Information Literacy (IL) Skills among the Female Students of Rural Secondary Schools of Dhaka District, Bangladesh

Dr. Muhammad Mezbah-ul-Islam
Professor, Department of Information Science and Library Management
University of Dhaka, E-mail: mezbah2000@yahoo.com

Minhaj Uddin Ahmed, Adjunct Faculty, Institute of Library and Information Science (ILIS), National University
Nilkhet, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh, Email: bilkisbegum2013@gmail.com
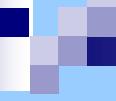
INFORMATION LITERACY (IL) IN BANGLADESH

- Information Literacy (IL) is relatively a new disclosure to Bangladesh.

- As an awareness campaign, Centre for Information Studies, Bangladesh (CIS, B) and United Nations Information Center (UNIC)-Dhaka are conducting training programs on IL for rural secondary schools of Bangladesh.

- The National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh has recognized the importance of Lifelong Learning.

- IL programs should be started in rural and urban schools but rural schools should be given priority.
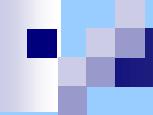
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives are to:

☐ know the pattern of library use and other supplementary sources by the students;

☐ approach of using ICT sources;

☐ develop a course module on IL training for the secondary school students and

☐ suggestions for implementing IL program in Bangladesh.

RESEARCH SITES

The research sites were selected based on Dhaka district. The schools are as below:

Zinzira Pir Md. Pilot Girls High School, Keraniganj, Dhaka

Aymona Khatun Girls High School, Keraniganj, Dhaka

Savar Girls High School, Savar, Dhaka

Dhanmondi Rotary Club Girls High School, Savar, Dhaka

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

- Population frame was consisted of the female students in the Class-X of four female secondary high schools of Savar and Keraniganj Upazilas of Dhaka district.

- A random sample of 50 female students each from four schools was drawn for the sample of the study.

THE SURVEY

- For collecting data, survey method was followed. Each of the school was visited with a team.

- The questionnaire was formed and tested according to the text books.
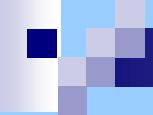
NATURE OF THE STUDY

- An empirical study and survey method was used that supported by observations & interviews.

- Girls' enrollment in secondary schools of Bangladesh rose 67 percent in last 17 years.

- These significant changes in enrollments led to conduct the research on female students.

- A close-ended questionnaire was designed.

FINDINGS

Text Book as Information Source

- 48.8% students correctly identified their textbooks as the sources of information while the rest 51.2% students failed to identify them.

Text books as sources of information

FINDINGS (cont.)

Use of Library among the female students
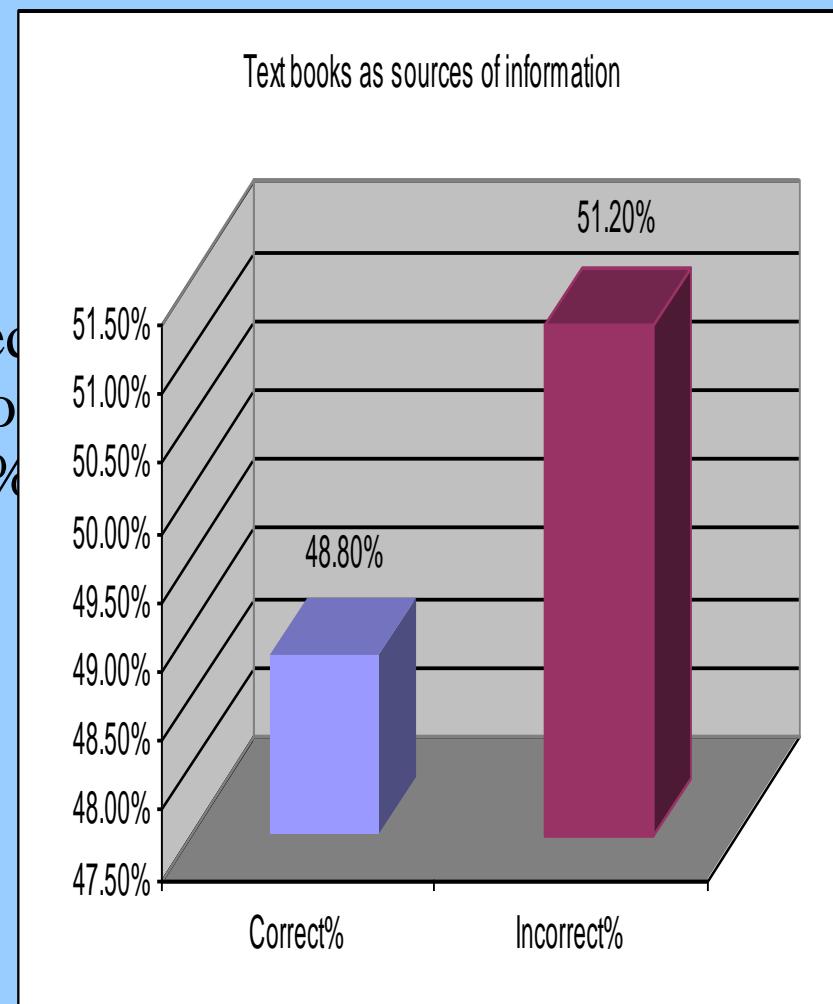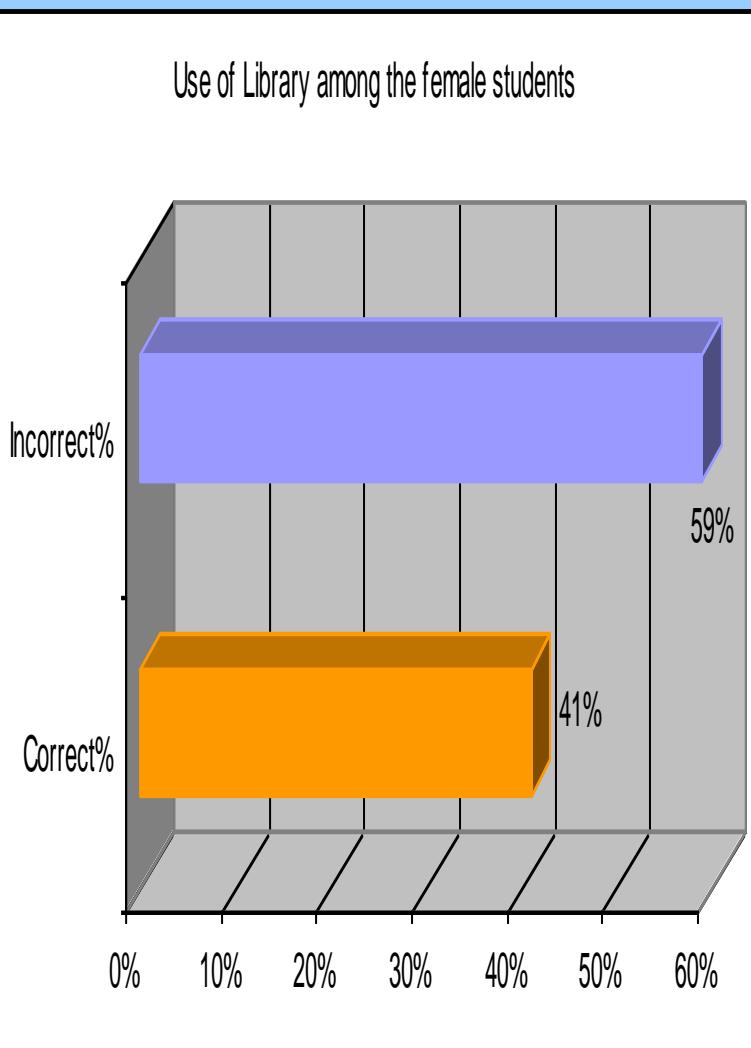
Library as Information Source

- Students were asked whether they know about library and have used it.

- 41% students know about their library and they use it. On the other hand 59% students have no/little knowledge about library and they do not use it.

FINDINGS (cont.)

- **Library Catalogue Skill**

  77% students have no idea regarding library catalogue and 23% students know about library catalogue.

  It is note to ponder that the students have very poor knowledge about library catalogue when every school has a small library

Library catalogue skill

77%

23%
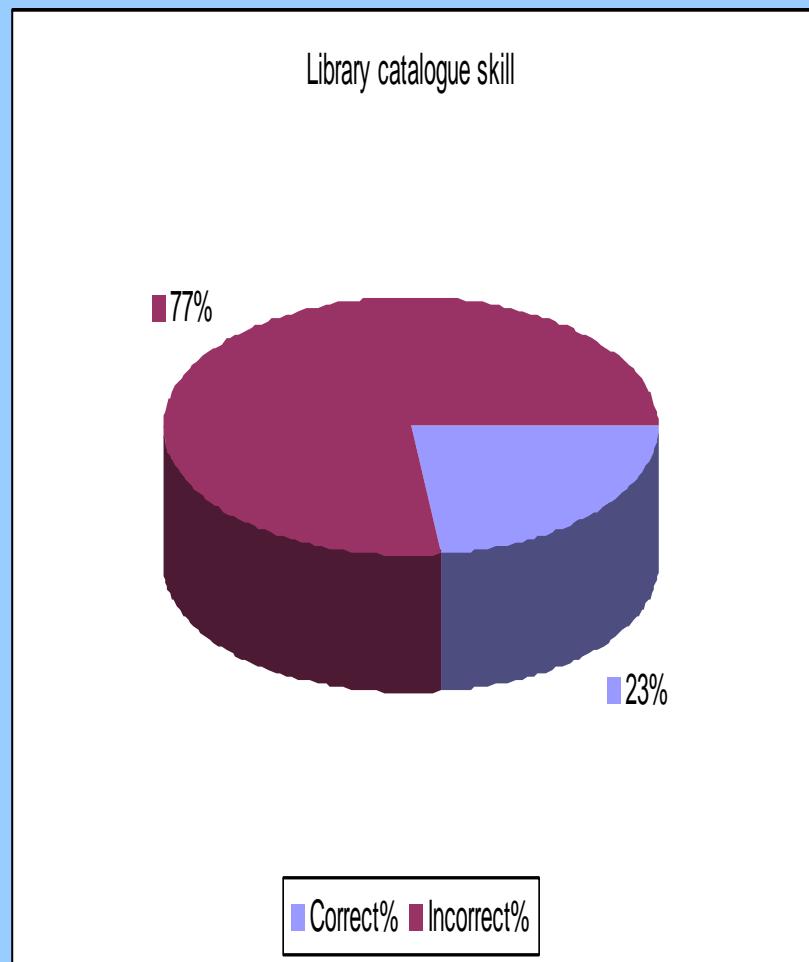
Correct% Incorrect%

FINDINGS (cont.)

- **Use of Reference Books for Information Literacy**

There are 63% students who are in dark in case of these sources.


Use of Reference Books
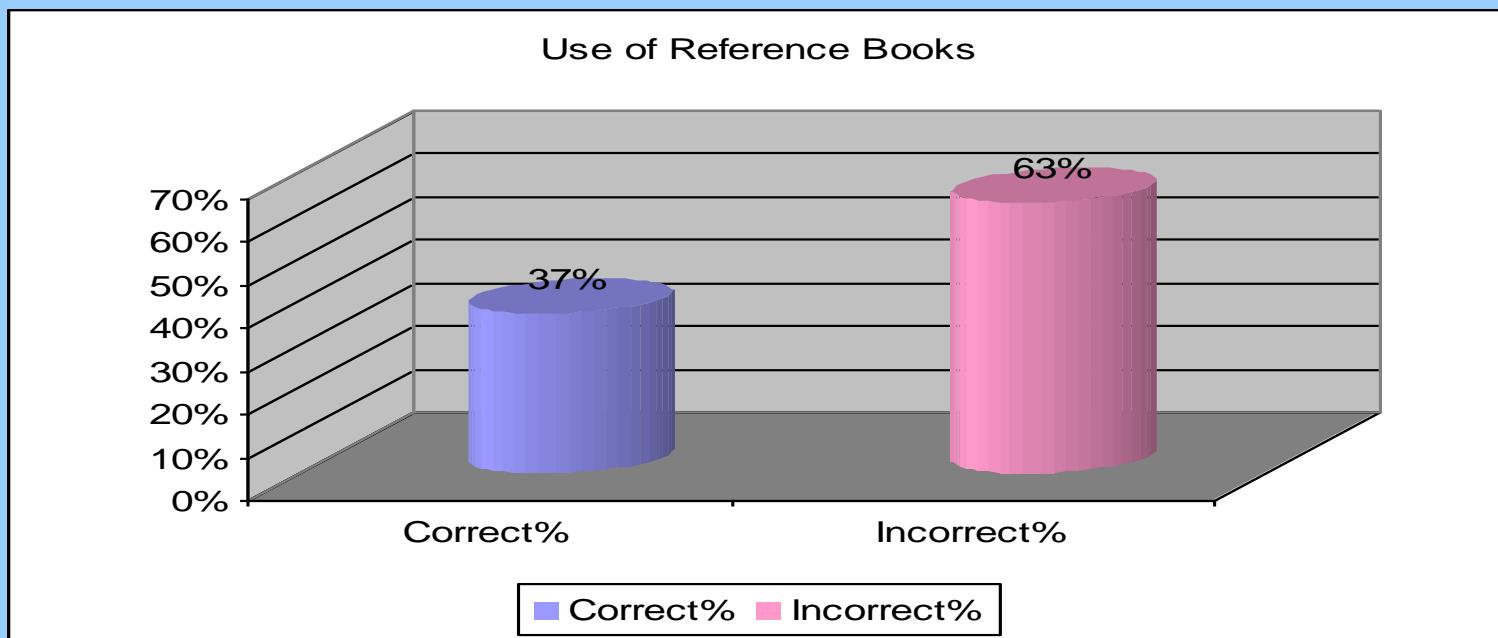
FINDINGS (cont.)

<u>Mass Media as Information Sources:</u> The 34% students only correctly identified the sources. But the majority of them i.e. 66% failed to identify the sources.
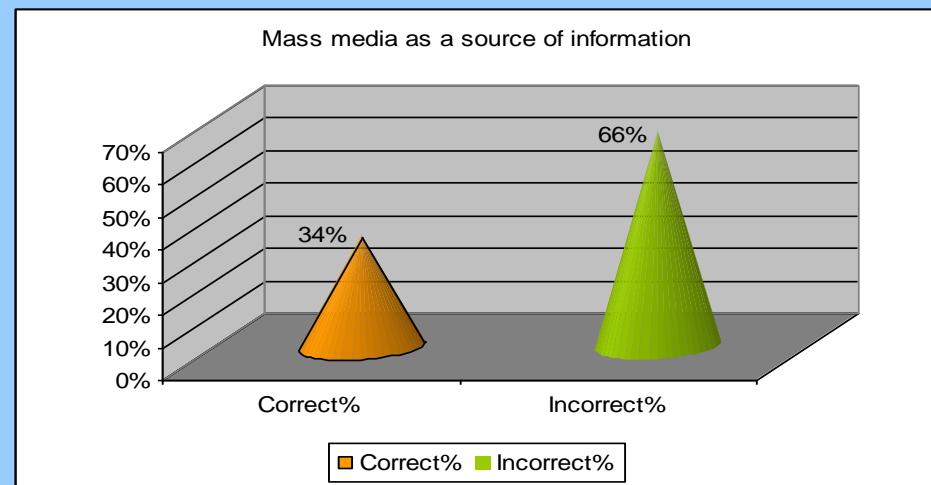
<u>Use of other Information Sources (maps, magazine etc.) by the Students</u> :

only 46% answers were corrected while 54% answers were incorrect.

Mass media as a source of information

66%

34%

70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

Correct%   Incorrect%

■ Correct%   ■ Incorrect%

Use of Information Sources

54%

46%

54%
52%
50%
48%
46%
44%
42%

Correct%   Incorrect%
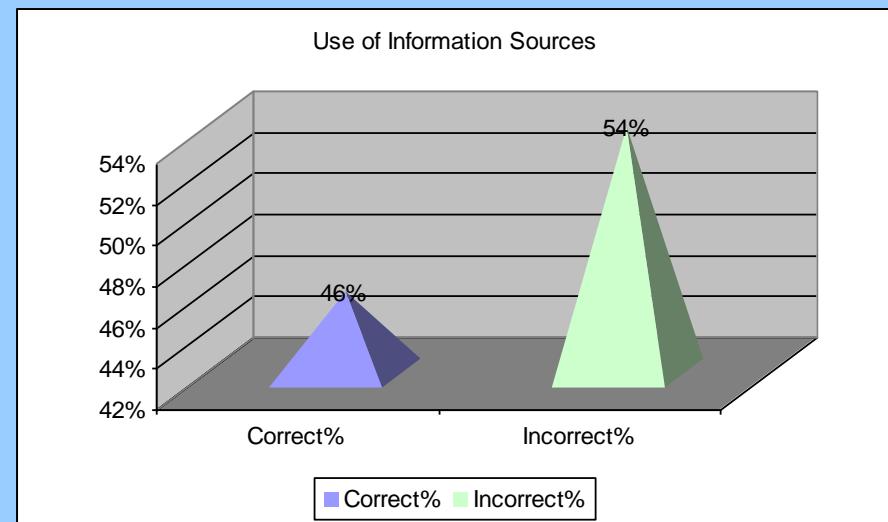
■ Correct%   ■ Incorrect%

FINDINGS (cont.)

■ **<u>Use of ICT by the female students of the schools:</u>**

As the students reside outside the capital city of Bangladesh, many of them did touch the questions on ICT. Figure 7 shows that 35% student corrected the questions regarding ICT while 65% answered incorrect options.

Use of ICT

35%

65%

■ Correct% ■ Incorrect%
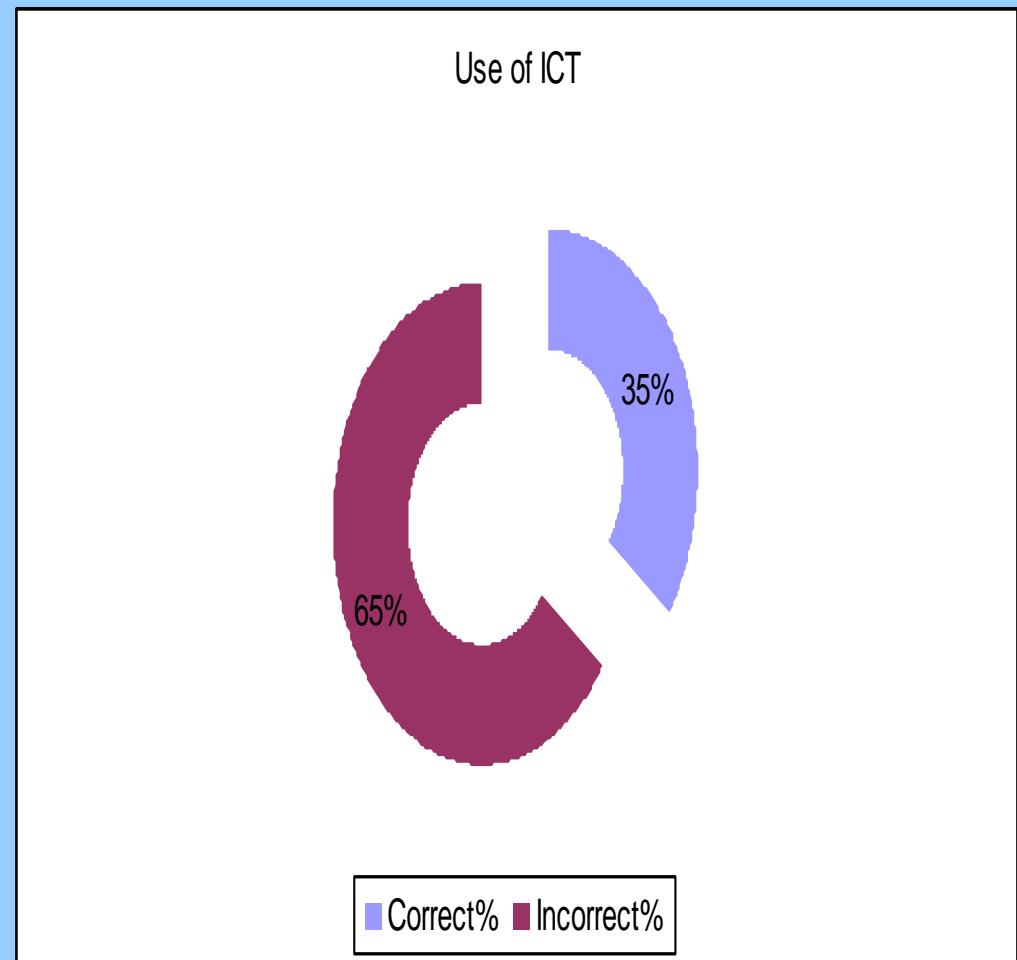
FINDINGS (cont.)

Idea of Digital Bangladesh

61%

39%

Correct%   Incorrect%
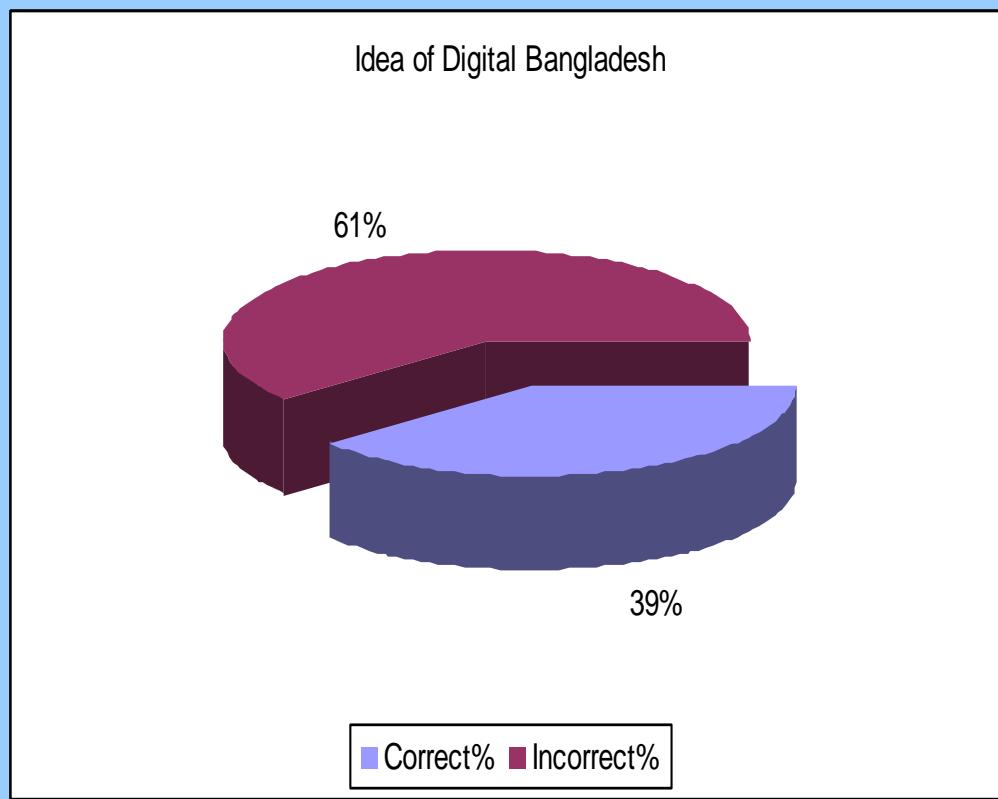
- ### Idea of Digital Bangladesh among the Students:

  As the present government of Bangladesh is envisioning to a Digital Bangladesh by 2021 and various steps have already taken, most of the students know the term. But most of them have not any ideas regarding Digital Bangladesh. Figure 8 shows that majority of the students i.e. 61% do not have ideas on Digital Bangladesh. There are 39% students who have a little idea on Digital Bangladesh.

COURSE MODULE FOR IL PROGRAME

- A course module was developed and tested in the training course.
- The evaluation (post-training) of the students revealed that the module worked well in identifying relevant information sources.
- Time has come to integrate IL course in the different curricula of school, college and university in Bangladesh.

COURSE MODULE FOR IL TRAINING AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

- <u>Lecture session</u> included the definitions of data, information, knowledge and wisdom. Meaning of literacy and information literacy, importance of information, its need and demand, different information sources and media including human and organizational sources, different types of libraries and their functions. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in popular way.

COURSE MODULE

- <u>Practical session</u> included different information formats (newspapers, books, periodicals, Bangladesh constitution, reports, maps, atlases, microfilm, CDs, web page etc.). Use of different reference books, use of catalogues, bibliographies, book index, abstracts etc., different parts of computer, acquaintance with CDs, mobile phone, internet and its different facilities.

- Finally, students were given <u>an assignment</u> in the form of writing an essay within fixed number of words and were given one month time to write the essay. The main objectives of giving assignment were to see the presentation style of the students and their willingness to cite references they would use in writing the essay.
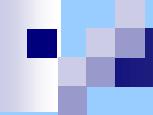
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Formation of National Knowledge Commission
- Faculty-librarian collaboration
- Curriculum Standards
- Building awareness program
- Library personnel
- Policy formulation
- Collaboration
- Digital literacy
- Building a committee
- Monitoring progress
- Extensive training on ICT literacy
- Training program for faculty and library & information professional
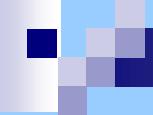
CONCLUSION

- IL concept is almost absent in the schools of Dhaka city and students are facing considerable challenges in the area of IL skills.

- The study provides analysis of the prevailing situation that helps in planning for policy makers to integrate IL courses in the mainstream of the secondary school education system.

- Study showed that the role of teachers and librarians in the school is critical. If the teachers are convinced about the significance of IL, they may become willing partners in this process (Rehman and Alfaresi, 2009).

- Further in-depth research is needed to back these marginally significant findings.

- There is a need for mass awareness raising program about IL in Bangladesh.

Thank You