A case study on awareness of Digital Information Literacy skills among students of Royal Global University Guwahati, Assam

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to find the awareness of digital information literacy skills among the students of Royal Global University, Guwahati. In today's digital society it is very much essential to have good skills to procure information as the maximum number of information sources are available in digital format. Students should know how to access or use information. Many new generation students are very much self-confident about their information skills but it is also observed that they are not always capable to evaluate the authenticity of that information. The study examines the literacy level to search, locate and use digital information. The present study also helps us to know the IT skills of the students. A structured questionnaire was prepared and personally distributed among 100 respondents. Most of them are aware of digital information literacy. For better use of digital resources, almost all the respondents stress that they require training.

Keywords: Information literacy, Digital society, digital information literacy, Royal Global University, Guwahati, information skills

1. INTRODUCTION

Today it is the era of globalization whether it is information related to study, business, health, management or any other field. We need the correct information to take the correct step in our life. As this is the digital era we cannot take books with us wherever we go due to different reasons. So it is very much essential for us to know how to find the right information for us. For this, we must have sound knowledge about how to get the required information that we need. We may get a varied number of information in e-form, but which information can be relied on is the main thing. It has been noticed that the process of identifying and choosing of information is not so easy. It is serious to support information literacy (IL) in the digital period. Laptops, computers, I-Pad, smartphones, etc. have become a very essential part of this digital society. Nowadays every student uses smartphones, laptops, i-pads for preparing themselves for this

competitive world whether it is for their study notes, projects, or job market. In this competitive digital world, they need to get up to date themselves with these new trends of digital literacy to compete with their fellow mates.

1.1 DIGITAL INFORMATION LITERACY

American Library Association defined Information Literacy as the 'lifelong ability to recognize the need for, to locate, evaluate and effectively use information (American Library Association; 2006)'. An individual's ability to access, evaluate and disseminate information in today's digital world is known as digital literacy. Digital literacy is all about how an individual can find, organize, evaluate and create information with the help of digital technologies. Glister (1997) defines digital literacy as ─ a set of skills to access the Internet; find, manage and edit digital information; join in communications; and otherwise engage with an online information and communication network (Glister, 1997). In simple terms, digital literacy is the ability to function digital society. Without hampering the copyright act, the ability to effectively and efficiently use and evaluate digital resources and its tools is known as digital literacy.

Digital literacy is the skill of individuals that help him/her to find any information available in digital form. It is the capability of an individuals to find or identify or create digital information with the help of different digital tools. while using digital information we need to understand the other aspects like economic, legal and social issues. One must should appreciate legitimate and ethical use of this information.

1.1.1 ROYAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY:

In Northeast India we have many reputed private universities and Royal Global University is one of them. It was established in the year 2009 and located in front of Tirupati Balaji Temple Guwahati. The entire Campus area is more than 27 acres of land and about 12 lakh square feet. The university has 18 different schools under which there are many departments. They offer more than 60 courses in different aspects including undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD courses. It provides a competitive, dynamic, energy driven curricula guided by a team of highly experienced faculty members. It is equipped with all the modern technologies in its labs. RGU is not only known for its world-class infrastructure and facilities, but also for its excellent results and placement.

1.1.1.1 RGU CENTRAL LIBRARY

RGU Central Library is treated as the heart of RGU. It is providing quality knowledge and information related to its subject to its users. The library is well-organised and hence its users don't find any difficulties to locate the needed resources. SOUL2.0 software is used for the management of library. Its users can search for their needed book in WebOPAC. In future advanced technology like RFID will be introduced in the library. Till date it is holding 26,121 printed books, 48 magazines, 13 journals, 391 CDs, 107 reference books and many e-resources. It has also a digital repository where many in-house publications are uploaded. "North East

Corner" is a special collection consisting of 72 books on North East India. It subscribes 7 daily newspapers. It is a member of DELNET. It has subscribed to Manupatra: Law Database.

2. OBJECTIVES

Objectives are very much essential to conduct a study. For the current study, the core objective is to explore the digital information literacy skill of the students of Royal Global University, Guwahati. Other objectives are listed below:

➢ To know the literacy level of students to search, find and use digital information and their sources.
➢ To identify the purpose for using these digital information sources.
➢ To find out the methods of learning to use digital resources.
➢ To find out the problem faced by the student community of RGU while accessing digital resources.
➢ To discover the awareness about Copyright and IPR issues

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Worldwide many studies are done on digital information literacy skills of the students in Universities. In Indian context also, many studies are done in different Universities. But no study has been undertaken in the Universities situated in the valley of Brahmaputra Assam on the digital information literacy skills of students. The current study investigates the digital information literacy skill of the students of Royal Global University, Guwahati Assam. For any academic study the review of existing literature is a very important component. It helps the researchers to know the past trends of their interest.

An attempt has been made to review the literature published on the digital information literacy skill of the students of different Universities. Few related studies have been observed before conducting this study. Among those studies, one of the studies was done by Ray and Day (1998) concludes that electronic resources were being used but only a limited number and many students left the institution without the required skills. Another study done by Maharana and Mishra (2007) found that more than half of the respondents do not have formal computer training but most of them call themselves computer literate and almost all of the faculty members stress/expressed their need for electronic resources. Cordell (2013) in his study "Information literacy and digital literacy" states that information literacy is an old concept and digital literacy is a recent concept. Both concepts are interrelated for higher education students. Khan (2015), in his study, finds that majority of users are aware of the basic concept of information literacy. Anjaiah, M. (2016) in his study finds that despite of most of the students were belongs from the village area, the majority of respondents have knowledge about digital information. Sinha, Atanu Kumar (2016) explored in his study that maximum numbers of respondents do not have knowledge about copyright and IPR while using digital resources. He also revealed that though the majority of respondents are known to use digital resources but to use these resources more effectively and efficiently they need training. Aftab and Singh (2017) also conducted a study to know the information literacy skills of social science research scholars of two central universities

of India conclude that universities should organize more information literacy programs to improve information literacy skills among students. Chanchinmawia and Verma (2017) in their study emphasize the inclusion of an information literacy program in the course curriculum. Pratap, Ran Vijay and Singh, Kunwar (2018) conducted a study on digital information literacy skills among students and research scholars of law school, BHU finds that respondents are not only aware of digital resources but also use it daily.

4. METHODOLOGY

For the current study, we adopt the questionnaire method. ased on the objectives we prepared one questionnaire and randomly distributed among the students of Royal Global University. We distributed only 100 questionnaires among the student community and all of them were returned the questionnaire. With the help of different statistical tools, collected data has been analysed and tabulated. Therefore, the findings of the current study are purely based on the responses given by respondents.

5. LIMITATIONS:

This study was conducted only in a single academic intuition, so findings may not be applicable to be generalized on all academic institutions. The present study is limited to the students of Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

A structured questionnaire was prepared and randomly distributed among 100 students of different departments of Royal Global University. All 100 students have returned the questionnaire. Among these respondents, 56 respondents are from UG course and the remaining 44 respondents from PG course.

6.1 Demographic characteristics

Table 1 shows that out of 100 respondents 43 (43%) are men and the remaining 57 (57%) are women which shows that in the present study female respondents have participated in more number than that of its male counterpart.

Table: 1

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	43	43%
Female	57	57%

(n=100)

On the otherhand, Figure 1 shows the age distribution of respondents and which indicates that the majority of respondents (52%) are from the age group of 17-20 years. Only 6 respondents (6%) are from above 25 years and 42% are from the age group of 21-25 Years.
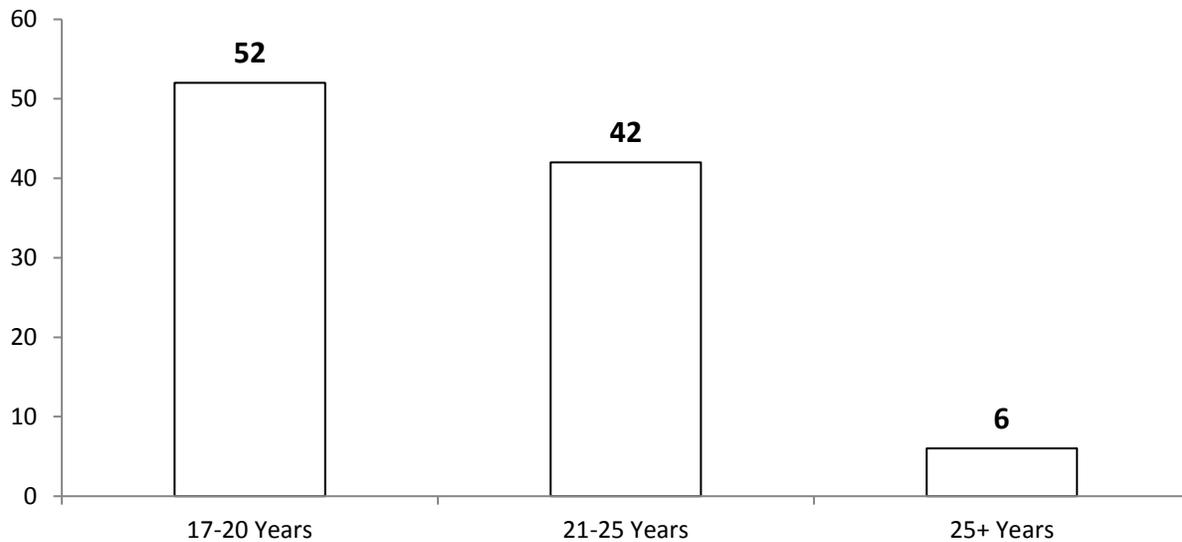
Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents (n=100)

6.2 Familiarity with the word Digital Information Literacy

We put one research question whether they have heard the word "Digital Information Literacy". 42% of respondents reveal that they are familiar with the word whereas 58% of respondents are not familiar with the word.

Table: 2

Response	Percentage
Familiar	42%
Not Familiar	58%

(n=100)

6.3 Computer Skill

To know about their computer skills, we also put one research question. They replied and the same information is depicted below in Figure 2.
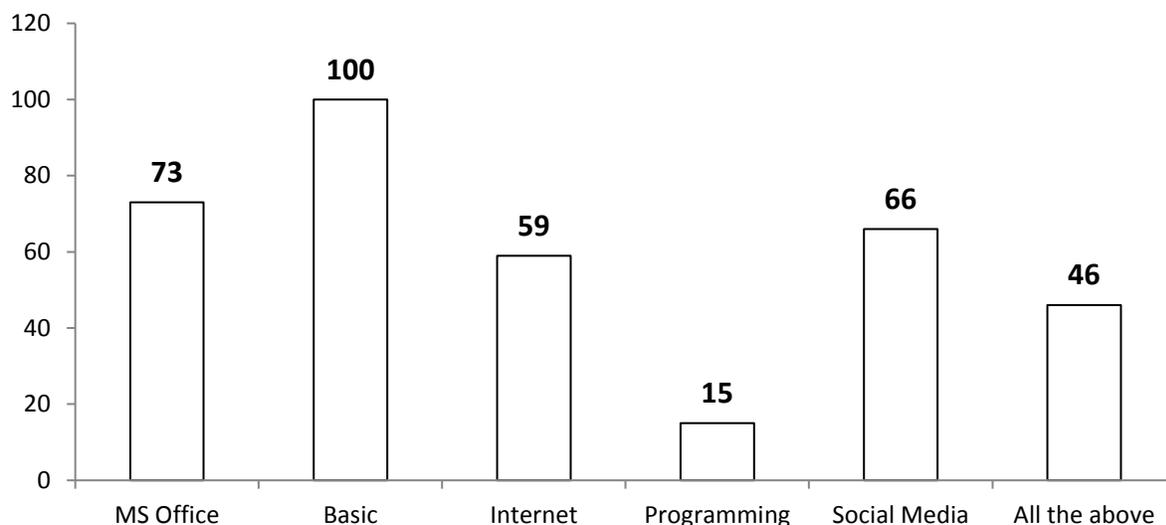
Figure: 2 Computer Skills. Note: Multiple options are permitted (n=100)

Figure 2 shows that all the respondents have basic computer skill and 73 respondents have knowledge of MS Office. 66 respondents have the skill of Social media which is followed by 59 of internet browsing and 15 of programming skills. 46 respondents reveal that they have all the above skills.

6.4 Purpose of visit the library

Table 3 shows the purpose of visiting libraries by the respondents. The majority of respondents (42%) visit the library to download course materials whereas only 6% visit the library to visit different websites. On the otherhand 19% of respondents visit the library to access e-resources, 14% visit for entertainment through movies, 10% visit to access internet facility and rest 9% visit to read e-newspaper.

Table: 3 (n=100)

Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
To Download Course Materials	42	42%
To access E resources	19	19%
To Visit websites	6	6%
To access Internet	10	10%
Reading E-Newspaper	9	9%
Viewing/downloading Movies	14	14%

6.5 Types of Digital Resources Used

The below Figure: 3 shows that Digital Library (26%) is the most used digital resources in RGU Library. As per the analysis E-journal (21%) is the second most used digital resources which is followed by E-Database (19%), E-Book (15%), Internet (10%) and E-Newspaper (9%).
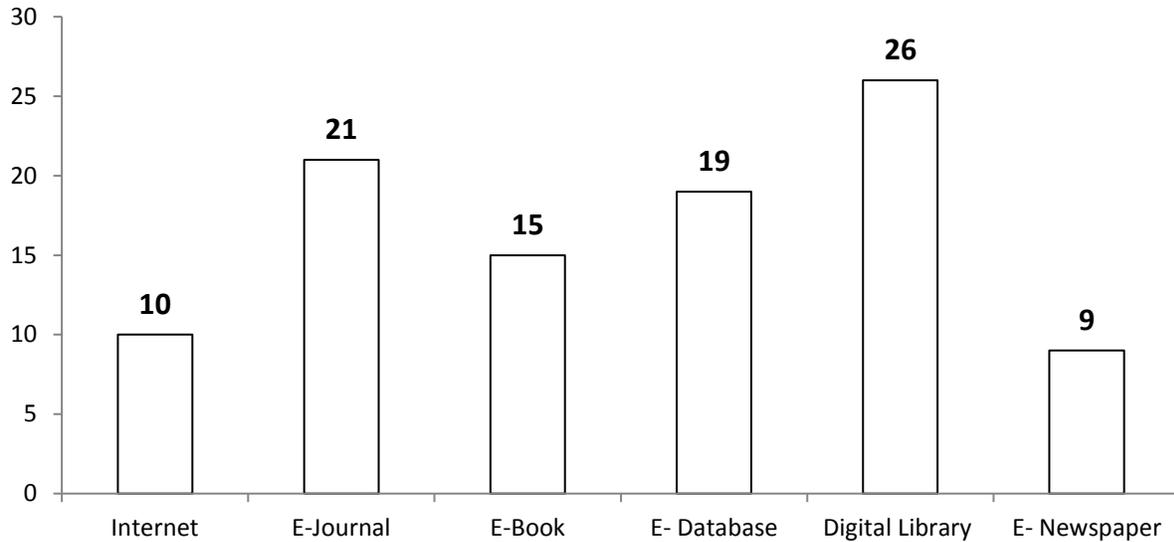

Figure: 3 Types of Digital resources used (n=100)

6.6 Preferred Location to access digital resources

It is seen from the analysis given in the Table: 4 that 47 respondents (47%) preferred Central Library to access digital resources whereas 9 respondents (9%) preferred their respective departments to access digital resources. It also observed that 33 respondents (33%) preferred their hostels to access digital resources followed by 11 respondents (11%) at computer lab.

Table: 4

Location	No of Respondents
Central Library	47
Department	9
Computer Lab	11
Hostel	33

(n=100)

6.7 Frequency of Using Digital Resources

From Figure: 4, we can say that 52 respondents (52%) use digital resources on daily basis and 19 respondents (19%) use it once in three days. It also indicates that 11 respondents (11%) use once in a week whereas 8 respondents (8%) use twice in a week followed by 7 respondents (7%) once in a month and 3 respondents (3%) rarely use digital resources.
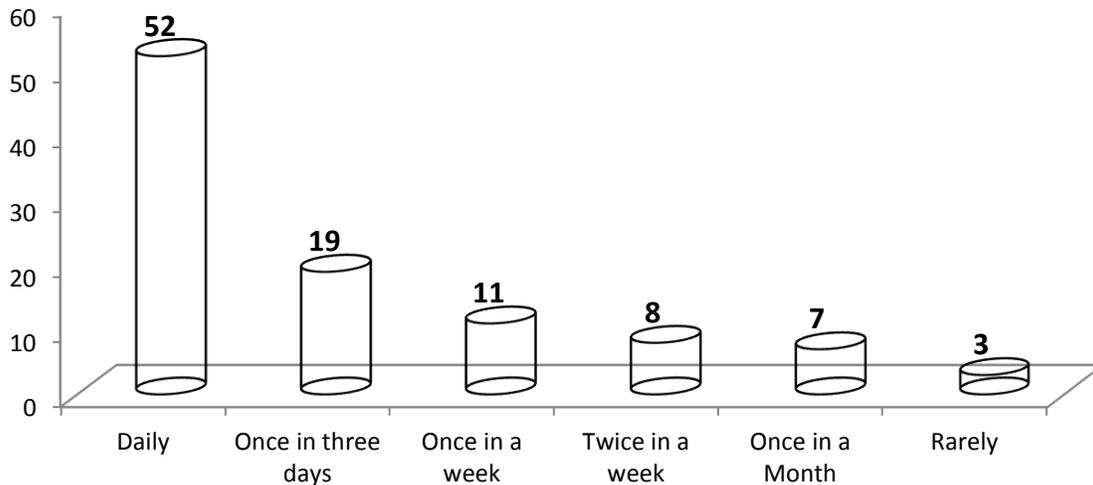

Figure: 4 Frequency of using digital resources (n=100)

6.8 Purpose of use of digital information sources

Table: 5 indicates that 44 (44%) respondents use digital information for research purpose and 30 (30%) use for keeping themselves up to date. On the other hand 19 (19%) respondents use digital information for writing seminar/research paper and 7 (7%) mentioned that they use to complete their project work.

Table: 5

Purpose	No. of Respondents
For research purpose	44
For writing seminar paper	19
For updating yourself	30
For competition of project work	7

(n=100)

6.9 Methods of Learning to Use Digital Resources

Figure 5 revealed the learning methods of using digital resources and it found that 48 % of respondents get help from the library staff to use the digital resources. 19% of respondents learned from their friends, 17 % from their own, 12% from their faculties and 4 % from others.
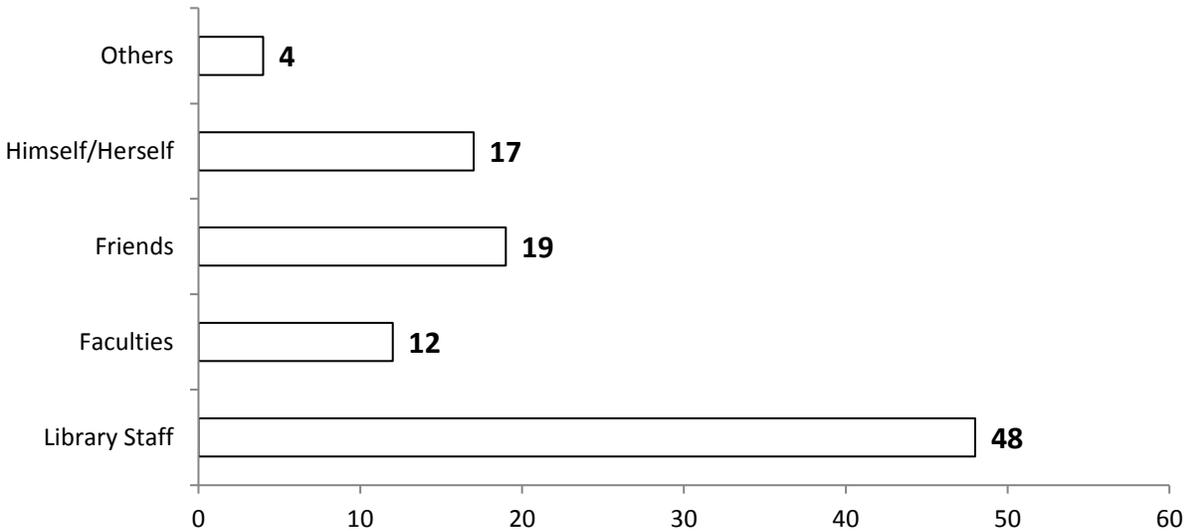
Figure: 5 Methods of learning to use digital resources (n=100)

6.10 Need for Training on Digital Resources

The below Figure 6 shows the need for training to use digital resources and the majority (84%) of total respondents feel that they need training on digital resources whereas the remaining 16% of respondents revealed that they do not need the training to use digital resources.
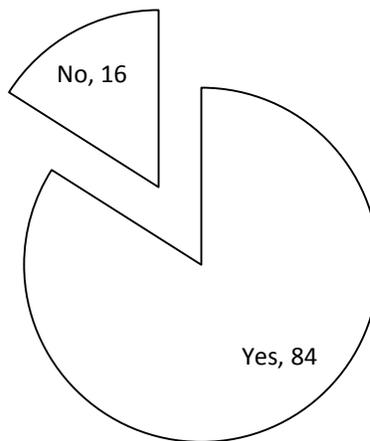

Figure: 6 Need for training on digital resources (n=100)

6.11 Problem Faced in Using Digital Resources

Table: 6 gives the problems faced by the respondents while using digital resources. 29 respondents (29%) feel that limited computer terminal is the main obstacle to use digital

resources, 23 respondents (23%) retrieve too much information and this is the problem for them, 16 respondents (16%) feel frequent power cut is one of the major problem to use digital resources, 12 respondents (12%) feel slow internet is the problem behind this, 11 respondents (11%) feel difficulty in finding relevant information, for 6 respondents (6%) lack of ICT knowledge is the problem and 3 respondents (3%) give others as a reason to access digital resources.

Table: 6

Problem	No. of Respondents
Slow Internet	12
Limited Computer Terminals	29
Frequently Power Off	16
Too much information retrieved	23
Difficult to find relevant information	11
Lack of ICT knowledge to use digital resources	6
Others	3

(n=100)

6.12 Awareness about Copyright and IPR Issues

We put one question in our questionnaire about awareness of copyright and IPR issues. We are delighted when we saw the responses. Figure: 7 depicted about the awareness of copyright and IPR issues. 76% of total respondents revealed that they are aware about copyright and IPR issues and 24% respondents say that they are not aware.
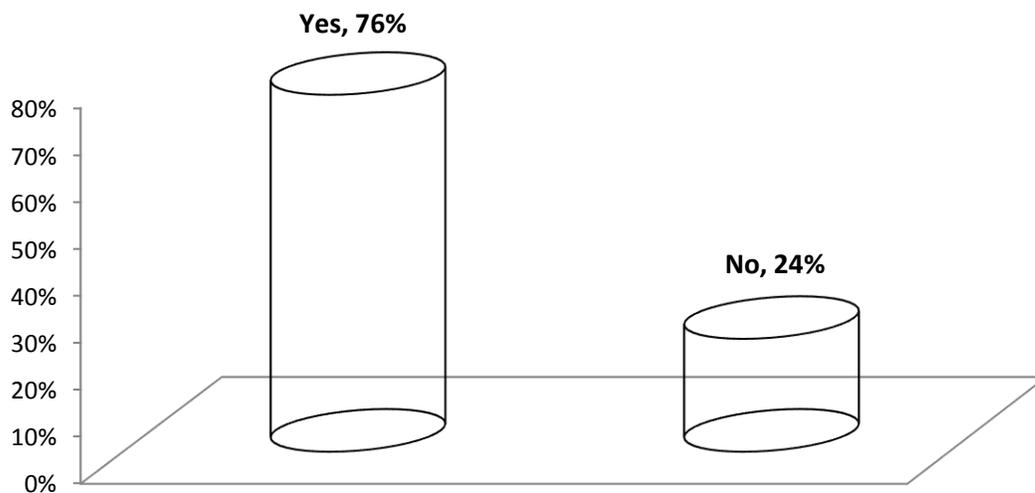

Figure: 7 Awareness about Copyright and IPR issues (n=100)

7. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the above study we can come to the conclusion that the majority of respondents are familiar with the word digital information literacy. Other major findings of the study are listed below:

- All respondents have their basic computer knowledge and the majority of respondents know to work with MS Office.
- The majority of respondents (42%) visit the library to download course materials whereas only 6% visit the library to visit different websites.
- Digital Library (26%) is the most used digital resources and E-Newspaper (9%) is the least used digital resources.
- 47 % of respondents preferred Central Library to access digital resources whereas 9% of respondents state their respective departments.
- 52 % of respondents use digital resources.
- 44% of respondents use digital information for research purposes.
- Almost half of the respondents (48%) get help from the library staff to use digital resources.
- The majority (84%) of total respondents feel that they need training on digital resources
- 76% of total respondents revealed that they are aware about copyright and IPR issues

Some of the suggestions are been put forwarded on the basis of its findings. These are as follows:

- The university library should provide more computer terminals and also take some necessary actions to resolve the frequent power off problem.
- University should organise more hands-on training session on the effective use of digital resources.
- The University library should organise seminar/workshop/talk session on Copyright and IPR issues.

8. CONCLUSION

From the present study, it can be concluded that the digital information literacy skills among the students is of moderate level. It is good to see that students are aware of searching relevant information for their personal needs effectively without violating any rules. Moreover, training should be provided to students to cope with the digital age and to become a digitally literate person. The study revealed that most of the students can search, locate and use the needed information with the help from library staff. The purpose of using digital information is mostly for their academic outcomes. They have idea about the Copyright and IPR issues but still university should organise more programme on IPR and copyright issues.

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