

Assessing Digital Literacy Competency among the Users of College of Agriculture and Research Station, Janjgir Champa (C.G.)

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ABSTRACT

Digital literacy has become an essential skill in the modern educational landscape, particularly in specialized fields such as agriculture. This research paper aims to assess the digital literacy competency of users at the College of Agriculture and Research Station in Janjgir. By employing a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys, practical assessments, and focus group discussions, this study evaluates the users' abilities in information retrieval, evaluation, and ethical use of digital resources. The findings highlight the current state of digital literacy among users and provide recommendations for enhancing digital skills to improve academic and research outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Digital Literacy, ICT Literacy, Information Needs, e-resources, CARS, Janjgir Champa.

INTRODUCTION:

In this digital era, technologies are developing continuously and every individual needs to cope with this development. To attain the maximum benefit of such technologies, individuals must need to be digital literate. Digital literacy enables one to participate in a digital society. Digital literacy is the ability to handle ICT tools as and when required. ICT is being used in every sector and the educational system is not out of the queue. ICT in the Higher education sector is used for both learning and teaching purposes. This leads to e-learning, online learning, distance learning, etc. Libraries in the academic sector are the backbone of the education system. Libraries are adapting to the change and managing more efficiently to serve the users according to their needs in the academic sector. This change reflects on collection of e-resources and digital resources in libraries to support the e-learning practice in the education system. Most of the libraries are moved toward automation and gradually migrating towards e-collection development. Users also need to develop digital literacy among themselves to deal with the situation. This study is focused on assessing digital literacy skills among the users of the College of Agriculture and Research Station, Janjgir Champa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mawia and Gyashree (2022) examined digital literacy among undergraduates in Assam, noting that students were familiar with digital literacy but required formal training to maximize their skills.

Pratap (2018) carried out a study on Digital Literacy skills among students and research scholars at law school, Banaras Hindu University. The study revealed that a greater part of respondents use digital resources daily. The investigators also point out that the majority of respondents were aware of digital resources available in their subject domain. Researchers suggest integrating digital literacy in the educational core curriculum to appropriate utilization of digital information resources by the academic community.

Biradar (2017) aims to identify the awareness of e-resources, their usage, the purpose of use, factors influenced, the impact of e-resources and barriers faced in the access of e-resources. 86.15% majority of respondents preferred to use books and e-journals followed by audio-visual resources 28.46%. Digital learning platforms are conducive to strengthening both academic and digital literacy skills.

DIGITAL LITERACY

“Digital literacy is nothing but creating awareness in digital space. Digital Literacy is the ability to use ICT to find, use, evaluate create and communicate information requiring both cognitive and technical skills.” (ALA; 2012).

Digital Literacy consists of two words namely Digital and Literacy. Digital means “in electronic form” Digital information means information is in electronic form. Literacy refers to the ability to read, write and think critically. Digital Literacy is associated with learning how efficiently and effectively one can find, use evaluate, create and communicate information using digital technologies.

Need of Digital Literacy

Today we are entered into the digital age and proper skills are required to survive in this digital age. For secure and safe use of digital resources digital literacy is a must. A wide range of Digital Divide is found among the people in this developing society. People’s lives in rural areas are mostly deprived of digital infrastructure and internet facilities. On the other hand digital natives enjoy the facility of ICT. These differences of people create a digital divide. The digital divide is the main reason for the emergence of the concept of Digital Literacy. Other reasons for the digital divide are fear, lack of interest and awareness in utilizing the digital resources and internet facilities for the individual development. Thus, the digital divide among individuals in the use of technology is the main reason for launching different digital literacy programs. The main objective of any digital literacy program is to inculcate literacy among the individual and produce digitally literate personalities who can deal with information with the use of ICT for individual development as well as for the development of society. Thus there is a need for digital literacy programs in the present society. People of the digital era are always with smartphones, tablets and laptops in their hands but how effective they are using the internet facility for their capacity building is questionable. Lack of digital literacy causes problems like bullying, cybercrime, copyright issues, security threats and so on. So, digital literacy is the need of the present era.

Role of College Libraries

Libraries have been regarded as an important department of any educational organization. Libraries play a significant role in the manufacture of dynamic future leaders by providing effective and efficient services. College Libraries help users to learn the process of self-learning and prepare them for higher studies and research. The principal feature of libraries is to educate the educated. Education and libraries are the two concepts that are mutually dependent on each other. One cannot be separated from the other and the existence of the one is impossible without the other. Unsatisfied Quires are satisfied in the libraries. The new student-centred paradigm and the new learning and teaching approaches through ICT have created the need for a reconceptualization of the role and responsibilities of the libraries in learning and teaching purposes.

Statement of the problem

In this digital age, information is produced in multifaceted forms and formats. The question arises are users of the College library are able to use various digital formats to access, organize, analyze and communicate the information? Do users have sufficient skills to deal with advanced ICT tools and techniques? Is there any digital literacy program or any other method used by the library for their users to make them digitally literate? The statement of the problem is Assessing Digital Literacy Competency among the users of the College of Agriculture and Research Station, Janjgir Champa. The study deals with assessing the availability of digital resources and their use in the College of Agriculture and Research Station, Janjgir Champa for different purposes. Also assessing the Digital literacy among the users of the libraries and the purpose of use.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To identify the information needs of undergraduate students of College of Agriculture and Research Station, Janjgir Champa.
- ✓ To analyse digital competency level among library users.
- ✓ To understand about the familiarity, purposes and usefulness of internet resources by the users.
- ✓ To know the problems being faced by users

Scope and Limitation of the study

The study is focused only on College of Agriculture and Research Station, Janjgir Champa and the respondents for the study is limited to Undergraduate Student.

Research Methodology

The present study aims to measure the awareness of digital literacy and to identify the characteristics, behaviour and opinion of the college library user concerning the use of digital resources in the digital environment. The present aim is suited to descriptive research and survey methodology. In the survey method, information is collected from the total population using the sampling method. Well-structured questionnaire is used for data collection in which responses are collected and data is analysed and represented through pie charts, histograms, and bar diagrams using MS Excel and MS Word.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table: 1 Distribution of Questionnaires as per educational status (n=112)

Questionnaires provided	Response received	Percentage
1 st Year	51	45.54
2 nd Year	17	15.18
3 rd Year	21	18.75
4 th Year	23	20.54
Total	112	100%

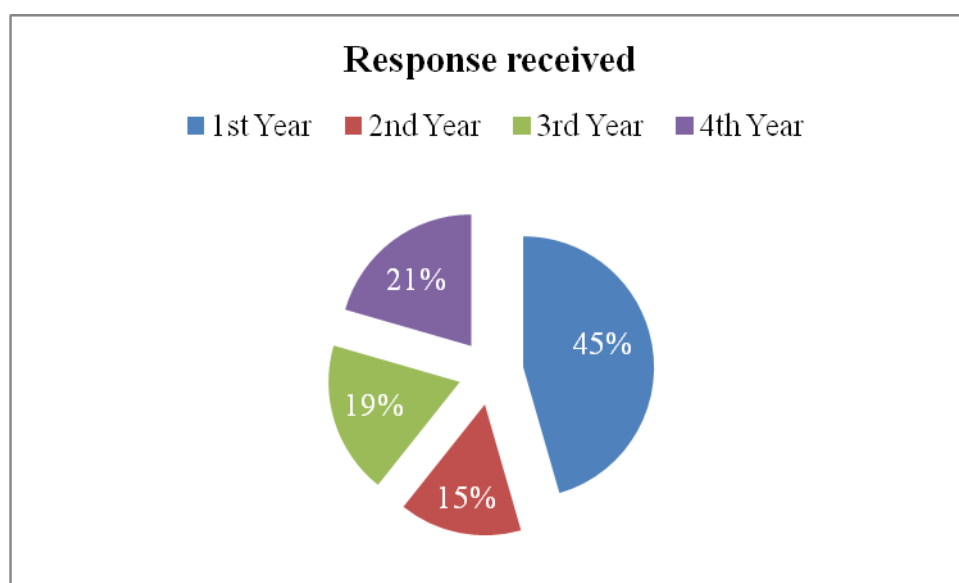


Table 1 describes the student's educational background who contributed in providing response. It is noted that 4th year students 23 (20.54%), 3rd year students (18.75%), 2nd year students 17 (15.18%) and 1st year students 51 (45.54%) UG students provided the response with more response rate.

Table 2: Library visit (n=112)

Library visit	Responses	Percentage
Daily	14	12.50
Weekly	33	29.46
Bi-Monthly	24	21.43
Monthly	18	16.07
Occasionally	23	20.54
Total	112	100%

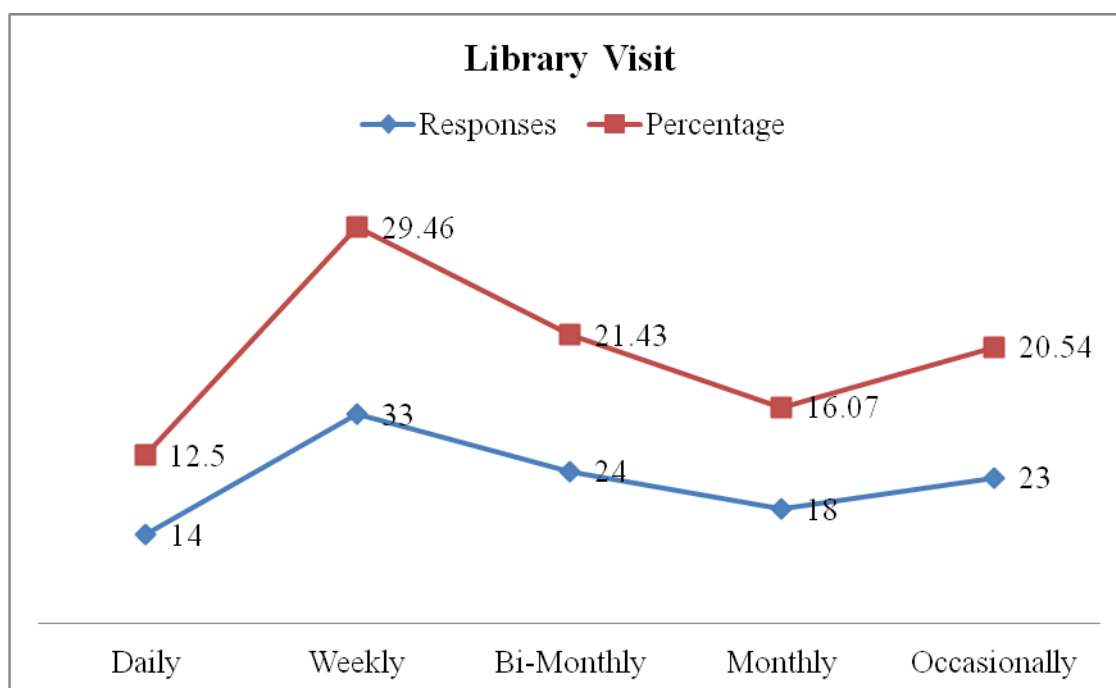


Table 2 shows the data of library visits by the students. It is noted that 12.50 % users visit library on daily basis, **29.46% visit on weekly basis**, 21.43% visit on Bi-Monthly basis, 16.07% visit on Monthly basis and 20.54% visit to library occasionally.

Table 3: Purpose of library visit (multiple option, n=112)

Purpose of library visit	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
To borrow/return book	112 (100%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
To read journal articles	9 (8.04%)	5 (4.46%)	46 (41.07%)	52 (46.43%)
To update subject knowledge	48 (42.86%)	39 (34.82%)	9 (8.04%)	16 (14.29%)
To access & use Internet / e-resources	72 (64.29%)	36 (32.14%)	3 (2.68%)	1 (0.89%)
Consulting reference materials	13 (11.61%)	37 (33.04%)	35 (31.25%)	27 (24.11%)

Table 3 shows the purpose of library visit. It has been recorded that in strongly agree category 112(100%) users visit library *to borrow/return book*. whereas in strongly agree category highest response was gained by *to access & use Internet/ e-resources* with 64.29%.

Table 4: ICT skills and level of Digital literacy competency (n=112)

Comfort level of using computer application	Response	Percentage
Comfortable	88	78.57
Less comfortable	7	6.25
Neutral	17	15.18
Total	112	100%

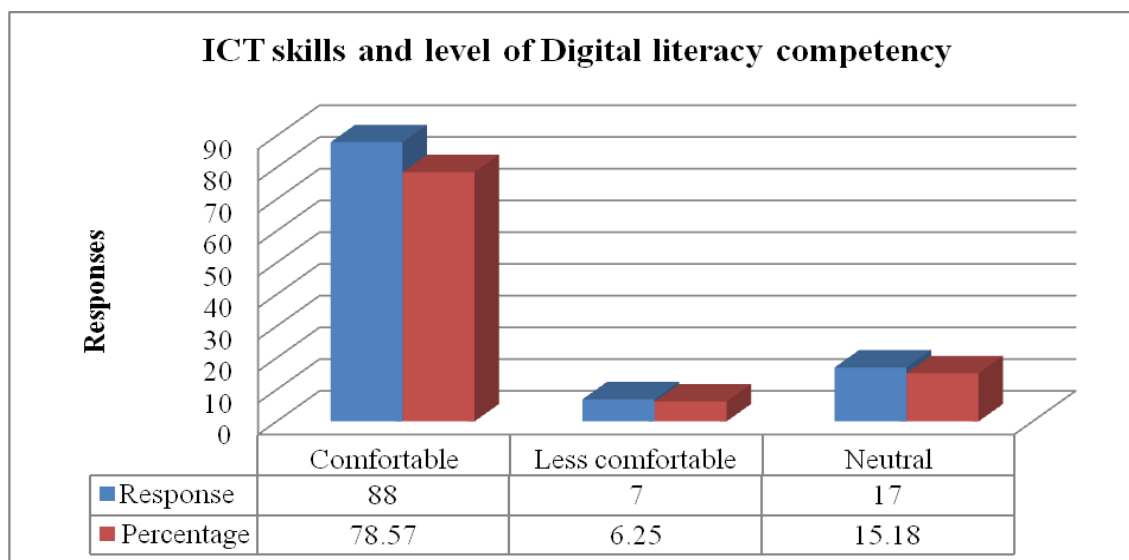
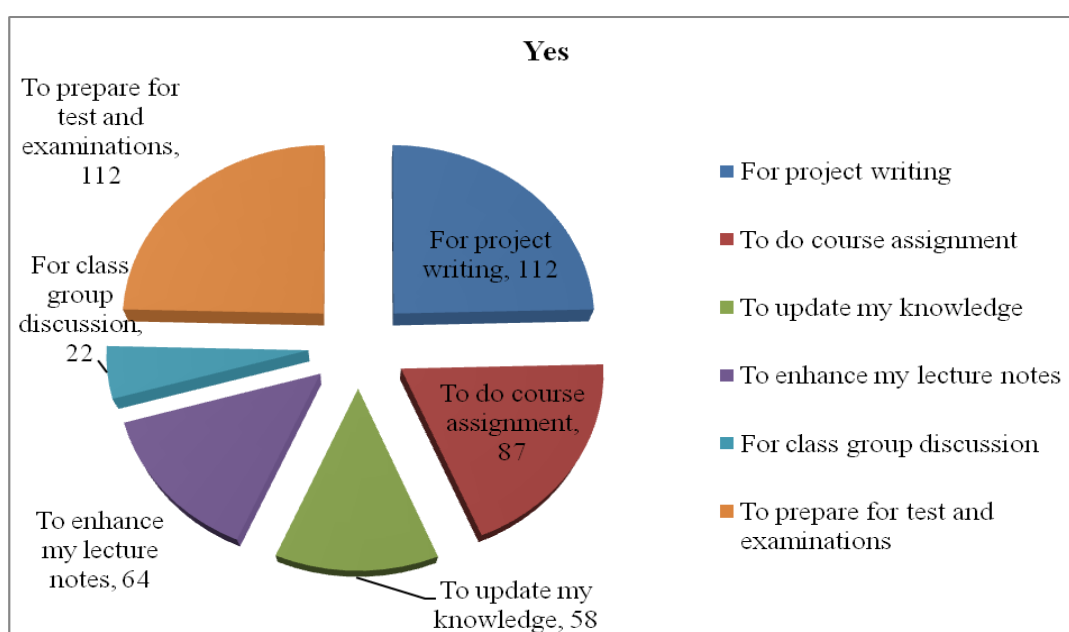


Table 4 shows the ICT skills and level of Digital literacy competency where comfort level by using computer was tried to know. The response reflects that 78.57.08% users are comfortable in using computer.15.18% users provided neutral response and 6.25% users were less comfortable in using computer for their work.

Table 5: Information needs of undergraduate students

Types of Information needs	Yes	%	No	%
For project writing	112	100%	0	0.00%
To do course assignment	87	77.68%	25	22.32%
To update my knowledge	58	51.79%	54	48.21%
To enhance my lecture notes	64	57.14	48	42.86%
For class group discussion	22	19.64%	90	80.36%
To prepare for test and examinations	112	100%	0	0.00%



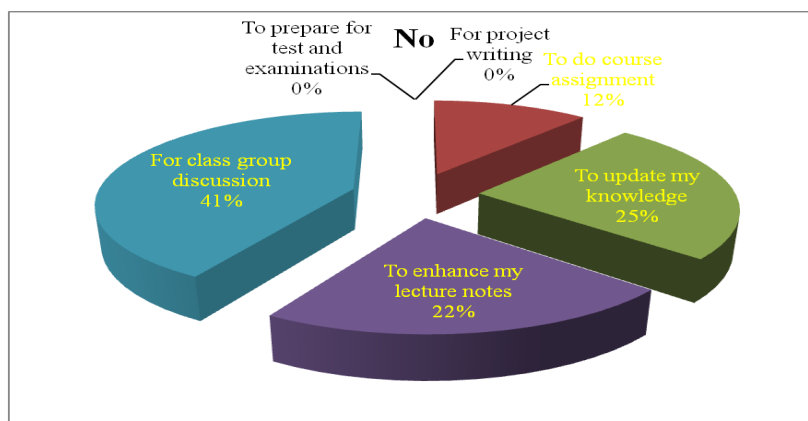
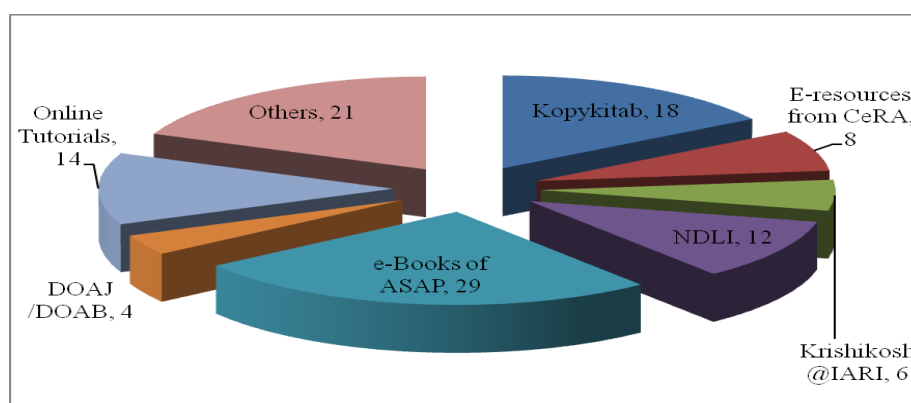


Table 5 revealed that the motive behind the need for information predominantly tilt more towards respondents' educational activities as all the respondents 112(100%) stated that they need information to prepare for test and examinations and project writing, majority, 87 (77.68%) said they need information to do course assignment, 64 (57.14%) to enhance my lecture notes, 58 (51.79%) to update my knowledge, and lastly 22 (19.64%) stated that they need information for class group discussion. The implication of this finding is that information needs of undergraduate students is diverse, this compel them to search for information for various purposes. Hence, CARS Janjgir Champa library must identify the information needs of the students; provide information resources, especially in digital forms to satisfy the information needs of the students.

Table 6: Frequently used e-Resources (multiple choice, n=112)

Frequently used e-Resources	Response	Percentage
Kopykitab	18	16.07
E-resources from CeRA	8	7.14
Krishikosh @IARI	6	5.36
NDLI	12	10.71
e-Books of ASAP	29	25.89
DOAJ /DOAB	4	3.57
Online Tutorials	14	12.50
Others	21	18.75
Total	112	100%



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Table 6 shows frequently used e-resources where e-books of ASAP was preferred by respondents with 25.89% followed by other e-resources with 18.75%. and 16.07% users responded in Kopykitab resources. The lowest response rate was gained by DOAJ/DOAB resources.

Table 7: problems in accessing digital contents (multiple choice, n=112)

Problems	Response	Percentage
Unprofessional content	16	14.29
slow Internet	2	1.79
Time constraint	5	4.46
Lack of web skills	27	24.11
Difficulty in finding relevant information	36	32.14
Lack of literacy	16	14.29
Lack of training /orientation	10	8.93
Total	112	100%

Table 7 show problems in accessing digital contents. It has been recorded that 36 (32.14%) users face problems with difficulty in finding relevant information, 27 (24.11%) users face problem of lack of web skills, 16 (14.29%) students are face problem of lack of literacy and Unprofessional content, 10 (8.93%) users are face problem about lack of training/orientation and less problem faced by the students of snow internet and time constraint.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

The results indicated that:

- Most of the library users visit library on weekly basis 29.46%.
- Most of the library users visit library for the purpose of to borrow/return books 100% and second highest response was gained by to access & use Internet/ e-resources with 64.29%.
- The results show that the ICT skills and level of Digital literacy competency where comfort level by using computer was tried to know. The response reflects that 78.57.08% users are comfortable in using computer.
- The motive behind the need for information predominantly tilt more towards respondents' educational activities as all the respondents 112(100%) stated that they need information to prepare for test and examinations and project writing.
- The results show that the frequently used e-resources where e-books of ASAP was preferred by respondents.
- The results show problems in accessing digital contents. It has been recorded that 36 (32.14%) users face problems with difficulty in finding relevant information.

Focus group discussions revealed several key themes:

- Need for Training: Participants expressed a desire for more training sessions focused on digital literacy skills, particularly in evaluating sources and using digital tools effectively.

- Resource Availability: Many users were unaware of the digital resources available to them, highlighting a gap in communication and resource promotion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhanced Training Programs: Implement regular workshops and training sessions focused on digital literacy skills, including information evaluation and ethical use of resources.
2. Resource Promotion: Increase awareness of available digital resources through orientation programs and informational materials.
3. Integration into Curriculum: Incorporate digital literacy training into the academic curriculum to ensure that all students develop these.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that while users at the College of Agriculture and Research Station, Janjgir possesses a foundational level of digital literacy, but there are significant areas for improvement. The ability to critically evaluate information and understand ethical considerations in digital content usage is particularly lacking. These skills are essential for academic success and effective research in agriculture.

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