
UNIT 2 TYPES OF REFERENCE AND INFORMATION ACCESS TOOLS

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Reference and Information Access Tools
- 2.3 Nature of Reference and Information Access Tools
 - 2.3.1 Origin of Reference Books
- 2.4 Types of Reference and Information Access Tools/Sources
- 2.5 Documentary Reference Tools/Sources
 - 2.5.1 Dictionaries
 - 2.5.2 Encyclopaedias
 - 2.5.3 Bibliographies
 - 2.5.4 Biographical Sources
 - 2.5.5 Geographical Sources
 - 2.5.6 Ready Reference Sources
 - 2.5.7 Government Publications
 - 2.5.8 Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals/Sources
 - 2.5.9 Patents and Standards
 - 2.5.10 Reference Sources for Current Events
- 2.6 Non-Documentary Reference Tools/Sources
 - 2.6.1 Human Resource
 - 2.6.2 Institutional Resource
 - 2.6.3 Mass Media
 - 2.6.4 Audio-Visual Media
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 Answers to Self Check Exercises
- 2.9 Key Words
- 2.10 References and Further Reading

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will introduce you to various types of reference and information access tools formerly called as Reference Books.

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- identify various reference and information access tools;
- differentiate between various kinds of reference and information access tools;
- relate types of reference queries to their corresponding reference tools; and
- reason out the importance of reference tools in a library.

The activities at the end of this Unit will prepare you to locate any information required by the users from different kinds of reference and information access tools/sources available in your library. They will also help you to pick up the right tools/sources for locating answers to queries put to you.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit, you have been given an overview of reference and information access tools, their need and importance in a library. Reference tools, also referred to as reference sources have undergone considerable developments since the early encyclopaedias which for a long time were the only sources of information.

Today's reference sources are authoritative, carefully designed to fit into a defined scope and to be accurate, objective and readable in treatment of information, logically arranged, appealing in format and useful in their special features.



The present day reference sources are so effective in their potential for enabling users to locate needed information that reference sources may be said to be the most efficient information retrieval devices devised by man. The library's reference collection has to be adequate to meet the users' information needs. The beginning of reference books can be traced to man's early attempts to record thoughts, concepts, ideas and events.

2.2 REFERENCE AND INFORMATION ACCESS TOOLS

In libraries, there are questions or queries all the time. The reference and information access tools are the most logical place to start with while providing answers to them. If for example, a user asks, - "Where can I find some information about Australia ?" - an encyclopaedia is the proper source of information. Or, another user wants to know, -" What are the names and addresses of some persons involved in Chemical Industry ?" - the answer will be available in a Directory. Or a third user queries, "How can I locate a few recent articles published in the subject of Information Technology?" - an indexing or abstracting journal in Information Technology - the particular subject, will be the most suitable source.

Man has been communicating over the centuries through various media and formats on a variety of subjects. All this eventually led to finding of information when it was wanted from various forms of materials. There is a large quantity of printed material available throughout the world today. Librarians and the library users have always put up with the problems posed by the r: tented literature as it is very much scattered not only in literary forms but also in various physical forms. The whole of available literature has been classified into three broad categories by several experts into - primary, secondary and tertiary sources of information. Knowing about primary, secondary and tertiary sources is useful as they indicate the relative currency and relative accuracy of the materials.

The primary sources are most original and current sources of information often not seen by anyone else before publication. These are in the form of journal articles, books or mono-graphs, reports, dissertations, pamphlets, conference papers, etc. Very often the primary source contains the research findings of a scientist. In order to control or use primary sources in the library, we make use of the reference works referred to as secondary sources like the indexes, abstracts or bibliographies.

An index is a secondary source if it is used to locate primary sources. A secondary source, thus, has information about original or primary information which is usually rearranged and modified for use by users. Thus, any work reporting about findings of others becomes a secondary source.

The tertiary sources consist of information which is collection of primary and secondary sources of information. Any sources not falling in the category of primary and secondary is a tertiary source. The tertiary sources usually list all kinds of secondary sources.

There are another type of information source which provides information of a particular query wherein specific answer is required, for example, address, telephone number of a person or institution. This is referred to as reference sources.

In reference work, access to various information and access sources is very important. The reference and information access sources are encyclopedias, dictionaries, biographical sources, geographical sources, fact finding sources, etc. All these are based on most of the information otherwise available but in a scattered way and thus fall in the category of secondary sources.

The various reference sources have been prepared and published keeping in mind the various types of reference queries.

In the subsequent sections we will study about the various kinds of reference sources which will provide answers to various type of questions related to books, facts, some organizations; places, trends, current awareness, background information, spellings, meanings, statistics, etc.



2.3 NATURE OF REFERENCE AND INFORMATION ACCESS TOOLS

Using reference books in libraries is a common practice. In the early times the books in the libraries were meant only to be read within the library. But later on when various categories of books became available, the reference books could be identified to be different from other books. The reference books are usually kept separately in libraries and are used only for the purpose of consultation or are only referred. Reference sources aid in the increase of knowledge of individuals and as one becomes more and more educated, the use of reference books is increased. .

A reference book is different from other books as it is meant chiefly for consultation rather than for continuous reading. Let us learn more about the origin of the reference books

2.3.1 Origin of Reference Books

A reference book is one which is designed by its arrangement and treatment to be consulted for definite items of information rather than to be read consecutively. For example, one looks up a dictionary only to find out the meanings of the words and not for continuous reading. A reference book therefore is a book published primarily for consultation rather than for continuous reading.

We can trace the origin of reference books to man's early attempts to record thoughts, concepts, ideas and events. When man first sketched the outlines of animals, he hunted, on the walls of the caves where he lived, we can say that the rudimentary form of reference books had begun. This is because these sketches were used by him to refresh his memory. Later on, man after he learnt to read and write began recording his thoughts on the clay tablets, tamrapatra (copper plates), cloth and leaves. Some of these are still found in many archives and museums.

Self Check Exercise

1) How is reference book different from other books?

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.4 TYPES OF REFERENCE AND INFORMATION ACCESS TOOLS/SOURCES

For many years, there was no problem in identifying the reference and information access tools or sources in libraries with regard to their physical aspect as the majority of the materials were only printed ones. But the situation is fast changing. It is true that printed sources still predominate but the others are fast becoming more obvious, more varied and more important. The printed books have been known to exist since the 16th century in the libraries. The news-papers and periodicals became visible only in the later part of the 18th century. It was only in the twentieth century and that too in the last two decades that came to distinguish the documentary sources from the non-documentary sources.

The printed sources of information have been in use for a long time and they have umpteen number of problems. Therefore, any alternative to them was welcomed by both the librarians and the library users. These non-print media reduce to a large extent the problem of study,



searching age. They have the ease of searching that results in quick reference. Although the new information media too have their own problems which include high cost and use of sophisticated equipment, still their very ease of handling and use has made them very popular with a wide variety of users.

On the basis of their very physical nature, use and arrangement, the reference and information access tools can be put into two broad categories: Documentary and Non-Documentary.

In the subsequent sections we will learn more about these two types of reference and information access sources.

2.5 DOCUMENTARY REFERENCE TOOLS/SOURCES

Various types of documentary reference tools (usually referred to as reference books) have been identified:

- 1) Dictionaries
- 2) Encyclopaedias
- 3) Bibliographies
- 4) Biographical Sources
- 5) Geographical Sources
- 6) Ready Reference Sources
- 7) Government Publications
- 8) Indexing and Abstracting Sources
- 9) Patents and Standards
- 10) Reference Sources for Current Events

Self Check Exercises

- 2) Name the two broad categories of reference and information access tools.
- 3) List five popular documentary sources of information.

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.
 ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Let us now give you a brief overview of each of the above intentioned reference tools with some representative examples. The details of each of these sources are available in Block 2 and Block 3 (Units 6 to 13) of this course.

2.5.1 Dictionaries

A Dictionary is a book explaining the words of a language, or the terms of a subject, arranged in some definite order, usually arranged in alphabetical order, with explanation of their meanings and use. It also usually gives the Orthography, pronunciation, usage and meaning of each word. A dictionary is mostly compiled from the written and spoken words as its source. Later on new words and new meanings, when occur, are added.



Some of the uses identified for the dictionaries are:

- 1) Definition
- 2) Spelling
- 3) Pronunciation
- 4) Usage
- 5) Synonyms, antonyms and homonyms
- 6) Abbreviations, signs and symbols
- 7) Slangs
- 8) New words, new meanings for old words
- 9) Dialect
- 10) Foreign terms in English writings
- 11) Grammatical information
- 12) Etymology

Dictionaries differ according to the range of words they define and the kind of information they give about each word. There are four types of dictionaries: abridged, unabridged; bilingual and multi-lingual dictionaries. Dictionaries especially the ones purchased for the libraries are usually hard bound. It is important to remember that the larger the scope of the dictionary, the more expensive a dictionary is to produce and keep up-to-date. Those published by reputed publishers are usually current as they are updated every 3-4 years. The use of computers at present helps a lot in production of good quality dictionaries.

Examples

Oxford Dictionary.

Webster's New World Dictionary of American English. 3rd College ed. 1988.

Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English

2.5.2 Encyclopaedias

An encyclopaedia is a systematic summary of the knowledge that is most significant to man-kind. It is a work containing information on all subjects or limited to a special field or subject, arranged in systematic (usually alphabetical) order. Encyclopaedias may be in one volume, in which case very brief information will be given, or they may be in many volumes in which the various kinds of matter will be comprehensive. Encyclopaedias are usually written by experts, and sometimes contain bibliographies and illustrations. It is different from dictionaries in the sense that dictionary tells "what", about a word whereas an encyclopaedia tells "what", "when", "how", "where", and "why" of an idea, a person, a place, an event or things.

Encyclopaedias are major reference sources, containing so much information that at one time, good encyclopaedias were referred to as the backbone of the reference service in the libraries. The etymology of the word encyclopaedia is Greek and means a cycle of instruction, which otherwise means good education. The term was first used in the book Johann Henrich Alsted's *Encyclopaedia Cursus Philosophici*, Herbom, 1608.

The first known encyclopaedia was written by Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, which resulted from his assembled treatises. That is why Aristotle is referred to as the father of encyclopaedias although he never intended to write one. The first encyclopaedia to be published in English was John Harris's *Laxion Technicum*, or, *An Universal English Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences*, London, 1704. One of the earliest encyclopaedias was the Spanish Archbishop Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiarum sine originum libriXX* which was completed in 623 A.D. More than a thousand manuscripts of this survived, and in printed form it had an undiminished appeal as late as the 17th century.



Encyclopaedias are of various types. Two major kinds are the General encyclopaedia like the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the subject encyclopaedias like the *Encyclopaedia of Religion*.

General Encyclopaedias

The popular general encyclopedias are most impressive by their size and number of volumes. The famous adult encyclopaedia are remembered as the ABC's - that is *Americana*, *Britannica* and *Collier's*. These encyclopedias are very useful for comprehensive coverage of various topics. For example, if one wants to know all about aeroplanes or butterflies, a good general encyclopedia would be a good starting point. For any American topic, say some historical aspect or geography of some place, the *Encyclopedia Americana* would be particularly useful.

Examples

Collier's Encyclopedia. 24 volumes. Annual Revision. First Published 1949-51.

Encyclopedia Americana. 30 volumes. Annual Revision. First Published 1929-33.

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. 15th Edition. 32 Volumes. Annual Revision. First Published as *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* since 1974. Published earlier as *Encyclopaedia Britannica* since 1768-71, first edition.

Subject Encyclopaedias

The increased specialization in various subjects has resulted in users requiring more information in narrow fields. This has led to publication of subject encyclopaedias in various subjects. The subject encyclopaedias provide in a single volume much more detailed overview of a subject than that could be found in a single article in a multivolumed general encyclopaedia. However, subject encyclopaedias also exists in multivolume.

Example

McGraw-Hill Encyclopaedia of Science and Technology. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987, 19 Volumes and Index.

Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science. 1968-. 35 vols. Supplements 1-

Self Check Exercises

- 4) What kind of information is given in Dictionary?
- 5) Give the scope of information given in a general encyclopaedia Give two examples of general encyclopaedias that have international coverage.

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.
 ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....

2.5.3 Bibliographies

A bibliography is defined as a well-organized list of written, printed or otherwise produced record of civilization, e.g., of books, articles in periodicals, etc. It serves the librarians and users in finding documents that they are not aware of (or not sure of existence). Usually common in the libraries are requests for documents by author, title or subject which are served



by help of library catalogue. But this fails when a part of a book is required or a book not available in a library is required, or when a type of material not available in the catalogue is being hunted for a user. At times, the author or the title supplied by the user may be incorrect. For all these problems, the bibliographic tools help in locating the needed materials.

During the course of their work, information specialists and librarians frequently consult bibliographies. Their use, therefore, includes selection, identification and verification and eventually location of materials..

Bibliographies are available in several forms. They can be universal, trade or national. An-other most useful form is the subject bibliography, which is meant for the research workers and for others in specialized areas.

Bibliographies should thus be complete, providing information access to the whole document or a part of it and be available in various forms. Bibliographies are of several types, details of which are available in Unit 3 of this Block.

Examples

British National Bibliography, British Library Bibliographic Services Division, British Library, Boston Spa, 1950-.

Cumulative Book Index, H.W. Wilson, New York, 1898-.

Forthcoming Books, R.R. Bowker, New York, 1966 -.

Indian Books in Print, New Delhi, 1967-.

2.5.4 Biographical Sources

A large part of the literature of reference consists of works that contain information about people, otherwise called the biographical sources. Their abundance can be explained simply by the fact that people are interested in people. Besides, all significant social, cultural and political events involve personalities and the reference librarians are called upon to provide biographical information about them all the time. For example, when a new President of India occupies office everyone becomes interested in knowing all about him, or if somebody receives some distinction in science, arts or literature we all are keen to know more about that person. All such queries are best answered through the biographical sources.

Biographical questions can be classified as follows:

- a) Notables (both living and dead), which include statesmen, artists, religious leaders, scientists, athletes, soldiers, philosophers, etc.
- b) Specialists, in science, social sciences, humanities; professionals from medicine, law, engineering, teaching community; persons in trade, business and industry.
- c) Socialites, from royalty, nobility, first families, social clubs.
- d) Persons from all walks of life, from a country, from a region, in the news recently, in advertisements, etc.

In order to answer queries about the categories of persons mentioned above, three kinds of sources have been designed:

- 1) Universal and National Biographical Dictionaries
- 2) Retrospective Biographical Dictionaries
- 3) Current Biographical Dictionaries also called Who's Who

These sources take care of diverse inquiries about a person, living or dead, with regard to his date and place of birth, nationality, educational background, professional achievements, significant contributions in life, writings and works, important landmarks in life and brief sketch of personal life.

In addition to the biographical sources, this information is also available in other publications, for example, encyclopedias, yearbooks, newspapers, and dictionaries or at times, in directories.



Examples

International Who's Who. London : Europa Publications, 1935- annual.

Who's Who in America. Chicago : Marquis, 1899-.

India Who's Who. New Delhi : INFA.

Who's Who in Commerce and Industry, Chicago : Marquis. 1936-.

2.5.5 Geographical Sources

The geographical sources are a category of reference books that help in answering queries related to places. They provide information like description and location related to countries, states, regions, districts, cities, mountains, rivers, lakes and all places throughout the world. The geographical sources can be divided into four categories:

- a) gazetteers
- b) guidebooks, handbooks
- c) maps and atlases
- d) a globe

A gazetteer provides historical, political, cultural, social, industrial, demographic and administrative details about a place. It also provides geographic data and location by providing longitude and latitude.

A guidebook is a handy book for travellers that gives information about a city, a county, a region, a religious place or about a building or a historical monument. These are usually meant for tourists and people who want to visit various places. The guide books usually provide all the information about routes, travel facilities, hotels to live in, cultural, social, religious aspects, eating places and shopping centre, etc.

A map is a graphic presentation of a place normally drawn to scale and it provides location and direction which otherwise is difficult to define by written documents. An atlas is a collection of maps bound up in the form of a book. If the map is a graphic image of earth drawn to scale, on the other hand a globe is a spherical representation of the earth's surface. It is a hollow ball of metal or plastic having the world map drawn on its surface.

Examples

The World Book Atlas, 1972.

Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide, 1876-

Self Check Exercises

- 6) Enumerate different types of biographical sources with examples.
- 7) What are the different types of geographical sources?

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.
 ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....



2.5.6 Ready Reference Sources

The ready reference sources are those sources of information that help in locating the right and factual answers to questions. They usually contain brief, pinpointed answers and are serial publications. These are published annually and mostly cover information about the previous year. The ready reference sources are of different types, namely, yearbooks and annuals, almanacs, directories, handbooks, manuals, guides to statistical sources.

The **yearbooks and annuals** are sources issued each year to review developments during the year and to record current information of a descriptive or statistical type. Yearbooks often review and present the events of the preceding year. They can be general yearbooks or supplements to encyclopaedias. The general yearbooks cover annual activities internationally, nationally of an organization, of a subject. The 'supplements to encyclopaedias' on the other hand are meant to supplement main set of an encyclopaedia. They record major events of the preceding year providing update to the original encyclopaedia. For example, "*Britannica Book of the Year*" supplements *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and "*Americana: Annual, an Encyclopaedia of Events*" supplements the *Encyclopaedia Americana*. A famous yearbook used by many Indians is the *Manorama Year Book 1996 - or India: a Reference Annual*. The *International Yearbook and Statesmen's Who's Who, 1953*, *Statesman's Year-Book* and *Collier's Year-book* are some examples of international yearbooks. Librarians find the *ALA Yearbook of Library and Information Services: A Review of Library Events, 1976*- a very useful document.

An **almanac** (also spelled as almanak) is a publication usually an annual, containing a variety of useful facts of a miscellaneous nature and statistical information. It was originally a projection of the coming year by days, months and holidays covering miscellaneous matters such as astronomical events, planetary tables, astrological predictions and anecdotes, etc. An almanac is different from an yearbook although both are annual publications. An yearbook is an annual compendium of data and statistics of a given year and records year's activities by country, subject of specialized area whereas an almanac usually covers retrospective information too. The difference therefore, is in coverage in the form of duration.

Almanacs can be grouped in three categories according to their scope, purpose and coverage of information. These are – astronomical, that provide astronomical projection of coming year; topical, or subject almanacs that cover some broad subject; and informational which are general almanacs and depend on government sources for statistical information.

The yearbooks and almanacs as combined publications provide recent information on a subject or personality with brief facts. Because of their recency, almanacs and yearbooks directly or by implication indicate trends in the development or regression of civilization. Besides this, events, persons, places of importance and scientific advances over the previous year are chronicled. They also contain informal indexes, directory and biographical information.

A **directory** is a document containing lists of names of residents, organizations or business houses in a city, a group of cities or a country, in alphabetical order, and/or in order of location in roads, or of firms in trade; classified and arranged in alphabetical order, or of professional people, manufacturers, or business houses in a particular trade or profession. A very famous international directory is *Yearbook of International Organizations*, published since 1948 biennially. An important feature of directories is their regular updation. *World of Learning*, another directory published since 1947, lists learned societies, research institutions, universities, libraries, etc., of the world

Another kind of directory is trade directories. A **trade directory** is concerned with one trade or a group of related trades. These directories are selective and usually have very limited coverage. *Kelly's Directory of Merchants* is an international trade directory in the area of shipping and manufacturing industries and *Kothari's Industrial Directory of India* is very popular with Indian trade community.

The **handbooks and manuals** serve as ready reference sources for a given field of knowledge. Here, emphasis is usually on established knowledge and not on recent advances. It is often difficult to distinguish between handbooks and manuals and both are often used as synonyms. It is a treatise on a special subject - a simple but all embracing treatment, containing concise information and being small enough to be held in hand (i.e., it is very handy), but strictly, a book written primarily for practitioners and serving for a constant revision or a reference. The scope of handbooks and manuals is usually limited to a specific area of interest and they serve



2.5.8 Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals/Sources

The indexing and abstracting sources of information are referred to as the secondary sources of information as they provide access to the already published primary sources of information. They have a very important role to play in locating and bibliographical control of materials, as their volume and variety is on the increase all the time. This category of sources are in the form of indexing and abstracting periodicals.

An indexing periodical is one which regularly and systematically indexes the contents of periodicals and sometimes other forms of publications, either of a general nature or within specified subject fields.

On the other hand, an abstracting periodical is one that is, in addition to the above, involved in the preparation of abstracts, usually in a limited field, by an individual, an industrial organization for restricted use or a commercial organization. The abstract is prepared, published and supplied regularly to subscribers. It can be comprehensive or selective.

The functions of the indexing and abstracting services include keeping the user abreast of current literature in a particular field of knowledge, locating specific information from the literature of the subject field and providing bibliographic control of the published literature in the particular subject. Abstracts help the users to make a choice of documents relevant for their research/study, as they, to some extent, reveal the specific subject of the document. They also help the user to overcome language barriers, provide full bibliographic details of a publication and collect all the published information in various sources during a certain period, at one place. Their use in research is the chief reason for their popularity and that is why these services/sources are available in almost all fields of knowledge. The other reason is the maintaining of uniformity and consistency in rendering the bibliographic description and having a helpful order for the arrangement of the entries. These are published at regular intervals and the publications coming from the reputed publishers have very less time lag. This help in maintaining currency and updateness in a field of knowledge.

The indexing and abstracting sources are of many kinds depending on their coverage:

- a) Comprehensive services
- b) Geographical coverage
- c) Subject coverage
- d) Coverage by kind of document, e.g., patents

The details of the various kinds of indexing and abstracting journals will be dealt with in a separate unit (Unit 4 in this Block) subsequently. Given below are some typical examples of the indexing and abstracting services.

Indexing Periodicals

Examples

Applied Science and Technology Index. New York: H.W. Wilson & Co., 1958-.

Index to Indian Medical Periodicals. New Delhi: National Medical Library, 1959-.

Guide to Indian Periodical Literature. Gurgaon : Prabhu Book Service.

Library Literature. New York: H.W. Wilson & Co., 1958-.

Abstracting Periodicals

Examples

Biological Abstracts, Philadelphia: Biosciences Information Service, 1927-.

Chemical Abstracts. Columbus: Chemical Abstracts Service, 1907-.

Dissertation Abstracts. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1938

Indian Science Abstracts. New Delhi: INSDOC, 1965-.



2.5.9 Patents and Standards

These two types of sources of information mostly belong to the literature of Science and Technology- Patent specifications are referred to as patents. A patent is a legal document by which a designated authority gives to the owner of an invention the exclusive rights to use or sell it. Patent specifications are important in most of the industrial/special libraries which collect them in their fields of interest.

Standards are common to all human enterprises. They are promulgated by government departments, a wide variety of non-governmental institutions, and many professional associations. The standards are published by the independent standards institutions and government departments to regulate the manufacture and design of specific goods, and to ensure uniformity in quality, size, shape and methods of manufacture. In India, standards are controlled by the Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi.

2.5.10 Reference Sources for Current Events

Current information has become an essential aspect of our daily lives. Every individual wants to have access to the latest and current information on any recent event that has taken place. The chief media for this kind of information are the newspapers, magazines, television and radio. The information loses its currency very fast. Thus there is need to have sources of information that provide current information all the time to sustain the thirst for information of the modern day users. A good solution to this problem is online access to information which has presently become quite cheap due to information available through the INTERNET. However many users still have to depend on the printed sources of information.

The various sources of current information are:

- a) Indexes to newspapers
- b) Indexes to general periodicals
- c) Radio and television broadcast.
- d) News summaries

The above mentioned sources provide current and handy information but it is to be remembered that they are difficult to compile and become obsolete very fast as their relevance is only with respect to the current information only.

Examples

Data India. New Delhi : Press Institute of India, 1976-.

The New York Times Index, New York: The New York Times. 1851-.

Kessing's Record of World Events. London : Kessings Publications, 1931-.

2.6 NON-DOCUMENTARY REFERENCE TOOLS/ SOURCES

There are other sources of information besides the traditional documentary sources, known as the non-documentary sources, which provide an immediate answer to certain queries. We frequently come across these reference sources in our pursuits to get information or to gain knowledge on certain areas. These sources can be observed to be of two kinds - the formal and informal sources. The formal sources are the one which are available through the properly established organizations, associations or in other words through formal channels. On the other hand the informal sources are through personal contacts, discussion with others or otherwise by any informal means.

The non-documentary sources can be classified into four categories:

- a) Human Resource
- b) Institutional Resource



- c) Mass Media
- d) Audio-visual Resource

Let us learn more about these resources.

2.6.1 Human Resource

The human resource refers to any individual serving as a source of information. This can be best illustrated by giving examples. If somebody is doing historical research, the best way to get information will be to go to a particular place and talk to older persons of that area. Here the individuals from their memories can give a lot of information. Similarly if some people had witnessed some phenomenon, then they become the best sources of information on that phenomenon. Past history of an organization can be traced by talking to senior and older employees of the organization. In addition to the above, talking, interaction with fellow scientists, experts, specialists, family members gives a lot of insight into the various problems of a re-searcher. Similarly, the extension workers are also an important source of information.

2.6.2 Institutional Resource

In many cases information not published in regular publications can be sought directly from research organizations in public, private or government setups. This then becomes the case of an institution being a source of information. Many times many institutions maintain their past records, annual reports or old documents not available in other places in their archives. These too are then institutional resources.

In addition to the above, industrial establishments have unique information which is unavailable elsewhere. The specialized information centers, referral centers, clearing houses, trade promotion councils, learned societies and associations, universities, colleges, etc. are examples of institutions as sources of information.

2.6.3 Mass Media

As we are all aware, the various communication media for the masses; that is, broadcasting and telecasting or a combination of the two are more effective than any printed document. The situation presently is very different and we have to contend with and consider the impact of these emerging new media on our society. Their value and benefits to the individuals cannot be denied and the technology in this area is advancing all the time. Almost every household today has the cable television being operated by many companies. They not only provide non-stop entertainment to people but also give information and instruction in many new and novel ways. For example, the news prepared by the cable companies are more analytical, critical and thorough and of local nature. Besides being private operators they do not have to face the hindrances of the bureaucracy.

In the future, the mass media channels of communication will have a bigger and better role to play in providing information to the masses.

2.6.4 Audio-Visual Media

Sometimes information cannot be conveyed by words alone. Librarians have extensively made use of the audio and visual form through the new technology to their advantage. Sound recordings on tape, reel-to-reel or cassette and audio cassettes have been of great help to libraries especially in providing services to the blind. In recent years, visual aids too have come to be used especially in educating the users in use of library services. *

The commercial and institutional production of visual and audio aids to education has become so substantial that many libraries are going for them. The British Library has compiled and published a bibliography called the British Catalogue of Audiovisual Materials.

Videotapes were the first to come to market and were later replaced by video discs. Both the tapes and discs have considerable potential value as sources of information. Presently the Compact Discs are capturing the market as they have the advantage of high quality of sound and vision. The value of the audio-visual materials in libraries thus cannot be disputed.



Self Check Exercise

10) List the various kinds of non-documentary sources.

- Note:** i) Write your answer in the space given below.
 ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

.....

2.7 SUMMARY

Reference and information access tools popularly known as Reference Books are very important for searching information. Every type of query is satisfied by a type of reference tool from which the requested information can be provided. This unit acquaints you with various types of reference sources, the details of each one of them will be covered in the subsequent Blocks and Units of this course. This Unit therefore is in the form of an introduction to the various reference and information access sources.

The sources of information have been divided into two major categories, namely, documentary and non-documentary. The documentary sources refer to the sources that are available chiefly in print media. These include the dictionaries, encyclopedias, bibliographies, year-books, manuals, biographical sources, handbooks, directories, geographical sources, etc. Each of the sources mentioned here is rich in content and style and due to this the reference sources are called the literature of reference. As already mentioned, the documentary sources are chiefly the print media but due to recent advances in technology, many of them are now also available on CD-ROM too. The details of this with various examples are available in the other units of this course.

The non-documentary sources too have a very important role to play since the last two decades. This is due to the fact that many times where the properly prepared expensive printed reference sources fail to provide information, the non-documentary sources may come in handy. Often many individuals are able to provide first hand valuable information which is not available in printed sources so is the case with many institutions which have with them available information in its records which has nowhere been published. The present day is witnessing the current information available via the various channels of mass media. The audio-visual too provides many facilities, which the print media cannot due to several constraints like distance and difficulty in copying and consultation.

The reference librarian thus must possess a thorough knowledge of reference and information access tools so that the queries of the users can be matched to their sources.

2.8 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) A reference book is one, which is designed by its arrangement and treatment to be consulted for definite items of information rather than to be read consecutively. For example, one looks up a dictionary only for knowing the meanings of the words and not for continuous reading. A reference book, therefore, is a book published primarily for consultation only rather than for providing specific information and continuous reading.
- 2) Two major categories of reference and information access tools are (a) documentary and (b) non-documentary.
- 3) The most popular documentary reference sources are:
Dictionaries



Encyclopaedias

Bibliographies

Yearbooks

Handbooks

- 4) some of the uses identified for the dictionaries are: definition, spelling, pronunciation, usage, synonyms, antonyms, abbreviations, slangs, new words and new meanings of old words.
- 5) General encyclopaedias provide comprehensive coverage of information on various topics.

The two examples of general encyclopaedias are:

Collier's Enc, slapedia. 24 volumes. Annual Revision. First (Published 1949-51.

Encyclopedic; Americana. 30 volumes. Annual Revision. First Published 1929-33.

- 6) These source: take care of diverse inquiries about a person, living or dead, with regard to his date and place of birth, nationality, educational background, professional achievements, significant contributions in life, writings and works, important landmarks in life and brief sketch of personal life. Examples of biographical sources are: *Who's Who in America, Chicago* : Marquis, 1899- and *India Who's Who*.
- 7) The geographical sources can be divided into four categories:
 - a) gazetteers
 - b) guidebooks
 - c) maps and atlases
 - d) Globes
- 8) The ready reference sources are of different types, namely, yearbooks and annuals, almanacs, directories, handbooks, manuals, guides to statistical sources. These are called ready reference sources as required information can be found from these instantly.
- 9) An almanac is different from a yearbook although both are annual publications. A yearbook is an annual compendium of data and statistics of a given year and records year's activities by country, subject of specialized area whereas an Almanac usually covers retrospective information too. The difference therefore is coverage in the form of duration.
- 10) The non-documentary sources can be classified into four categories:
 - a) Human Resource
 - b) Institutional Resource
 - c) Mass Media
 - d) Audio-visual Resource

2.9 KEY WORDS

Current Awareness	:	To keep abreast of current developments and advances through the currently published literature.
Database	:	A collection of related items of information which together make the record for a single topic. It is mostly computer generated.
Index	:	The list of names, subjects, topics, etc. arranged in some order with indication of exact location.
Periodical	:	A publication intended to appear at intervals, regular or irregular, or an indefinite period, and usually having several features by different contributors.
Primary Document	:	A document that contains original, information published for the first time.



Secondary Document : A document, which presents the concepts of primary document in a condensed form or list them; in a helpful sequence.

2.10 REFERENCES FURTHER READING

Grogan, Denise J. (1992). *Practical Reference Work* 2nd ed. London: Library Association Publishing.

Grogan, Denise J. (1982). *Science and Technology: An Introduction to the Literature*. 4th ed. London: Clive Bingley.

Higgins, Gavin (ed). (1983). *Printed Reference Material*. 2nd ed. London: Library Association.

Katz, William A. (1992). *Introduction to Reference Work. Vol. 1: Basic Information Sources*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Subramanyam K. (1981). *Scientific and Technical information Sources*. N.Y.: Marcel Dekker.

Activities

- 1) Visit a library and observe the way the reference collection is arranged. Talk to the reference librarian and take out the various reference and information access tools as mentioned in the unit.
- 2) Visit any large library say a university library or a special library. Collect two general encyclopaedias and two subject encyclopaedias. Study their introductory pages to know the scope and arrangement of the books.
- 3) In any library, locate the various ready reference sources and try to categorize them according to the text in this unit