

INFORMATION LITERACY AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

After Independence, India has experienced growing population of literate and educated citizens due to various efforts in universalisation of elementary education through programmes like, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), National Literacy Mission and so on. On the other hand, for the facilitating educated citizens with the adequate documentary and knowledge resources, government and other agencies have established public libraries. The community information centres and village knowledge centres are the recent additions to this effort that would transform India into an information society, where information and knowledge resources are considered as critical ingredient for development. But problem is with the effective and efficient use, consumption and evaluation of information resources, so that informed citizen can take right decisions. Here information literacy can play a vital role in educating the users of libraries on various information and documentary resources, where to start searching of information, what where and how to access them, how to assess and compare retrieved information, how to communicate their information or findings to the general masses and experts, and so on. In addition to borrow books for entertainment and leisure, public libraries can also disseminate information on community development, best practices, literature, culture, trade, education, etc. which may be further elaborated when needs arise. Information seekers may want consolidated or exhaustive information. To provide right information to the users, public librarians need to be trained to develop information literacy competency and should able to educate the user that will make user information literate.

Before going into depth, we would like to know what 'information literacy' is and who 'information literates' are 'Information literacy' is "the ability to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" [<http://en.wikipedia.org>]. Information literacy embraces related concepts like 'user education', 'library instruction', 'bibliographic instruction' and 'library research', although 'information literacy' has broader perspectives and wider applications than these concepts.

Information literacy competency development programmes and standards are designed to produce information literate. *American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy* defines 'information literates' as, "...ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to

learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand.”
[<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/whitepapers/presidential.htm>]

INFORMATION LITERACY AND READING HABITS

Present urbanized society observes a changing face of new generation, where children have access to various modes of entertainment and amusement. Every middle-class household in India equips with at least one electronic gadgetry, like, television, music system, DVD-player, VCD-player, Internet, video games, etc. All these gadgets may be detrimental to our new generations as well as older generations, that is also one of the reasons for declining number of regular users of public libraries. We know public libraries build up collections of literature of local languages, national literature and world literature. A public library user can get higher satisfaction if they read classic literature, contemporary literature and know cultural heritage of India and the state he/she belongs. Other than books on literature, many informative books and magazines that enhance knowledge levels of the users are available in the public libraries. Other useful documents, such as career handbooks, encyclopedias, directories, dictionaries, etc. are also accessible in public libraries. Reading habits not only help a person becoming knowledgeable, socially responsible and socially productive person but also help in personality development. Information literacy competency development programmes may be initiated to impart necessary information skills and reading skills to public library users in maximizing utilization of public library resources. A public library may be participating in a library resource-sharing network. The public library users should learn how to search union catalogues of the network, how to obtain documents from other participating libraries through inter-library loan service and document delivery service. This way the limitation of collection in one public library may overcome and users get satisfaction for this service. Public libraries also conduct various extension programmes, like, quiz competition, story, poetry and essay writing competition, etc. that also aims to enhance reading habits of the users, especially younger users of the public libraries.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA

Public libraries in India have a countrywide spread, consist of state central libraries in every state, district libraries, urban public libraries at the cities and rural public libraries at the villages. Public libraries are mainly supported by state governments and local authorities, and some times by the central government, developmental agencies, non-government organizations and private trusts. The Delhi Public Library (DPL), established in 1951 by government of India in collaboration with UNESCO, caters library and information services to the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation

(RRRLF) is the nodal agency of the Government of India to support public library services and system and promote public library movement in the country. The RRRLF undertakes different functions in each state and union territory through a State Library Planning Committee (SLPC) or State Library Committee (SLC). Its headquarters' is located at Kolkata and it has four zonal offices in Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai. RRRLF provides financial and technical assistance to public libraries and organizations engaged in the promotion of public library development through different schemes. Schemes of RRRLF broadly categorized as Matching Schemes and Non-Matching Schemes. Assistance under matching schemes is given from the resources shared on 50:50 matching basis with the state governments. Assistance under non-matching schemes does not have share of the state governments.

Table 1 shows the number of different public libraries in India. Table data also indicates that there is lack of existence of public libraries in most of the villages even after 59 years of independence. The real catch of India's development lies in villages where focused spread of rural libraries can catalyze the diffusion of knowledge among rural masses. This effort needs to be the core of our social and rural development programmes as this has been untouched so far. Probably, this is one of the reasons of mass infectivity of literacy programmes and other development programmes envisaged for rural mass.

Table 1: Penetration of Public Libraries in India

Demography of India	Number	Public Libraries ^{##}	Number	Percentage covered
States and Union Territories	35	State Central Libraries	28	80%
Districts	592	District Libraries	451	76%
Talukas [#]	3,987	Taluka Libraries	501	12.5%
Villages [#]	587,226	Rural Libraries	28,820	4.9%

(Source: [#]Census of India, 1991; ^{##}Ghosh, 2005)

DELHI PUBLIC LIBRARY

Delhi Public Library (DPL) was started as a Pilot Library Project by Government of India in collaboration with UNESCO, in 1951. From a single service point confined to one place, it has now spread throughout the whole length and breadth of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It has 176 service points spreads over five regions and consists of branch libraries, sub-branches, community libraries resettlement colony libraries, reading rooms, mobile library points, Braille library and deposit stations. The DPL is a recipient of books published in India as per the provision in the *Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954*. The DPL has collections about 2 million books and other documents.

Aims of the Delhi Public Library

- To provide free public library services to the citizens of Delhi
- To function as a model public library in India and abroad
- To eradicate the illiteracy
- To provide a platform for cultural activities, lifelong learning and creativity

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto indicates that “the public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.” The DPL conforms most of the missions as suggested in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. Table 2 depicts the missions of a model public library, as suggested in its Manifesto and their conformity in DPL system.

Table 2: Missions of a Model Public Library and DPL Conformity

Sr. No.	Missions as per UNESCO Public Library Manifesto	DPL Conformity
1	Creating and strengthening reading habits in children at an early age	Yes
2	Supporting both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels	Yes
3	Providing opportunities for personal creative development	Yes
4	Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people	Yes
5	Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations	Yes
6	Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts	Yes
7	Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity	Yes
8	Supporting the oral tradition	Yes
9	Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information	Yes
10	Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups	Yes
11	Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills	Yes (information literacy); No (computer literacy)
12	Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary	Yes

The data of Table 3 reveals that the service points of DPL are not evenly distributed in accordance with the population to be served. Also, the Table depicts that North zone has highest number of service points of DPL, to serve its only 5.66 percent population. On the other hand, West and North-West Zones have 17.19 percent service points of DPL to serve its 36.04 percent population.

Table 3: Population of Delhi State vs. Delhi Public Library Service Points

Zones	Population	Percent to total population of state	No. of Service Points of DPL	Percent to total No. of Service Points of DPL
North	7,79,788	5.66	21	32.81
South + South-West	40,07,859	29.07	19	29.69
West + North-West	49,67,036	36.04	11	17.19
East + North-East	32,12,482	23.31	10	15.62
Central + New Delhi	8,15,811	5.92	3	4.69
Total (Delhi)	1,37,82,976	100	64	100

Table 4 shows that Delhi is one of the progressive states in terms of literacy rate, consists of more literate persons than the national literacy rate, both in male population as well as female population. But Delhi state has little change in literacy rate (6.53%) from 1991 census to 2001 census, which is lower than national average change (13.75%) in literacy rate. As the number of literate and educated persons is increasing in Delhi due to various literacy missions of the Government, DPL is also extending free library services to its citizens, through new membership drive and establishing new service points.

Table 4: Literacy Rate of Delhi State vs. India

	Literacy Rate (2001 Census) (In %)			Literacy Rate (1991 Census)	Change in Literacy Rate (1991 - 2001)
	Persons	Males	Females		
India	65.38	75.96	54.28	51.63	13.75
Delhi	81.82	87.37	75.00	75.29	6.53

Other than DPL branches and service points, there are a number of other public libraries those provide library services to the people of Delhi.

LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN INDIA

Public library development in the state is the responsibility of the respective state government. Ten states in India have enacted Public Libraries Act in their states. The library legislation ensures the smooth functioning of the public libraries in the state. A state may have three tiers of public libraries in hierarchy. The apex body would be a state central library, the next tier consists of district libraries in all districts of the state, and third tier consists of rural and urban public libraries spread all over the state. Public Libraries Act also ensures each village or city at least have one government-aided public library. This Act also makes provisions of finances, human resources and other resources for the development and functioning of public libraries. Some state governments provide grants for the public libraries; some other state governments collect Library Cess from the taxpayers.

The states that passed Public Libraries Act are shown below along with the year:

- Tamil Nadu (then called Madras Public Libraries Act, 1948);
- Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad Public Libraries Act, 1955; then Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act, 1960);
- Maharashtra (Kolhapur Public Libraries Act, 1945; then Maharashtra Public Libraries Act, 1967);
- Karnataka (Mysore Public Libraries Act, 1965; then Karnataka Public Libraries Act)
- West Bengal (West Bengal Public Libraries Act, 1979);
- Manipur (Manipur Public Libraries Act, 1988);
- Kerala (Kerala Public Libraries Act, 1989);
- Haryana (Haryana Public Libraries Act, 1989);
- Mizoram (Mizoram Public Libraries Act, 1993);
- Goa (Goa Public Libraries Act, 1994)
- Uttaranchal (Uttaranchal Public Libraries Act, 2005)

Table 5: Public Libraries Act in the States of India vs. Literacy Rate

Sr. No.	State	Literacy Rate (2001 Census)	Change In Literacy Rate (1991 -2001)	Library Legislation	Year of LL
1	Andhra Pradesh	61.11	17.02	Yes	1955
2	Arunachal Pradesh	54.74	13.15	No	
3	Assam	64.28	11.52	No	
4	Bihar	47.53	10.04	No	
5	Chhatisgarh	65.18	22.27	No	
6	Delhi	81.82	6.53	No	

Sr. No.	State	Literacy Rate (2001 Census)	Change In Literacy Rate (1991 -2001)	Library Legislation	Year of LL
7	Goa	82.32	6.81	Yes	1994
8	Gujarat	69.97	8.68	No	
9	Haryana	68.59	12.74	Yes	1989
10	Himachal Pradesh	77.13	13.27	No	
11	Jammu & Kashmir	54.46	NA	No	
12	Jharkhand	54.13	12.74	No	
13	Karnataka	67.04	11	Yes	1965
14	Kerala	90.92	1.11	Yes	1989
15	Madhya Pradesh	64.11	19.41	No	
16	Maharashtra	77.27	12.39	Yes	1967
17	Manipur	68.87	8.97	Yes	1988
18	Meghalaya	63.31	14.21	No	
19	Mizoram	88.49	6.22	Yes	1993
20	Nagaland	67.11	5.45	No	
21	Orissa	63.61	14.52	No	
22	Punjab	69.95	11.45	No	
23	Rajasthan	61.03	22.48	No	
24	Sikkim	69.68	12.61	No	
25	Tamil Nadu	73.47	10.81	Yes	1948
26	Tripura	73.66	13.22	No	
27	Uttar Pradesh	57.36	16.65	No	
28	Uttaranchal	72.28	14.53	Yes	2005
29	West Bengal	69.22	11.52	Yes	1979
	India	65.38	13.75		

Table 5 indicates the states that have enacted Public Libraries Act as well as the states which are yet to enact such Acts. This Table also indicates that large number of states does not have Public Libraries Acts, including densely populated states, such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Jharkhand. Also

these states have literacy rate less than the national average. All states of the south region have Public Libraries Act, and they have literacy rate above the national average. Although, some states as such have no Public Libraries Act, these states have government-funded public libraries at the state and district levels; government aided public libraries at the rural and urban areas are mostly absent or having in an unorganized manner. The Delhi Public Library is located in Delhi, which is fully funded by the union government, so Delhi state does not have such Act.

For getting into the profession, public librarians should have formal training, at least a Certificate in Library Science (CLS) or Diploma in Library Science (DLS) for the rural libraries and Bachelor's in Library and Information Science (BLIS) for the district libraries. There is also provision of training of public librarians in the Public Libraries Act in some states, in the forms of orientation training, refresher training. The public librarians should be aware of recent development in information sources and information systems, especially in the digital environment, as many public libraries worldwide are providing web-based library and information services to their users. Digital divide in the India can be bridged significantly if they make use of computers and Internet technologies in the public libraries at the grass-root level. The users of public libraries then will have access to digital information available through Internet to keep abreast of recent development in their areas of interest. Information literacy competency development programmes for public librarians and users need to be a part of provisions in the Public Libraries Act of the states.

ROLE OF STATE LEVEL LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

Library associations exist in most of the states and union territories of India. State level library associations are very active in public libraries development in their respective states. Some library associations also conduct certificate and diploma courses in library science that help the learners get into the profession. Some library associations also conduct refresher courses for the in-service public librarians, mostly in the areas of library automation, ICT applications in libraries, and other contemporary issues. Most library associations observe Library Day and Dr. S.R. Ranganathan's birthday. On those occasions they organize one-day seminars or lectures. These way public librarians get informed about the recent development in the librarianship and public libraries movement in India and the states. Some library associations bring out their newsletters and bulletins for their member librarians and disseminate various professional information.

Some library associations take up the issue of information literacy competency for the librarians and library users. Library associations in the states need to come forward and develop information literacy competency of the public librarians through organizing training programmes, workshops and seminars. In December 2005, Indian Library Association had organized 51th All India Conference with the focus on "libraries, information literacy and lifelong learning",

where many librarians felt the importance of information literacy in lifelong learning and optimizing the usage of information in the libraries. In October 2005, an international information literacy workshop was held at the Punjabi University, Patiala, India to promote information literacy in South and South East Asia, with the support of UNESCO and other partners. In September 2003 at Prague, the *International Alliance for Information Literacy* was formed where India's *Networking Alliance for Voluntary Actions*, a network of NGOs, became a member. In India, a number of NGOs support public libraries and community information centres, where common people become users of these libraries. The state level library associations, NGOs and developmental agencies can collaborate amongst themselves to develop information literacy competencies of the librarians and library users.

INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIANS AND PUBLIC LIBRARY USERS

Information literacy (IL) competency development programmes for public librarians would be a kind of training course for the trainers. The public librarians would impart training to the end users of public libraries. Some of the skills required for the information literacy are already achieved by the public librarians through their formal degree or diploma courses; induction, orientation, and on-the-job training programmes. Some librarians started their career before the introduction of information communication technologies (ICT) in library services and information handling. Such ICT skills, communication and teaching skills need to be obtained freshly through the refresher courses. The aims¹ of the information literacy competency development programmes for public librarians can be:

- the ability to apply the principles of scholarly communication to problems of information handling;
- the ability to locate, select and use appropriate information retrieval tools in order to obtain useful information in connection with studies or work of the end users, and when required;
- confidence in using, and satisfaction in carrying out information searching;
- confidence in communicating, instructing and educating the users.

Some of the objectives¹ IL competency development programmes for public librarians are:

- Public librarians would be able to develop a systematic method of searching for information related to areas of studies of the users;
- They would be aware of wide range of sources (including open access sources) available for finding information and select the sources which will best meet users needs;

¹ Adapted from: Information Literacy Course in Chemistry/ Library of Kaunas University of Technology, 1999. <<http://internet.unib.ktu.lt/chemija/>>

- They would be aware of appropriate indexing and abstracting services and databases and understand the principles of their use;
- They would develop database searching techniques for accessing both web-based and CD-ROM databases;
- They would be able to use current awareness methods to keep up-to-date with the published literature;
- They would be able to use international academic networks for getting information;
- They would be able to use and create list servers, discussion forums, Internet chat services and bloggers for obtaining and disseminating information;
- They would be able to use local library network for sharing in-house resources and obtaining documents through inter-library loan and document delivery services;
- They would be able to compare and critically evaluate information obtained from various sources;
- They would be able to cite bibliographic references in the papers, articles, reports or theses;
- They would be able to construct an institutional bibliographic system;
- They would be able to motivate library users in accessing library resources and availing user services;
- They would be able to communicate, instruct and educate library users;
- They would be able to prepare learning and assessment modules both printed as well as web-enabled for the learners;
- They would be able to make strategies for influencing stakeholders; and prepare action plans.

Some of the above-mentioned aims and objectives of the IL competency development programmes can be considered and adopted for public library users, as some of the components of the programmes are common. These aims and objectives of the IL competency development programmes are not exhaustive; and some elements may be altered whenever needs arise. Public library authorities in India, like Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Delhi Public Library, state central libraries and library associations need to introduce IL competency development programmes for public librarians with above-mentioned objectives and aims. The changing library scenario, present and future public library systems in India need consideration while designing such courses and programmes.

INFORMATION LITERACY STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

In 1998 *American Association of School Librarians* and *Association for Educational Communications and Technology* prepared a document titled 'Information literacy standards for student learning: standards and indicators', which is widely accepted worldwide as a set of information literacy standards that can be imparted to produce information literate citizen. The each standard has

some indicators that show kinds of competency and parameters to accomplish that standard. As far nine standards are identified which have three broad spectrums, such as information literacy standards, independent learning standards and social responsibility standards. Although these standards and indicators are initially developed for students, these can be equally applicable to the common citizens as well as public libraries users. The information literacy standards and respective indicators are shown in the Table 6 and Table 7. The Table 6 indicates that information literates are also independent learners, and information literates who contribute positively to the community use information ethically and responsibly. We know that many public libraries cater information services to the higher learners and researchers. It is also being said that one of the best research libraries in the world is New York Public Library. The Table 7 indicates information literacy competency standards for higher education. American Library Association and other organizations endorsed these two standards.

Table 6: Information Literacy Standards and Indicators

Standards	Indicators
<i>Information Literacy Standards</i>	
1. The person who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.	1. Recognizes the need for information. 2. Recognizes that accurate and comprehensive information is the basis for intelligent decision-making. 3. Formulates questions based on information needs. 4. Identifies a variety of potential sources of information. 5. Develops and uses successful strategies for locating information.
2. The person who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.	1. Determines accuracy, relevance, and comprehensiveness. 2. Distinguishes among fact, point of view, and opinion. 3. Identifies inaccurate and misleading information. 4. Selects information appropriate to the problem or question at hand.
3. The person who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively.	1. Organizes information for practical application. 2. Integrates new information into one's own knowledge. 3. Applies information in critical thinking and problem solving. 4. Produces and communicates information and ideas in appropriate formats.

<i>Independent Learning Standards</i>	
4. The person who is an independent learner is information literate and pursues information related to personal interests.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeks information related to various dimensions of personal well-being, such as career interests, community involvement, health matters, and recreational pursuits. 2. Designs, develops, and evaluates information products and solutions related to personal interests.
5. The person who is an independent learner is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is a competent and self-motivated reader. 2. Derives meaning from information presented creatively in a variety of formats. 3. Develops creative products in a variety of formats.
6. The person who is an independent learner is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assesses the quality of the process and products of personal information seeking. 2. Devises strategies for revising, improving, and updating self-generated knowledge.
<i>Social Responsibility Standards</i>	
7. The person who contributes positively to the community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeks information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures. 2. Respects the principle of equitable access to information.
8. 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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respects the principles of intellectual freedom. 2. Respects intellectual property rights. 3. Uses information technology responsibly.
9. The person who contributes positively to the community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shares knowledge and information with others. 2. Respects others' ideas and backgrounds and acknowledges their contributions 3. Collaborates with others, both in person and through technologies, to identify information problems and to seek their solutions. 4. Collaborates with others, both in person and through technologies, to design, develop, and evaluate information products and solutions

(Source: AASL Information literacy standards)

Table 7: Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

Information Literacy Competency Standards	Performance Indicators
<p>Standard One Information Literate (IL) person determines the nature and extent of the information needed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information Literate (IL) person defines and articulates the need for information. 2. IL person identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information. 3. IL person considers the costs and benefits of acquiring the needed information. 4. IL person reevaluates the nature and extent of the information need.
<p>Standard Two IL person accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IL person selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information. 2. IL person constructs and implements effectively designed search strategies. 3. IL person retrieves information online or in person using a variety of methods. 4. IL person refines the search strategy if necessary. 5. IL person extracts, records, and manages the information and its sources.
<p>Standard Three IL person evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IL person summarizes the main ideas to be extracted from the information gathered. 2. IL person articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources. 3. IL person synthesizes main ideas to construct new concepts. 4. IL person compares new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information. 5. IL person determines whether the new knowledge has an impact on the individual's value system and takes steps to reconcile differences. 6. IL person validates understanding and interpretation of the information through discourse with other individuals, subject-area experts, and/or practitioners. 7. IL person determines whether the initial query should be revised.
<p>Standard Four IL person, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IL person applies new and prior information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance. 2. IL person revises the development process for the product or performance. 3. IL person communicates the product or performance effectively to others.
<p>Standard Five IL person understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IL person understands many of the ethical, legal and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology. 2. IL person follows laws, regulations, institutional policies, and etiquette related to the access and use of information resources. 3. IL person acknowledges the use of information sources in communicating the product or performance.

(Source: ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards)

CONCLUSION

Information literacy competency ensures maximum utilization of the information resources as well as optimization of information handling capabilities. Many libraries and information systems introduce user orientation programmes to educate users on the salient features of information resources, search techniques, search strategies, scholarly communications and other aspects. In India a number of training programmes are conducted by the different agencies, who are also architects of modern information systems, to the end-users. For example, INFLIBNET conducts workshops on information resources in Infonet e-journal consortium. NISCAIR conducts workshops on information resources in CSIR e-journal consortium. National Informatics Centre conducts training programmes on 'biomedical information retrieval' covering Indian Medlars Centre's resources like, IndMED, medIND, OpenMED and UNcat. All these training programmes are meant to develop information literacy competencies of the end users. Similarly, public library authorities and public librarians should impart information literacy competencies to the public library users. The importance of public libraries would be felt more strongly, if the public libraries attract common citizens and younger generations and such librarians meet the information needs of all walks of users.

Public libraries can also play a pivotal role for national development programmes and bringing mass affectivity of such programmes. Hence, horizontal diffusion of information literacy can reap the optimum value of envisaged programmes.

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