

# DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES AMONG THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC TIME: A STUDY

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## Introduction

A time span of almost two years and the world is still fighting against the deadliest pandemic in the history. But none of the pandemic so far caused this much of paradigm shift. India reported its first COVID cases in Kerala on January 7, 2020, since then the country underwent a series of lockdowns and partial lockdowns to avert the further of spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 is a mysterious virus much information still remains undiscovered. Its unique characters and ability to spread rapidly has affected the various spheres of life drastically.

COVID-19 affected life from every aspects leaving no exception to educational institutions also. The wild proliferation of COVID-19 caused turmoil to all the educational institutes and its activities all round the world. The outbreak proposed a challenge for educational institutions to continue the learning with the help information and communication technology (ICT) and to save the previous year of students. The overnight radical change in education from physical classrooms to virtual classroom was possible with the help of telecommunication which turned out to be the salvation in the COVID age. "The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unpredictable situation for many Higher Education institutions across the globe, as online learning and blended or hybrid provision (drawing on both physical and virtual learning) have now become rapidly the new education reality, based on the anticipation that, at least for the near future, fewer students are likely to be present fully on-campus" (Martzoukou, 2020). Overnight students were introduced to the new normal where physical interaction was took over by virtual existence, lectures were shifted from physical classrooms to virtual classrooms. COVID hampered every aspect of college life, both from the learner to the instructor's end.

Telecommunication acted as the knight in shining armor to rescue world from the aftermath of the global pandemic. For example work from home, online groceries shopping, e-yoga sessions and many more concepts came into picture during the outrage of the pandemic to limit the crowd and lower down the COVID graph. In India, the concepts of work from home or online educations via virtual classrooms were till date only in black and white.

The change was expected to come after five to six years, the radical changes hit India before the expected time span. The world perceive the importance of digital literacy and in India, a major digital gap was identified during the COVID era. The forced changed of virtual existence left India with a major question of eradication of digital gap and making the population accomplished with the digital literacy.

## Digital Literacy and its importance

Digital literacy is seen as product of information literacy and digital era, 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is on gadgets rather than paper, hence one possessing the digital literacy automatically becomes

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