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# INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMME : 30 YEARS EXPERIENCE OF MANIPUR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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## ABSTRACT

*States that University library plays an important role in enhancing accessibility to knowledge resources to the users. University library exist to serve the needs of the university in providing knowledge resources. They have centrally positioned themselves in providing and implementing information literacy programme. They acquire, describe and make the information available to their users in a variety of formats, which may include print, audio, video and electronic formats. The present study has been taken up to assess the way how the Manipur University Library (MUL) conduct such programmes taking into account its 30 years of experience. For the collection of data pertaining to the study, Manipur University Library (MUL) has been taken as study area. Data were collected by means of face to face interview with the university librarian and his staff and scanning of annual reports of the university. The study discussed the various information literacy programme (ILP) conducted by the library. It shows that, though in a slow pace, MUL library is conducting various ILP from time to time since its inception for providing better services in term of knowledge resources.*

**KEYWORDS:** Information Literacy Programme (ILP), Higher Education, University Library, Manipur University Library (MUL).

### **Introduction**

The term Information Literacy (IL), has been defined as the ability to identify what kind of information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate and use the needed information in an effective way to serve the purpose of the users. Thus it becomes a must for each and every individual to be information literate in order to keep pace with the ever growing knowledge resources. With the emergence of knowledge explosion, there has been the need to acquire the right kind of information from the vast and uncertain information resources. Libraries and information centres have been serving as the hub from where most of the knowledge resources are disseminated. Academic libraries in this regard, are playing a major and crucial role in this regard. Higher education today, is mainly learning oriented, so libraries of such institutions are the backbone of knowledge. University libraries are rendering their services in enhancing accessibility to knowledge resources to the users having varied and diversified needs. Library networking, interlibrary loan service, current awareness service, selective dissemination of information, reference services, etc have been providing to the users besides the housekeeping operations of the library. But, such services become insufficient for the user to identify, locate, evaluate and use the needed information effectively.

It becomes necessary to make the user community more information literate and competent to identify, locate, find and use the information. In this regard, among other academic libraries, university libraries are found to be providing various Information Literacy Programmes (ILP). Such ILP may include user education programme, library awareness programme, book fair and exhibitions, library related programme, programme on the application of computer and communication technology in library, online tutorials, and also thematic workshops, seminars, conferences etc related to library. Besides, there are also various ways in which ILP is required within the in-house functioning and other activities of the library. The staff must be made aware of the users approach and the goal of the library in making the user information literate. Library and Information (LIS) professionals are also playing a major role in providing information literacy to the users' community.

In this backdrop, the present study has been taken up with an attempt to study the ILP conducted by the Manipur University Library (MUL) to create information literacy to the user community with an objective to examine the various ILP conducted so far by the library since last 30 (thirty) years.

### **Review of the Literature**

Since recent past, IL has become an active area of research in Library and Information Science. Different dimensions of IL are found to be covered in such studies conducted in different parts across

the world. ILP in higher education particularly in university library system also occupies an important place in such studies. Efforts have been made to have an internationally accepted definition of IL. The findings of the study made by Idiodi (2005) is an important contribution in the context of Nigerian universities. Different approaches used in providing ILP in higher education system have been studied by different scholars in different part of the world. Studies conducted by Adeleke and Olorunsola (2010), Burger (2007), Bury and Oud (2005), Mansourian (2008) and Miller (2010) have covered many approaches and strategies in this regard. Studies are also found to be carried out in various issues associated with ILP as seen from the researches conducted by Foster (2006), Getty et al (2000), Hoffman and Goodwin (2006), Joint (2006), Korobili, Malliari and Christodoulou (2008), Malliari and Nitsos (2008), Matoush (2006), Mizrachi (2007), Simard (2009) and Trescases (2008). Understanding the level of ICT literacy of the audiences, the ILP can be provided in the new environment. Studies made by Adeyoyin (2005), Adomi (2006), Armstrong and Georgas (2006), Gust (2006), Majid and Abazova (1999) and Safahieh and Asemi (2010) have shown many clues in these aspects.

Instructional programmes are important facets of ILP in which studies undertaken by Collins (2009) and Oduwole and Sho (2007) have shown the need for such programme to teach IL skills and summary of an international training programme respectively. The need for integrating IL in different courses and its impact have been studied by some scholars like Hoffman (2002), Harrison and Rourke (2006), Mutula et al (2006), Sult and Mills (2006). Innovative aspects provided to high school to college students concerning IL has been discussed by Burhanna and Jensen (2005). While Hicks and Graber (2010) conceptualized a common framework of teaching and learning theory for librarians to use when implementing web 2.0 tools and applications, Korobili and Tilikidou (2005) studied the practices of faculty and students regarding ILP and Wu and Kendall (2006) addressed the issues associated with the developing of a good partnership between teaching faculty and librarians. On the other hand, the role played by extensive collaboration between university librarian and faculty has been highlighted in their study conducted by Hooks and Corbett (2005).

The vision of Johnston and Webber (2004) about the information literate university (ILU) is a new vista in the area of ILP of higher education, in which they identified the new roles of the LIS faculty to support this vision. On the frontier of IL courses, the study of Li (2006) is an important aspect, though there are various landscapes for expressing IL while the visibility learning diary (VLD) of Mansourian ((2008) has brought an initiative to measure efficiency of IL training courses. The status and practice of IL in various institutions have been assessed by researchers like Lwehabura and Stilwell (2008) in Tanzanian Universities, McGuiness (2009) in Irish higher education institutions, Noe and Bishop (2005) on assessing effectiveness of the programme in Auburn University Libraries, Resnis et al (2010) at Miami university, Sonley et al (2007) on IL module at the University of Teesside

in the UK. Evaluation and assessment of ILP were also made by some researchers at various institutions – Salisbury and Ellis (2003) at the University of Melbourne and Vande Creek (2005) at Northern Illinois University Library.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study has been taken up with the objectives to: highlight the ILP conducted by the MUL; examine whether the library provides ILP regularly; understand the status of MUL in this regard and role of the LIS Professionals; and explore the efforts of the library towards planning and implementation of ILP.

### **Methodology of the Study**

The methods and techniques used for the study include the following:

- Various literature related to the topic have been scanned for review;
- Records and Annual Reports of Manipur university and its library have been consulted to understand the various IL related programmes conducted by the library; and
- Interviewing with the university librarian and his subordinate professionals in this regard.

### **Information Literacy Programmed (ILP)**

Programmes carried out to make information users literate about information is Information Literacy Programme (ILP). It may be considered in various ways and in different forms. In other words, the instruction or guidance given by the library to its users about the use of various knowledge resources available in the library in an effective way may be known as ILP. It may consist of various programme such as book fairs and exhibitions, orientation and training programmes, seminars and conferences, awareness programme, workshops and other promotional activities as its different facets. In today's ICT driven knowledge society, higher education is described more as a process of learning, than of teaching. It signifies the self effort to be put in by the students which need full support from the library. Thus, ILP supports the user's community in accessing the knowledge resources.

In various higher institutions of learning, library plays a major role in dissemination of information. Now a days, libraries are subscribed to various national and international online journals and their full text articles are made available to their users. Free access to various online information resources are also made possible. Not only this, publication works of the library as a part of ILP also help the users in search of the needed information. It can be said that ILP in different forms supports the users

in various ways. In this perspective, the role of the library in such institutions, say university library is manifold. As any level or type of library aims to fulfill the complex information needs of their users, all the activities, functions, operations and services of a university library should be oriented towards making its users information literate. Right from selection and procurement of information resources in varied formats to dissemination and delivery of the same to the right users, proper planning for effective implementation of ILP need to be kept in view by the library.

### **ILP in Manipur University Library**

Manipur University is the only central university of its kind in the state. It was established on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1980 by an Act of 1980 passed by the Manipur Legislative Assembly. Prior to this, there was a Post Graduate Centre of JNU, New Delhi at Imphal. JNU was functioning from 1972 to 1981 having 10 disciplines. It was merged with Manipur University on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1981. Manipur University is located at the historic palace of Canchipur. Its distance from the Imphal city is about 8 km on the western side of National Highway No.39 (Indo-Myanmar road). The University campus occupies an area of about 287 acres of land.. On 13<sup>th</sup> October 2005, it became a Central University by an Act, (Act No.54 of 2005) of Parliament.

Currently, the university has six (6) Schools of studies including the school of Medical Science and 30 Departments which constitute the five (5) schools of studies. The school wise distribution of the departments is shown below:

- A. School of Humanities:** The Departments under this school are: Dance (Manipuri); English; Hindi; Linguistics; Manipuri; Philosophy; and Foreign language.
- B. School of Human and Environmental Sciences:** The five Departments of this school include: Anthropology; Earth Science; Geography; Physical Education and Sports; Forestry and Environmental Science.
- C. School of Life Sciences:** The School of Life Sciences has three departments namely: Biochemistry; Biotechnology; Life Sciences
- D. School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences:** There are five departments under this school. They are: Chemistry; Computer Sciences; Mathematics; Physics; Statistics
- E. School of Social Sciences:** Currently 9(nine) Departments of the university constitute the school. They are: Adult, Continuing Education and Extension; Commerce; Economics; Education; History; Journalism and Mass Communication; Library and Information Science; Management Studies; Political Science; and Sociology.

### **Manipur University Library**

The history of Manipur University library dates back to 1972 with the establishment of the erstwhile JNU Centre of Post Graduate Studies, Imphal. It keeps pace with the development and up-gradation of the University. The working hour of the library is from 9 am to 7 pm on all working days and from 10 am to 3.30 pm on Sundays. Currently, MUL has various sections to carry out its house-keeping operations, services and other administrative works. The library follows open access system. Each section of the library plays a major role in the in-house functioning of the library. There is also a maintenance section for the management of the overall in-house operation of the library. Besides, the various facilities and services of the library in-house operations, the library is also providing awareness programme to its user.

### **Information Literacy Programme of the Library**

Since its inception, MUL had been playing a major role in providing access to vast knowledge resources to its users. Various sections of the library have their own unique function. Each and every section has an important role to play in the proper functioning of the library. Library staff as a whole, and partly the staff of each section also contribute in this regard. Almost every section of the library has a unique contribution in the planning and implementation of ILP in the library. The library had conducted various ILP from time to time in collaboration with a number of National and State level bodies such as National Library, Kolkata, Information and Library Network, (INFLIBNET) Centre, Ahmedabad, Department of Education(U), Government of Manipur, Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University, Manipur Library Association (MALA) etc. In the last about 30 years, MUL has been carrying out a number of activities related to ILP. The following sections give an account of such programme under different facets.

#### **A. Book Fair and Exhibitions**

Book fair and exhibitions constitute a part of ILP as the same is also a way of providing knowledge resources. Such programmes of the MUL include the following:

- Book exhibition conducted during 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1986 commemorating 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of

Rabindra Nath Tagore, which was inaugurated by His Excellency the Governor of Manipur General (retd) K.V. Krishna Rao and attended by more than 500 distinguished visitors.

- Book exhibition conducted during 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1986 in which more than 400 persons including AIU team visited.
- Manipur University Book Fair conducted during 29<sup>th</sup> October – 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2001.
- Book fair conducted during 11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

Such aspects of ILP enable the visitors, audiences, users, etc to know more about new titles in different subjects and their availability, etc.

### **B. Summer Institute/Orientation/Training Programme**

Various library instruction programmes may be included in this group. The MUL organized a Summer Institute for college librarians of NE region from 19<sup>th</sup> May to 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1988 under the sponsorship of UGC. It was conducted by the Library in collaboration with the Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University. An INFLIBNET Regional Training Programme on Library Automation (IRTPLA) was also organized by the library during 23<sup>rd</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2002. The training programme was financed by INFLIBNET, Ahmedabad. Not only this, in 2004, the library conducted an orientation programme on UGC-INFONET on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

### **C. Seminars**

Seminars also play an important role in making the users information literate. Through such seminars and conferences, the participants are made aware of various knowledge resources and its accessibility. MUL hosted and organized Second Convention of Promotion of Library Automation and Networking in North Eastern Region (PLANNER) under the sponsorship of INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad during 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2004. A National seminar on “Role of Librarians, Archivists and Writers in Preservation of National Heritage” was also organized by the library during 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 in collaboration with National Library, Kolkata, Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

### **D. Awareness Programmes**

The Library also conducted User awareness programme on “Access to E-resources under N-LIST programme” and workshop on “Library Automation, Networking” from 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2011. While the former was sponsored by INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad, the later was organized in collaboration with Directorate of Education (U), Government of Manipur.

### **E. Library Day/Week Celebrations**

The MUL organized the National Library Week Celebration i.e. from 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November 1995 in collaboration with Manipur Library Association (MALA). Commemorating the father of Library Science in India Dr S R Ranganathan, the library also organized Library Day on the 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 jointly with Manipur Library Association (MALA) and Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centre, (IASLIC) Zone-5.

### **F. Workshops**

Since recent past MUL has been very instrumental in conducting workshops for the LIS professionals particularly of Manipur. Some such programmes include the following:

- Two day workshop on “Application of Computers in Libraries” during 25<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> March 2008 organized jointly with National Library, Kolkata, Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- Three day workshop on “Application of Computers in Libraries” sponsored by National Library, Kolkata, Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- Workshop on “Library Automation, Networking and E-resources” for the principals and librarians of colleges in Manipur on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011 organized in collaboration with the Directorate of University and Higher Education, Government of Manipur.

### **G. Publication Works**

Publications brought out by the Library is also one of the important influencing factors to make users information literate on certain aspects of the library and its resources. The publications of Manipur University Library, at present are as follows:

- Accession List of Manipur University Library since 2008 (every 3 months) onwards.
- Current Contents of the periodicals received in the Library since 2008 (every 3 months) onwards.
- Journals subscribed to Manipur University Library, 2009 onwards.
- Calendar based on the general holidays, restricted holidays, etc of the university since 2010.

### **Observation and Conclusion**

Though the concept of IL and ILP became to be popularized during early 70s many library across the world, however started provision of different modes of ILP without knowing the concept. User

education, bibliographic instruction, library awareness programme etc have been introduced and conducted by different libraries since long time back which are very much important parameters of the ILP. The concept became more and more popular as the significance of IL became high. It has become one of the important emerging issues in the field of Library and Information Science. It have been discussed and transacted the need for providing ILP in different libraries of various level have been emphasized upon by different agencies and bodies. University libraries being the libraries of the institution of higher learning, as such, require taking up certain strategies and initiatives to make ILP as one of the important aspects in the library.

Today, as review of literature shows ILP has got a prominent place in the university library set-up. The phenomenon has become global. Keeping all these aspects in view, in the present study about ILP in respect of MUL, we have understood many clues on the programme in the university system. It is observed that in addition to different house-keeping operations, services and other functions of the university library, the same also has carried out a number of programmes like seminars, conferences, workshops, orientation courses, awareness programmes, book fairs and exhibitions etc. All these activities are an integral part of ILP of the library. Therefore MUL has given a commendable service to the readership community in the last more than 30 years on some important aspects of ILP such as identification, location, collection and use of information through different modes. Besides its own registered users, MUL has also extended to reach its ILP to other audiences like students, research scholar, teachers, administrative staff, other LIS professionals etc of other institutions and common people of the state, as well.

Collaborative efforts by MUL have been established in organizing such programmes successfully with different national level agencies such as Ministry of Culture, Government of India; National Library, Kolkata; INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad; IASLIC Zone-5; and other state level agencies including Department of Library and Information Science of the university; Directorate of Education (U), Government of Manipur and the Manipur Library Association (MALA). On the other hand, the success story of such programme can be ascertained only when we can evaluate the performance of the same. Therefore, further research can be carried out on some aspects of the programme in future like: a) collection of feedback and responses from the participants for further analysis; b) survey of users community of the library; c) assessment of the programme towards fulfillment of the demand of the participants/users; d) chalking out policy, programme and planning for implementation of new areas of ILP.

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