

INFORMATION LITERACY AMONG WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract

We talk much about information literacy, but we are not concerned about the present literacy condition and economical condition in India. Do we have the enough resource, manpower, matured thinking toward accepting a new technology? Whereas infanticide, dowry death, honour killing are still prevalent in our society. How information literacy is helpful to eradicate social evils from our society, encouraging mass power is our motto. Research is needed in this field. In this article I have try to find out the information literacy which is able to enrich the human resource in manifold ways. Information literacy is required for Indian women. In India, every passing five year plan realize the need of ICT and give much importance on it and felt that Indian women also awaited for it.

Keywords: Information Literacy-Women-India

Introduction

The National Forum on Information Literacy defines "information literacy" as ".....the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand."(Wikipedia) The phrase information literacy first appeared in print in 1974. The primary concern is not simply literacy but we have to achieve more than that.

We have to live in the web of information now-a-days after connecting globally through internet. We get information within few seconds clicking mouse. Do we have the need of every bit of it? There are so much information, we may choosy on it, little is needed for our work or we have time to concentrate on it. Precisely, we collect information to solve our problem on the time of need. We collect information from every aspect we get, analyse it and try to reach the solution, highlighting every perspective of the problem.

In this present topic, we try to focus on the information literacy among women in India. So, do we have the ability to literate our women power in India? The fact is that, there is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14% for men and 65.46 % for women. But there is also a positive indication is that the growth in female literacy rates (11.8%) was substantially faster than in male literacy rates (6.9%) in the 2001-2011 decadal periods, which means the gender gap appears to be narrowing. So, for a better future of Indian women,

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we must focus on how to make them able to get more and more information and become information literate.

Information literacy is a critical set of skills for student's success in school, at work and as citizens of our democracy. The skills are not simply library search skills, nor are they only information technology skills."Information Literacy has progressed from the simple definition of using reference. Multiple literacy including digital, visual, textual and technological have now joined information literacy as crucial skills for this century".

The need of information literacy in Indian Women mostly because information literate women are able to access information about their child's well being , health, household, environment, education and workplace .Empowered themselves to make critical decisions about their lives. e. g. in taking more responsibility for their own health and education and for their family also and by which they participate in making better India. (http://crl.du.ac.in/incal09/papers/index_files/ical_88_1....).

In 1998 American Association School Librarians and Association for Educational Communication and Technology prepared a general standard, which is widely used as a set of information literacy standard. These standards and indicators are initially developed for students but can be equally usable for common citizens.

Information Literacy Standards and Indicators

<p>Standards</p> <p>1. Information Literacy Standards</p> <p>a) The person who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.</p>	<p>Indicators</p> <p>a) Recognises the need for information.</p> <p>b) Recognises that accurate and comprehensive information is the base for intelligent decision-making.</p> <p>c) Formulates questions based on information needs.</p> <p>d) Identifies a variety of potential sources of information.</p> <p>e) Develops and uses successful strategies for locating information.</p>
<p>b) The person who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.</p>	<p>a) Determines accuracy, relevance and comprehensiveness.</p> <p>b) Distinguishes among fact, point of view and opinion.</p> <p>c) Identifies inaccurate and misleading information.</p> <p>d) Selects information appropriate to the problem or question at hand.</p>
<p>c) The person who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively.</p>	<p>a) Organises information for practical application.</p> <p>b) Integrates new information into one's own knowledge.</p> <p>c) Applies information in critical thinking and problem solving.</p> <p>d) Produces and communicates information and ideas in appropriate formats.</p>
<p>2) Information Learning Standard</p> <p>D) The person who is an independent learner is information literate and pursues information related to personal interests.</p>	<p>a) Seeks information related to various dimensions of personal well-being, such as career interests, community involvement, health matters and recreational pursuits.</p> <p>b) Designs, develops and evaluates information products and solutions related to personal interests.</p>
<p>E) The person who is an independent learner is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.</p>	<p>a) Is a competent and self-motivated reader.</p> <p>b) Derives meaning from information presented creatively in a variety of formats.</p> <p>c) Develops creative products in a variety of formats.</p>
<p>F) The person who is an independent learner is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.</p>	<p>a) Assesses the quality of the process and products of personal information seeking.</p> <p>b) Devises strategies for revising, improving and updating self-generated knowledge.</p>
<p>3) Social responsibility Standards</p> <p>G) The person who contributes positively to the community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.</p>	<p>a) Seeks information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines and cultures.</p> <p>b) Respects the principle of equitable access to information.</p>
<p>H) The person who contributes positively to the community and to society is information literate and practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.</p>	<p>a) Respects the principles of intellectual freedom.</p> <p>b) Respects intellectual property rights.</p> <p>c) Uses information technology responsibly.</p>
<p>I) The person who contributes positively to the community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.</p>	<p>a) Shares knowledge and information with others.</p> <p>b) Respects other's ideas and background and acknowledges their contributions.</p> <p>c) Collaborates with others both in person and through technologies to identify information problems and to seek their solutions.</p> <p>d) Collaborates with others both in person and through technologies to design, develop and evaluate information products and solutions.</p>

(www.ala.org/ala/aasiproftools/informationpower/informationliteracystandards_final.pdf)

According to 2011 Census literacy rate in women is highest in Kerala (92%) and lowest in Rajasthan(52.7%).The state of Kerala in Southwestern India stands apart from other states in India and nations in South Asia for its rather unusual development includes lowest birth rate ,lowest infant mortality, highest age of marriage and longest lifespan.

Rural India female literacy rate (58.75%) is lower comparing to urban India female literacy rate (79.92%) according to 2011 census. Out of 150.18 million households in rural areas in 2004-05, 16.67 million (11.1%) are female headed. In the urban sector, out of the total of 56.97 million household, (10.9%) are female headed. Despite the factor of lower illiteracy rate among rural women, they may take more initiatives in household chores comparing to urban women.

The e-democracy is an effort to change the role of citizen from passive information giving to active citizen involvement. In an e-democracy the Government will be informing the citizen, representing the citizen and encouraging the citizen to vote, consulting the citizen and government policies by organizing an e-debate will further strengthen the e-democracy.

To encourage information literacy among women in India:

1. Women should be trained in The Field of ICT because IT breaks down traditional barriers.
2. Economic Opportunity should be increased.
3. Government should promote education for Rural Girls.
4. Technology Allows Targeted Education Programs.
5. Government should install IT-enabled Village Information Centers in India.
6. Women's Representation should be increased through Specific Policy Intervention.
7. Local communities should be empowered through a comprehensive Tele Centers.
8. Training girls and women to become part of the local governance process.
(Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/1897308>)

The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index for the year 2007, ranks India 114th among 128 countries. This index comprises four indicators, namely, economic, political, and educational and health subjects. These parameters influence overall empowerment process of women because they are intricately related. The empowering process of women in India started predominantly from the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) when obligatory quota of benefits for women in different poverty alleviation programmes had been made. This process reached its peak when the Government of India brought in 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India in the year 1992 for at least one third reservations of seats and offices in favour of women in rural and urban local self governments (panchayats and municipalities respectively). In rural areas, local self governments have three tiers at villages, blocks, and districts. This reservation is applicable to all three tiers. As a consequence thousands of women in rural and urban India have been brought into positions of authority and responsibility in the panchayats and municipalities. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) of India envisages the objective of faster and inclusive growth. Promotion of e-governance through newer technology development, entrepreneurship, and innovation in ICTs is of paramount importance in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The Eleventh Five Year Plan document claims that "breakthroughs in technology and innovative applications have brought vast benefits to various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy of the country." But no mention is there whether these benefits give equal benefits to all categories of people irrespective of their caste and sex.

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In India, whereas the number of girls per thousand boys is declining with each phasing decade, where sexual harassment, immoral traffic, dowry death, cruelty by husband & relatives, molestation, kidnapping & abduction ,rape cases are day to day incidence, in that scenario we have to give "information literacy" more importance. As told by a villager (study held by Deepa Narayan & Binayak Sen on "Moving out of poverty in India: an Overview". Source: worldbank.org/...Reports/MOP-India-overview.pdf) "Participation is active in the gramsabha, the village wide meeting. Some of the women attribute increased participation levels over the decade to improvements in education." Information literacy improves information learning and increases social responsibility. To eradicate social evils form India, information literacy can play a vital role .In conclusion, we can say with Mahatma Gandhi that, "If you educate a man, you educate an individual; if you educate a woman, you educate a family".

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