsing facilities for public use, access to educational resources in CD-ROM format, automated library services mainly library OPAC and access to online catalogues of other local libraries.

vii)   The public libraries are always under pressure to maintain the quality of the facilities and services on one hand and to introduce new advanced services on the other. Pricing the services is one of the crucial marketing decisions to be decided by the public librarians.

Such decisions need prior understanding of the willingness of the user to pay for the services. While 58 percent of the users are ready to pay for increased charges in the form of user fee to meet the cost of improved services, 42 per cent are willing to pay charges for new services if library offers priced services in the future.

viii)   Users suggested many improvements regarding the quality, adequacy and scope of the library collections and other physical facilities even if they are priced. Users wanted the libraries to offer additional information services like Current Awareness services and Literature search services even if they are priced. Many users are enthusiastic to use automated facilities like computerized/automated catalogues, computerised book transactions, database searching, Internet browsing and use of CD-ROM & other AV materials. Further, they wanted guidance and training in the use of these materials.

Status of Information Literacy programmes: Survey of Library practices

User orientation programmes are services aimed at orienting novice user to various aspects of the library and its sections and services. User training on the other hand is a planned programme to instruct the users to learn the use of library and its resources. The present study tried to assess the nature and type of user induction/training/education/orientation activities of the three public libraries in Visakhapatnam and status of IL programmes in these libraries. Following are the major findings :

Initiation to new user

The new user will be introduced to the library first by explaining him/her the rules and regulations of the library. If the user wishes to become a member of the library, he/she will be registered as a borrower.

Orientation to Users

Though no specific orientation programme for the newly registered users is seen in the libraries on the request of users, the library staff explains the users about the library resources, services and arrangement of books on the shelves.

Existence of separate Reference Desk/Reader Advisory Service

Only one library is maintaining a separate reference desk. The other two libraries are unable to offer this facility due to lack of qualified staff.

Information needs' study

The three librarians are assessing user needs through different means. While two are ascertaining information needs through suggestion registers, one is assessing them based on users' queries and requests, suggestion register and issue statistics.

Views on IL programmes

The three librarians felt that for organizing IL programmes, the library needs more staff and have a policy to conduct such programmes. They have pointed out that library needs the cooperation of citizens and local organizations for conducting such programmes and that IL programmes are useful only in some of the areas. All the three librarians agreed that conducting such programmes improves the image of their library. They firmly believed that IL initiation will help in establishing strong relations with the user community and local institutions.

Awareness of IL programmes

All the three librarians are aware of the usefulness of IL programmes to the users. However, only one is offering IL programmes through instruction - classes were conducted to create computer literacy among young visitors to the library. Orientation for school children on the use of different reference sources also has been provided by the librarian and the author.

Future plans

Future plans of all the three librarians include automation of the library; providing spacious accommodation; improving the existing collections; and Internet browsing facility.

Problems and Perspectives

The above findings project the ground realities in three public libraries in Visakhapatnam city. Public Library movement in Andhra Pradesh gave lot of impetus to the development of public libraries in the state through the enactment of public library legislation. Even after 45 years of its existence, the public library system in AP could not demonstrate its significant impact on the society. A number of reasons can be attributed to this unsatisfactory state of affairs. The foremost reason is lack of proper mechanism to check the defaulters who failed to share the money collected in the form of cess as dues to the public libraries. Ban on recruitment of staff in public libraries for nearly a decade had adverse impact on their functioning. Lack of adequate support by the state governement has been a major hindrance for the growth and development of public libraries.

However, positive moves towards development of public libraries have been noticed recently due to pressure from the citizens and professional associations. Grants were released to District Central Libraries and Regional Libraries for improving the facilities and for funding the training programmes to the staff to impart computer literacy skills. Rajarammohan Roy Foundation, Kolkata in collaboration with Indian Library Association (member of IFLA), Andhra Pradesh Public Library Association and District Central Libraries is sponsoring a number of seminars on issues related to public libraries.

In this backdrop, the Public Library System in Andhra Pradesh needs to focus its attention on improving the citizens' perception about its utility. Unless the public library makes the user to realize the potential benefits of information and its use for the betterment of his/her personal, family, professional life, motivating the user to exploit the available information facility would be a daunting task. Thus there is need to help the users to develop their knowledge and become independent life-long learners who will be able to apply and transfer the skills in a variety of situations in life and work. In brief, imparting information literacy skills to the users helps to improve the extent of use of library resources and services. Implementation of IL programmes involves the following activities.

Identifying resources for implementation of I L Programmes

Identifying the resources for implementing the IL programmes is crucial for their success. Another way to meet the cost of conducting such programmes is sponsorship. Local booksellers, publishers, business/industrial organizations may be approached to sponsor IL programmes. They may provide equipment or expertise or funding for organizing IL programmes. For example, a part of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant's donation of Rs. One million to Visakha Public Library may be earmarked for IL programmes. Funding may also be sought from associations like Indian Library Association, Rajaram Mohan Roy Library Foundation and AP Library Association.

Methods of Imparting IL skills

Choosing appropriate teaching methods for imparting information literacy skills is an important factor for the success of IL programme. Besides the traditional methods of conducting user education programme in the form of guided tours and orientation to the library resources, IL programmes may be offered using the following methods:

i) **_Instruction_**

   Conducting classes and tutorials using both lecture and AV methods for teaching the essential concepts of information seeking and evaluation in a particular area of interest to the target group. This type of instruction is supported with printed material in the form of handouts explaining the concept in a simple way.

ii) **_Reference_**

   The public library may select focus areas based on the target group requirements to teach them how to locate, access, acquire, understand and use the information in those areas where they require knowledge and skills. Some examples of such programmes are :

   - Educating the citizens to find and retrieve information about health and health related services using the reference sources available in the library – Handbooks, Encyclopedias etc., both printed and electronic.

   - Educating users through online interactive teaching and learning modes like using FAQ or Virtual Reference Desks on Internet.

   - Using Interactive CD-ROM databases to clarify doubts and gain skills in a particular subject.

iii) **_Collaboration and Partnership_**

   For successful teaching of information skills, the public libraries need to combine the expertise of the library staff and external experts from different fields and other teaching and learning support services. Collaboration with local schools, colleges and university library and other departments enables inclusion of IL skills in the curriculum of different courses. They may also seek partnership with:

   - Local government and non-governmental bodies like Municipal Corporation, Departments of Adult Education, Social Welfare, District Rural Development Agency, Health Employment and Consumer councils, Legal Advisory cells etc.

   - Local literacy associations and writers

   - Involving officials like Block Development Officers, Extension Officers, Social Workers, Health Workers, Volunteers etc.

   - Partnership with other libraries in the locality for example: partnership with Andhra University Library, AIR Library, Visakhapatnam Steel Plant Library and other libraries – helps the library to provide better IL training in areas of wider application combining the strengths of each partner.

Identifying the target groups

The public library, according to IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto 1994, should serve all citizens and groups, irrespective of their age, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. The public library has

to serve children, youth, adults, aged, women and groups with special needs and people with different literacy levels.

As the resources are limited, it is not always possible for any single library to serve all groups of users to the same level. The libraries must establish priorities based on an analysis of user needs and their access to alternative services. As youth and adults are the frequent users of the public libraries surveyed, they may be considered on priority basis for imparting information literacy skills. As there is a large number of educational institutions in Visakhapatnam (20 Arts/Science/Commerce colleges; 10 engineering colleges; 1 medical, 1 dental and 1 pharmacy college; 1 polytechnic and 2 Industrial Training Institutes besides the Andhra University), public libraries need to offer IL programmes to youth.

Earlier community studies in Visakhapatnam revealed that women represent significant portion of the population in Visakhapatnam urban and rural areas (Satyanarayana, 1993). It is also observed that there are 32,296 DWACRA groups (Self Help Groups of women) working in rural and urban areas of Visakhapatnam. IL programmes of the public libraries surveyed may include DWACRA members also as their target group. A brief on DWACRA is given below for better understanding of their activities and information needs.

Women's Self-Help Groups in Andhra Pradesh

The women's Self-Help Groups (SHG) in Andhra Pradesh, popularly called as **DWACRA** (Developing Women And Children in Rural Areas) groups, are playing an important role in district and village planning process. The strategy towards decentralized governance in rural areas involves strengthening the self groups such as DWACRA, thrift and credit groups, education committees, water users associations and mothers committees. Self help movement through savings has been taken up as a mass movement by women.

There are about 4.23 lakh women self-help groups in Andhra Pradesh covering nearly 55.77 lakh poor women. Andhra Pradesh alone has about half of self-help groups existing in the country. Up to 1994, only 10,000 groups were functioning and in the last ten years there was massive scaling up in self-help group activities.

The DWACRA groups are not only resorting to thrift but also are taking small amounts as loans out of the corpus fund available. The group corpus consists of savings, government assistance and also bank loan. Members use the loan out of group corpus for personal needs initially but lateral they utilize the loan for income generating activities.

In addition women have taken up initiatives in improving their socio-economic status by participating in governmental programmes such as family welfare, promoting their nutritional and educational status, awareness on environment, public health through sanitation and safe drinking water. Rising of nurseries and watersheds is also entrusted to women SHGs.

Special programmes have been designed for training and capacity building of SHGs. Regular training programmes for production, packaging and marketing and other support is given by the government. SHGs are encouraged to come together as Cooperative Societies at the village level and mandal level by federating them under Mutually Aided Cooperatives Societies Act 1995. Nearly 250 societies have been formed so far. The state government is enabling women to be in the forefront in the development process and is assisting SHGs by providing Revolving Fund under various programmes.

Marketing and Promotion of I L programmes

Public libraries may use marketing techniques to enable them to understand the information literacy needs of their users and to plan effectively IL programmes to meet those identified needs.

They may also promote their IL programmes to the target groups to improve their information skills.

Marketing and promotion plan may include the following activities:

- Making use of print, electronic and communication media viz. news papers, television - especially cable TV networks and radio not only to create awareness but also to popularize the IL programmes.

- Display of pictures, posters and distribution of IL material; conducting training programmes, meetings, exhibitions and talks for creating public awareness and motivating them to participate in IL programmes.

- Creation of Library Website to propagate information online about the IL programmes offered to different target groups in the city.

- Promotional strategy may include face-to-face interaction, maintaining rapport with the local community and working with government bodies. Public Libraries may facilitate formation of 'Friends of Library Groups' to help the libraries in offering IL programmes.

- Organizing and linking IL programmes appropriately with the celebrations of important events and days like Independence Day, Human Rights Day, International Women's Day, Population Day, etc. to attract more number of participants.

- Revenue generation is another important aspect of marketing the IL programmes. As the user survey revealed the willingness of the library users to pay for charged services, finances generated may be utilized to develop IL tools and infrastructure.

The above list is not exhaustive and by adopting different marketing strategies public librarians should ensure that the community is aware of the importance of IL programmes offered by them. Further the librarian should be visible in the society (Tovote, 1997). Well-informed public provide valuable support for the IL programmes of the library and would actively promote them within the community.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made for offering effective IL programmes by the public libraries:

IL Programmes for DWACRA Members

The special training programmes offered by the Government for the capability building of DWACRA women members cover only certain techno-economic skills required to perform different income raising and welfare activities. As Information literacy aspect has not been included in these training programmes, it is suggested that public libraries may take up the task of building the information capability of DWACRA members in the following areas:

- Health and sanitation
- Small saving schemes
- Nutritious food for children
- Adult literacy
- Consumer rights
- AIDS awareness
- Income generating activities/Entrepreneurial skills
- Water management
- Producing and marketing of food products

- Producing and marketing house hold products
- Setting up grocery shops
- Making of envelopes from newspapers
- Basket weaving with bamboo/ fibre

I L Programmes for Youth

Young persons in the society represent a dynamic section of population with ambitions and energy to achieve their goals. Public libraries should be aware of their needs to provide services that help them to realize their goals. The public libraries may organize IL programmes in the following areas to improve the information capabilities of youth:
- Educational opportunities
- Employment opportunities
- Employment skills like technical writing and communication skills
- CD-ROM database searching and retrieval
- Online database searching
- I T skills - internet browsing
- AIDS awareness programmes
- Guidance for appearing in competitive examinations
- Indian Heritage and Culture
- Use of multimedia information sources
- Environment Protection and Personal health
- Self employment schemes
- Government schemes for youth

Use of Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

Use of computers and networking technologies facilitates effective teaching and learning of information literacy skills. Using demos, tutorials, course materials in electronic form as interactive and ordinary CDs, animated and multimedia programmes helps in attracting the learners' attention and assists in easy understanding of the content of the training module.

Use of Cable TV network

Since Cable TV has gained popularity both in urban and rural areas of Visakhapatnam, the public libraries may make use of Cable TV as a channel to reach out its users at their doorsteps for teaching information literacy skills. This method of imparting training and educating the user is very cost-effective, especially in distributed environment.   At present seven Master Control channels through 385 Cable TV operators are offering programmes covering the urban and suburban population of Visakhapatnam city covering more than 1,63,000 households within a radius of 20 Kilometers (Kms). It is estimated that 70 per cent of the population is covered by the cable TV network.

Information literacy related programmes for different groups of target users may be video-graphed for telecast at different time slots. IL programmes combined with entertainment provides variety and opportunities to motivate citizens. The telecast may include target users, librarians, volunteers, other functionaries and invited experts from different fields

Visakha FM

The city's first private radio broadcasting channel started in 2003, which has
become an immensely popular medium, would be another effective tool for imparting IL skills to the citizens of Visakhapatnam. This channel covers a radius of 150 Kms from Visakhapatnam city. IL related programmes may be relayed in different time slots combined with entertainment to attract listeners. This method is also cost effective to impart programmes to a large a number of

citizens. IL programmes involving listeners, officials and public associated with these programmes may be covered through FM radio. The programmes may also be relayed with the sponsorship of local agencies.

All India Radio (AIR)

It is a Govt. of India channel, providing learning programmes over five decades for different types of listeners and it has spread its programmes to cover literacy campaign activities. Programmes covering interviews, talks, discussions, quiz, letters from listeners, song and drama etc. involving the learners/target groups, volunteers, functionaries and officials may be aired at fixed time intervals in a week. For this, the public libraries need to develop a variety of programmes in audio cassettes on information literacy with the help of experts from different fields.

Local Newspapers

Local language daily newspapers will be of immense help in reaching the citizens to impart basic IL skills like vocabulary building, writing and reporting skills. The public libraries through the popular local newspapers viz., Eenadu, Andhra Bhoomi, Vaartha and Andhra Jyothi may publish different items on IL skills. Special features by experts in Telugu language would attract neo-literates and others.

Context Based Programmes

Critical to imparting information literacy is recognizing the importance of context. Identifying the context or issues that motivate a particular user/user group seeking information is the most important aspect of organizing IL programmes in public libraries. ILP demands the involvement of the library staff to study the social, cultural, economic, political and educational aspects of the community. The success of any IL programme depends on the wholehearted participation of the learner who has a zeal to improve his/her life. Motivating the community groups to IL programmes is another challenging task for the public library staff.

Since the objective of IL programmes is the development of individuals and communities, it is their responsibility to support them. Leaders from the local communities should promote information literacy through partnerships. Some of the potential partnership groups and agencies are: business/industrial corporations, chambers of commerce, service organizations, Human Resource professionals and academic institutions.

Publishing the IL activities

Professional journals and newsletters in Library& Information science should give wide coverage to IL programmes. Librarians and other professionals involved with IL programmes may publish the IL activities taken up by them. Effective campaign of information dissemination should be launched to create greater awareness in the society about the important role of the public libraries in Information Literacy.

Funding

Director of Public Libraries, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh should earmark separate funds for conducting IL programmes in the public libraries. Intially the grants may be given to the six Government Regional Libraries to start IL programmes which may be extended later to all the 23 District Central Libraries in the state. Financial support may also be sought from local business and industrial organizations.

Indian Forum for Information Literacy

The major obstacle in promoting IL programmes in developing countries like India is lack of public awareness of the problems created by information illiteracy. To accomplish this Indian Forum for Information Literacy (IFIL) should be formed under the aegis of Indian Library Association. This forum should serve as the co-ordinating agency of all the activities performed in relation to Information Literacy at each state level. It should monitor and co-ordinate all the related educational efforts and develop leadership and identify best practices in implementing IL programmes. Through a strong advisory body of prominent public figures from librarianship, education, government, business and industry, the forum should work for raising public awareness, capturing media attention and fostering a climate for growth of information literacy in the country.

Information Literacy is thus the *sine qua non* for individual and community development in the information driven society. The present study emphasizes the importance of information literacy programmes by public libraries in information capability building of citizens in India.

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