

Chapter 12

Implementing Information Literacy Skills and Soft Skills for Better Use of Library Resources and Services

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ABSTRACT

Information literacy (IL) is a set of skills that allows us to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the information that we need. IL skills are essential tools that help us successfully plan for the present and future scenario of information. Soft skills are a set of abilities that influence how we interact with each other. Soft skills and IL skills affect every person in every possible situation work, education, entertainment, etc. This chapter highlights the importance of soft skills in library profession, different types of soft skills, why soft skills are important, relevance of information literacy in the ICT era, concepts of information literacy, IL and school libraries, and various types of IL models and standards. Both soft skills and IL skills are essential for library professionals as well as the users, particularly while using the 21st century resources, so that the users will be energized in using the library resources effectively and efficiently.

INTRODUCTION

Soft skills are a set of skills that influence how we interact with each other. It is a set of abilities such as effective communication, problem-solving, creativity, analytical thinking, team building and maintaining good relations with colleagues and users of libraries. Soft skill is a term often associated with a person's EQ – Emotional Quotient; the cluster of personality traits, communication, language, interpersonal skills, leadership, managing with people, etc. The main role of librarian in a school library is to manage and

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collection of print resources, promote reading and a love of good literature and teach children how to find things in the library – use of computers, internet, OPAC, teaching Information Literacy and so on. These are essential for the better use of available resources effectively and efficiently in this ICT era.

Before the advent of computer, followed by the influence of internet, teaching children to find information was limited to the card catalogue for the print collections, a guide for the periodicals and standard print reference sources like dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs, year books, thesauri, biographies, etc. During 1970's and 1980's, we saw video discs, video cassette, audio cassette, micro films, micro fiche in libraries and these were replaced by computers and other 21st century electronic devices. The trend in using the resources has changed from how to find information in a limited number of resources to how to choose information that is most appropriate for the needs from the unlimited number of resources.

SOFT SKILLS: ESSENTIAL FOR PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS

Soft skills play an important role for the success of the routine works of academic libraries. It is defined as “Soft skills is a sociological term, which refers to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism, that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job”. (Personality Development & Soft Skills by Shalini Verma, 2013) In fact, soft skills are all the behaviours and feelings that exist within all of us that influence our ability to connect with others. These are individual's personal skills, i.e. interpersonal, non-specialized, such as leadership, responsibility, assertiveness, and conflict resolution or mood management. Sound soft skills reduce stress and conflict, improve relation building ability, enhance intimacy, increase understanding and promote joy that we, the library professionals needed for the success of our profession. Soft skills can play a vital role for the success of the library profession in following ways:

- To handle interpersonal relations.
- To take appropriate decisions.
- To communicate effectively.
- To have good impression and impact.
- To gain professional development.

To handle the users of the 21st century technological era, especially to handle with the techno savvy young generation in academic libraries, soft skills play a significant role in day to day activities. With the increased use of computers, mobile phones and internet, the importance of listening has increased manifold.

WHY SOFTSKILLS ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

Soft skills are learned right from our childhood – the way we are brought up, educated, groomed to behave in a society. Children imitate in an attempt to learn soft skills. Soft skills are all the behaviours and feelings that exist within all of us that influence our ability to connect with others. These are individual's

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