Information Literacy among Post Graduate Science College Students of Ahmedabad City

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Abstract- This study investigates the level of information literacy (IL) competencies among postgraduate students enrolled in science colleges in Ahmedabad City. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire (N = 338) across five colleges. The analysis reveals that while students demonstrate high ability in recognizing information needs and accessing resources, they show weaknesses in citation practices, research data management, and advanced search strategies. The findings suggest embedding IL modules into curriculum, librarian–faculty collaboration, and strengthening orientation programs to bridge the identified gaps.

Keywords: Information literacy, postgraduate students, science colleges, Ahmedabad, e-resources, academic libraries, research skills, India

1. INTRODUCTION

The explosion of scientific literature, proliferation of open-access repositories, and AI-assisted search tools have transformed how postgraduate students locate, evaluate, and use information. Information literacy (IL) is a critical skill set that includes defining information needs, developing search strategies, assessing credibility, and ethical use of information.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Frameworks such as the ACRL Framework highlight the multidimensional nature of IL. Studies in STEM contexts emphasize critical evaluation, data literacy, and the role of libraries. In India, IL research is emerging with a focus on postgraduate students.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To measure IL competencies of postgraduate science students in Ahmedabad.
- To compare IL levels across disciplines.
- To examine predictors such as training, orientation, and database use.
- To identify priority areas for IL development.

4. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey was conducted among postgraduate students (N = 338) across five science colleges in Ahmedabad. Data were collected using a structured Google Form questionnaire with 35 items. The response rate was 86.67%. Analysis included descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and regression.

5. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Key findings from the survey:
- Response rate: 86.67% (338/390).
- Gender distribution: Male 61%, Female 39%.
- Library visits: 87% visit the library regularly; weekly visit is most common (45%).
- Purpose of visit: Study (67.46%), note preparation (15%), issue/return books (12%).
- Awareness of resources: Textbooks (66%), reference books (64%), journals (46%), e-resources (21%).
- Use of resources: Textbooks used most frequently (81%), journals (46%), online databases (36%).
- Awareness of services: Issue/return (90%), e-delivery (59%), online databases (64%), internet (62%).
- Preferred format: Both print & electronic (79%).
- Motivating factors: Support research (38%), update knowledge (37%).
- Sources of information: Friends/colleagues (42%), college library (28%), online resources (12%).
- Familiarity with IL: 83% familiar, 70% attended orientation programs.
- Computer skills: High in basic tasks (74%), average in research paper writing (39%).

- Internet skills: High in browsing (62%), weaker in downloading scholarly articles (49% average).
- Integration of IL: 50% say IL is integrated into curriculum.
- Barriers: Lack of trained staff (38%), lack of staff (16%), lack of policy (11%).

6. DISCUSSION

The findings highlight strengths in recognizing information needs and accessing resources but weaknesses in advanced IL skills such as citation ethics, data management, and evaluation. This aligns with international studies emphasizing the need for structured IL training in postgraduate education.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop institutional IL policies.
- Mandatory IL orientation for all students.
- Embed IL modules into curricula.
- Organize discipline-specific workshops.
- Promote librarian–faculty collaboration.
- Improve access to databases and RDM training.

8. LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to science colleges in Ahmedabad. The cross-sectional design does not capture longitudinal changes, and self-reported data may involve biases.

9. CONCLUSION

Postgraduate science students in Ahmedabad demonstrate basic IL competencies but face challenges in advanced skills. Structured IL integration into education, stronger training, and collaboration between faculty and librarians are essential for developing research-ready graduates.

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