



# Role of Libraries in Lifelong Learning

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## **Abstract:**

Libraries play a crucial role in promoting lifelong learning by providing access to information, resources, and educational programs. Libraries are pillars of knowledge and enlightenment, serving as indispensable resources in promoting literacy and lifelong learning. Beyond their traditional role as repositories of books, libraries have evolved into dynamic centers catering to communities' diverse educational needs worldwide. This paper explores the multifaceted role of libraries in lifelong learning. The paper also discusses libraries role as community centers, showcasing their programs and services for lifelong learning. Libraries play a crucial role in promoting literacy and lifelong learning in various ways. The libraries play role as community centers, showcasing their programs and services for lifelong learning, outreach efforts to diverse populations, and collaborations with educational institutions. Overall, this paper underscores the vital role of libraries in facilitating lifelong learning and recommends measures to strengthen their impact in the future.

**Keywords:** Lifelong learning, Libraries. Information Literacy

## **Introduction:**

Information has become a vital source for world economies and is certainly the basic component of education. Information is a vital element to technological and scientific change. It poses several challenges to individuals of all walks of life: students, workers, and citizens of all types. The current information overload requires people to validate and assess information to

verify its reliability. Information by itself does not make people information literate. Information is certainly a vital element for creativity and innovation, a basic resource for learning and human thought, a key resource in creating more knowledgeable citizens, a factor that enables citizens to achieve better results in their academic lives, with regard to health, and at work and an important resource for national socio-economic development.

Information Literacy promotes an individual to understand, participate actively and benefit fully from the emerging knowledge societies. The fundamental goal of the Information Literacy is to develop critical users of information. Information Literacy promotes the lifelong learning. It is a guiding tool in analyzing and accessing the required information in all the level of education.

Information Literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments and all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extent their investigations, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning. Information Literacy acts as a key for lifelong learning. It empowers the people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational goals. Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit.

The library is an integral part of every learner irrespective of their age, gender, religion etc. In the era of technology, the library services have undergone tremendous changes in terms of information dissemination. The library acts as a responsible institution adjusting to new developments and update the information in various forms from present to past. The lifelong learning is an essential skill to be developed in every learner and to achieve this learner must be committed to learn the rapidly changing information, developments etc. This not only creates an environment of learning but also bring the abilities to teach other and contribute for knowledgeable community.

### **Lifelong learning:**

Lifelong learning intends that learning should take place at all stages of life cycle from cradle to grave and it should continuously right from the school to the work place, the home and the society. The term lifelong learning means education throughout the life. Developing lifelong learners is central to the mission of the educational institutions. As a key component and contributor to lifelong learning, Information literacy extends learning beyond the boundaries of formal education and supports individuals in self-directed learning in all areas of life.

Due to the information explosion and data among all students and the society face many difficulties to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information. Due to the expansion of internet services, we receive a lot of information that is not evaluated, unlike the printed sources. Hence the authenticity, validity, and reliability of this information is in doubt. Information skills are vital to the success in education, occupation, and day to day communication of all citizens. In the twenty first century, lifelong learning has become one of the main themes in the higher education sector. Therefore, the students need to be educated with regard to the abilities and skills of how to learn, or learning to learn, by developing the aspects of reasoning and critical thinking.

Information literacy skills will help students to achieve this target in a broader sense, in student centered learning. Traditionally, we assume that the students will gain information literacy skills automatically by themselves. But it is not. In fact, information literacy skills need to be inculcated among the students, by the teachers and librarians. Learning mainly focuses on achieving knowledge, skills and attitudes, associated with particular subject areas. Irrespective of the disciplinary stream, each and every student should be able to access, use and communicate information in an innovative manner. The Information literacy curriculum plays a major role in order to cultivate these skills among the university and school students. The curriculum can be implemented by the library professionals with the help of academic and administrative staff.

Lifelong learning is a continuous process with development of abilities throughout their life. This brings social involvement, community participation, active participation, teaching skills

and personal development. In education, lifelong learning has been associated with curriculum and way of teaching. The curriculum has major impact and undergone changes from time to time to make learner learn by correlation not by memorization. The teacher must adopt teaching styles which promote skill of lifelong learning in students. It must be emphasized to students that learning is never completed in the classroom, once they are in society will face numerous challenges and lifelong learning is must to solve such situations by acquiring proper knowledge. Formal learning consists of learning that occurs within an organized and structured context (formal education, in-company training), and that is designed as learning. It may lead to formal recognition (diploma, certificate). Non-formal learning consists of learning embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace. Informal learning is defined as learning resulting from daily life activities related to family, work or leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning and can be understood also as accidental learning.

### **Understanding the Importance of Lifelong Learning:**

Lifelong learning acknowledges that education is not confined to formal institutions and a specific period of life. It emphasizes that learning is a lifelong journey, and every experience, whether formal or informal, contributes to personal growth and societal advancement. By understanding the importance of continuous learning, we can lay the foundation for a culture that values knowledge acquisition at all stages of life.

### **Benefits of lifelong learning:**

Lifelong learning is about providing second chances to update basic skills and also offering learning opportunities at more advanced levels. The top ten benefits of Lifelong learning are as follows:

1. Lifelong learning leads to an enriching life of self-fulfillment and self-improvement.
2. Lifelong learning helps us make new friends and establish valuable relationships.

3. Lifelong learning keeps us involved as active contributors to society.
4. Lifelong learning helps us find meaning in our lives.
5. Lifelong learning helps us in decision making.
6. Lifelong learning makes the world a better place.
7. Lifelong learning increases our wisdom.
8. Lifelong learning creates a curious, hungry mind.
9. Lifelong learning opens the mind.

### **Encouraging and Cultivating a Culture of Lifelong Learning:**

Cultivating a culture of lifelong learning goes beyond individual self-improvement; it is about fostering an environment where continuous learning is celebrated, encouraged, and accessible to all. Such a culture enhances personal and professional development and contributes to the progress of communities and nations. Cultivating a culture of lifelong learning begins with nurturing curiosity. Encourage individuals, especially children, to ask questions, explore new topics, and seek answers. Curiosity is the driving force behind learning. Ensure that education is accessible to everyone. This includes equitable access to quality formal education and access to resources like books, libraries, and digital learning platforms. Acknowledge and value informal learning experiences. People can gain valuable knowledge and skills through hobbies, travel, volunteering, and everyday life. Celebrate these experiences as opportunities for growth.

Encourage the belief that dedication and hard work can develop abilities and intelligence. A growth mind-set fosters resilience and a willingness to embrace challenges. Create opportunities for learning in various settings, such as workplaces, community centres, and online platforms. Offer workshops, seminars, and courses that cater to diverse interests and needs. Employers can play a significant role in promoting lifelong learning by offering training and development programs, mentorship opportunities, and a supportive learning culture within the workplace.

### **Role of Information Literacy in the Learning process:**

Information literacy is a means to express personal ideas, develop arguments, refute the opinions of others, learn new things, or simply identify the truth or factual evidence about a topic. It is acknowledged that most people are likely to change careers at least five times throughout their lives. The traditional focus on learning associated with a single vocation is past. People must become versatile learners who can adapt to new careers through their own ability of learning how to learn.

Those who are not information literate are unable to make informed decisions given an information-related problem and must rely on others rather than thinking for themselves. Those who are information literate can



analyze and interpret information and this ability enables them to respond critically and creatively to problems. Consequently, we can think of information literacy as contributing towards personal empowerment and our freedom to learn. When you know how to find and apply information you can teach yourself what you need to learn and essentially you have learned how to learn.

### **Role of Librarians in promoting Information Literacy for lifelong learning and Challenges:**

Libraries have long been acknowledged as signal resources supporting teaching learning, and research. They are the chief contributor to the 'repository of knowledge'. The introduction of technology into teaching, changes in scholarly communication patterns, the increasing variety of media, more demanding students requiring services to be available as, when and where they want them, all require that librarians ensure, even more than ever, that they are user-focused, user-friendly, and able to assist users to gain information literacy skills which will enable them to be to a greater degree self-sufficient.

The library is, of course, not the only place for accessing information though it is expected to remain the principal source for many to access local resources which are owned and leased, and those which are obtained from a distance in response to individual requests. The librarian's role in managing information and knowledge resources and in constantly re-examining the appropriate balance of ownership and access, and which medium to hold or access is one of continuing challenge, stimulation and even delight.

The concept of Information Literacy has deep roots in Library and Information science and has been promoted by the library professionals from several decades in the form of bibliographic instruction, user education and library orientation. Bibliographic instruction gives training to user on information search and retrieval; user education gives global approach to teach information access to users and Library instruction focuses on library skills. Earlier it is considered as one of the library services but today due to information explosion and data smog, it is considered as an institutional issue. LIS professionals have to play a significant role to promote information literacy in society. There exists a gap between librarians and user's information needs. To bridge the gap, they need to educate and reeducate themselves to acquire new skills and competencies for a new role and they need to cultivate the concept of lifelong learning of information literacy skills. So, LIS professionals need to play an important role in the education process and making people aware of a need and motivating the use of information.

### **Conclusion**

Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning and is essential to successful lifelong learning. It prepares people to use information effectively in any situation and helps people to reorganize when information is needed and develops the ability to locate, access, evaluate and use information effectively for problem solving and decision making. Lifelong learning is an effective way for inventing the future of the societies. People committed to lifelong learning can only meet the challenges faced by the communities and the nations.

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