
UNIT 7 ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

Structure

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

In the previous Unit, we acquainted you with various types of dictionaries and their uses. We also suggested some guidelines, which can be useful in evaluating dictionaries.

After reading through this unit, you will have a fair idea of trends in the development of encyclopaedias from ancient to modern period and you will be able to:

- describe the characteristics and uses of encyclopaedias;
- distinguish between the general and special encyclopaedias;
- identify a particular encyclopaedia for answering a query received from a reader; and
- assess the value of any new encyclopaedia before adding to your reference collection.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit, we aim to introduce you to a very common and familiar reference and information source called "Encyclopaedia". We intend to:

- trace the historical development of encyclopaedias;
- state and illustrate various types of encyclopaedias; and
- enumerate the uses of encyclopaedias, and suggest some check points to evaluate them before their acquiring for the library.

A few sample examples are given to explain the features of different kinds of encyclopaedias but they are not enough to scan the vast world of encyclopaedias. To help you know many varieties of encyclopaedias, you will have to search for more examples in each category by visiting big libraries, or from publisher's catalogues, book selection tools and guides to reference sources.

The activities at the end of this unit will prepare you to locate any information required by the readers which could be found out from different encyclopaedias, available in your reference section.. In case, the required encyclopaedia is not available in your library, you will be able to suggest the titles. This will help the reader to refer them in some other libraries,

7.2 DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

The word 'encyclopaedia' is derived from the Greek word 'enkyklios paideia' meaning 'general education'. It meant 'circle of knowledge' or 'circle of learning' or 'a complete system of



The meaning of the term has undergone a considerable change during its long history. The term encyclopaedia is now applied to any reference work of one or more volumes consisting of articles pertaining to all branches or some special branch of human knowledge, usually arranged in alphabetical order. At the end of every article, it gives an exhaustive bibliography or references. It may also contain several illustrations, diagrams, photographs and sketches of notable persons, places or objects to assist the user in better understanding of the subject. A detailed index with cross-references helps tracing the spread over information in the articles easily and quickly.

The purpose of the modern encyclopaedia is to condense current and essential information in a short and simpler form to make it accessible to the non-specialist. Encyclopaedias are secondary sources. It can be general information for the layman or subject information for specialists. Encyclopaedias are also called 'cyclopaedias' when they are limited to a specific subject.

Self Check Exercises

- 1) i) List four main characteristics of modern encyclopaedias.
- ii) Fill in the blanks:
 - a) The word 'encyclopaedia' is derived from the.....word
.....meaning.....
 - b) Subject encyclopaedias are also known as.....

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

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

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7.3 HISTORY OF ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

Encyclopaedia has a very distinct and distant past. Man always has an inner urge to share his knowledge with his contemporaries and people of future generation by maintaining records. Though Aristotle and Plato were pioneers in systematising all available knowledge, it was Pliny, the Elder who in 77 A.D. produced the first encyclopaedia *Wisteria Neturalis*'. It contained a series of anthologies on topics such as Botany, Zoology, Metallurgy, Cosmography, Astronomy, Medicine, Magic, Fine Arts, etc. They were in thirty-seven volumes arranged in classified Order. It was translated in English as '*Natural History*' in ten volumes.

During the Middle age, several scholarly and notable works of encyclopaedic nature were produced. They range from Marcus.Terentius Varro's '*Disciplinarium Libel Lk*' to the works of Boethius, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville. The similar efforts were made in Arabia and China. Isidore's *Etymologies or Origins 'and Woe.. t tf* Beattvais's'*Speculum Majus*' (The Greater Mirror) were the most famous medieval encytl. - edias. But Paul Scalich used the word 'encyclopaedia' for the first time in his '*Encyclopaedias Seu Orbits Methodical*

In the Seventeenth Century, Lou is Moreri and Pirre Bayle were famous encyclopaedists. Louis Moreri's '*Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique*' (1674) inspired Pierre Bayle to write criticism



entitled '*Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*,' a milestone in European criticism and philosophy. However, Johann Heinrich Mated was the first to apply the term 'encyclopaedia' in mod-em sense by arranging the content in seven classified heads in his '*Encyclopaedia Septem Tomis Distincta*' in 1630. It was produced subjectwise in thirty-five volumes.

The eighteenth century was the classic age of encyclopaedias. In 1701, Vinceno Maria Coronelli produced the first Italian encyclopaedia '*Biblioteca Universale Sacraprofana*' which was arranged in alphabetical order. The first English alphabetical encyclopaedia was John Harris's '*Lexicon Technicum*' or '*Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Science*' in 1704. Harris was first to get articles written by the subject specialists and include bibliographies. *Ephraim Chambers' Cyclopaedia* in two volumes published in 1728 superseded that of Harris. He was the first to provide cross reference and opinions of different schools of thought.

Apart from this English venture, the other countries also made good efrerts in producing encyclopaedias. 'John Mills translated *Ephraim Chambers' Cyclopaedia* in French. Of several German encyclopaedias, the largest and best was Johann Heinrich Zedler's '*Grosses Vollstandiges Universal Lexicon*' in sixty four volumes (1732-50). Denis Diderot edited his famous '*Encyclopaedie du xviii Siecle*' in which he included artilces from notable contributors including Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesqni iituffon, Condillac etc. The first edition of '*Encyclopaedia Britannica*' appeared in three volumes in Edinburgh in 1771. It was immediately accepted by English speaking world and two enlarged editions were published in 18th Century. In 1796, *Brodie us 'Konversations Lexikon '* consisting of short and simple articles was published in German. It occupied a prestigious position throughout 19th Century.

The encyclopaedia became a popular form of publication in 19th Century. The first edition of '*Encyeiopaedia Americana*' published in 1829 is the landmark in the history of American Encyclopaedias. The advanced printing technology made publishing of encyclopaedia a potential and profitable business. '*The Metropolitana*' (1817-45) and '*The Penny Cyclopaedia*' (1833-43) were two successors to the "*Britannica*" in England.

The first edition of *Chamber's Encyclopaedia* by Andrew Findlater in 1850-68 is another important British encyclopaedia. In France, Pierre Larousse and Augustin Bover published the '*Grand Dictionnaire Universal du xix Siecle*' (1975-76) having combined qualities of dictionary and encyclopaedia.

Twentieth Century has produced numerous encyclopaedias of all types and with many innovations in approach, coverage, readership, etc. '*The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*' 1926-47 appeared in sixty-five volumes. Many editions of the '*Encyclopaedia Britannica*' and the '*Ebcyclopaedia Americana*' have been published as they have won recognition in English speaking world. Many encyclopaedias have been published for children. '*The Book of Knowledge*', '*World Book Encyclopaedia*', '*Compton's Pichared Encyclopaedia*' and '*Britannica Junior Encyclopaedia*' are a few popular examples.

Efforts to compile encyclopaedia on western pattern were made in India in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. *BidyakalpadntmaArthata Mbidha BidyalisayakaRecna* (Encyclopaedia Bengaliensits) by Rev. Krishnamohan Benerjee was published as early as 1846-51 in 13 volumes. Similarly *Cyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia* by Edward Balfour was printed in 1857 at 1Vladras.

The first two decades of the 20th Century saw *Jnanacakra Yani Gujarati Encyclopaedia* in 9 volumes (1918). Post-independent India saw a spurt in the activities of encyclopaedia compi-Winn in various Indian languages. Hindi, Tamil, Bangali, Marathi and Malayalam languages in India and Urdu (from Pakistan) have already got general encyclopaedias. Other languages are also on their way to have an encyclopaedia of their own.

Hindi Vishwakosh. Varanasi : Nagri Pracharni Sabha, 1960-70. 13 vols.

Vigyanam Timananthpuram : Balan Prakashan 1956-69. 6 vols.

Marathi Vishwakosh. Bombay : Maharastra Rajyasakitya Sanskriti Mandal, 1973.

Sankshipta Odia Jnanakosha : Encyclopaedia Orissana. Cuttack: New Students Store, 1963,-65. 4 vols.



Self Check Exercise

2) Match the following number in 'A' with its counterpart in 'B'.

| A | | B | |
|----------|------------------------------------|----------|---|
| 1 | Encyclopedia Britannica | 1 | First Encyclopedia having articles written by subject specialists |
| 2 | Johann Heinrich Alsted | 2 | Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Condillac contributed articles |
| 3 | Pierre Larousse and Augustin Bover | 3 | Etymologies or Origins |
| 4 | John Harris | 4 | First edition appeared in three volumes in 1771 |
| 5 | Isidore of Service | 5 | Encyclopedia Septem Tomis Distincta |
| 6 | Encyclopaedie dux viii Siecle | 6 | Grand Dictionnaire Universal dux ix Siecle |

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

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7.4 VARIOUS TYPES OF ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

In the previous section, we have surveyed the genesis and development of encyclopaedia as one of the most popular reference sources. Every library whether small or big, has a few encyclopaedias in its reference collection on which the librarian usually depends to answer the queries received from the readers. Twentieth century has seen a considerable growth in number and kind of encyclopaedia due to sudden proliferation of knowledge in all fields. In this section, we will acquaint you with various types of encyclopaedias. In order to organise the collection in the reference section effectively, they are divided into two main categories, namely, *general* and *special or subject* encyclopaedias according to the scope, purpose and coverage.

The difference in scope and coverage of general and special encyclopaedia is evident. General encyclopaedia contains a collection of articles giving essential information about all the branches of knowledge. They are arranged either in alphabetical or classified order by subjects or names.

They are intended for the general readers. It is a common practice to bring out supplements to encyclopaedias to keep them up-to-date but revised editions are published occasionally. It is rather a huge and highly expensive task to produce an authoritative general encyclopaedia. In contrast to this category, special or subject encyclopaedia is a collection of articles limited to a specific field of area. They are generally arranged alphabetically by subject and names. They are designed to satisfy the needs of the specialists interested in a particular subject. They are published in abundance in almost all the subject areas due to expansion of literature in every field and increasing demand from the users. The cost of publishing is comparatively less due to its limited scope and coverage.

The encyclopaedias can be further divided by using any one of the following characteristic :

- i) Size or volume, i.e., one or two volume set or multi-volume set.
- ii) User's age, i.e., adult, junior, children.
- iii) Area covered, i.e., universal or regional/national.
- iv) According to language.

An encyclopaedia may possess more than one of the above characteristics. A multi-volume set may be for adult or for children. Similarly a children encyclopaedia may restrict its scope to only India or South Asia.

Now, let us examine these general and special encyclopaedias in detail with suitable examples.

7.4.1 General Encyclopaedias

General encyclopaedias cover all the existing branches of human knowledge. They are most popular and extensively used reference sources. They are classified into different categories according to format, user's age, coverage and language. Some popular examples are mentioned below.

a) **Comprehensive Multi-Volume Encyclopaedia for Adults. - English Language**

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. 15th ed. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1974.

30 volumes.

The first edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica was published in 1768-1771 in 3 volumes. The fourteenth edition published in 1929 was revised and reorganised till 1973. In 1974, the fifteenth edition was published as the "*New Encyclopaedia Britannica*" consisting of thirty volumes. It has three parts.

- i) Propaedia - 1 volume
 - ii) Micropaedia - 10 volumes
 - iii) Macropaedia - 19 volumes
- i) *Propaedia*, a guide to the set, gives outline of knowledge and is a schematic introduction to articles in Macropaedia.
 - ii) *Micropaedia*, a study guide contains brief information for ready reference and acts as a detailed index to the set by giving volume and page reference to articles in the Macropaedia. Cross references are freely given throughout the 10 volumes. Users needing broader details can refer to Micropaedia and save time whereas those who want minute facts can refer to Macropaedia to get elaborate information.
 - iii) *Macropaedia* containing knowledge in depth has lengthy articles. It covers major topics of human interest and is intended to educate the serious readers. They are written by well-known experts and include selective and annotated bibliographies. It has international approach and universal coverage. Since 1938, every year '*Britannica Book of the Year*' is published to update the information and it also follows policy of continuous revision.
 - iv) The new edition was criticised for not providing an index to the set, hence in 1985 print, a two-volume index was also published in which it a set of 32 volume. The Encyclopaedia volumes were also re-numbered as

| | | |
|-------------|---|------------|
| Propaedia | - | 1 volume |
| Micropaedia | - | 12 volumes |
| Macropaedia | - | 17 volumes |
| Index | - | 2 volumes |

Encyclopaedia Americana. New York : Grolier, 1976. 30 volumes,

The first edition was published in 1903-1904 as a 16 volume set. The 1912 edition carried its title only "Americana"

The encyclopaedia, for the most part contains short articles on very specific *subjects*. The encyclopaedia is strong on American towns and cities with abundance of biographical sketches of eminent personalities.

A completely new revised edition was published in 1918-20, which has become succeeding editions.

It is good, comprehensive multi-volume encyclopaedia for general use. Most of the articles are



signed but bibliographies are not often updated. It has adopted the continuous revision policy. Every year some articles are revised but new editions are not published.

Since 1923, "*Americana Annual : An Encyclopaedia of Events*" has been published to record the events of the previous year.

Chambers's Encyclopaedia. New rev. ed. London : International Learning Systems Corporation, 1973. 15 volumes.

It was first published in 1850-1867. It was based on *Brokhaus*. It was continuously revised. In 1950, it was completely updated. The later editions are the revised editions of 1950 edition. It has short articles contributed by subject specialists and signed with initials. It is international in scope. All the articles do not have bibliographies. Volume 15 contains an atlas, gazetteer and general index of articles in classified order.

Chamber's Encyclopaedia Yearbook is published from 1968 onwards.

Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopaedia. New York : Funk and Wagnalls, 1983. 27 volumes.

It is the best choice for the small library and a family. The information is current and well organised. It has a good index and adequate illustrations.

b) Popular Multi-volume Encyclopaedia for Adults

These encyclopaedias are for high school and college students. They are written in simple language and popular style. They can be of great interest to the layman.

Collier's Encyclopaedia with Bibliography and Index by William D. Halsay. New York : Macmillan, 1982. 24 volumes.

It was first published in 1949 in 20 volumes. It was continuously revised. It consists of 25,000 signed articles written by about 5000 contributors and editors. Biographies are exhaustive. The Index entries are clearly displayed. It contains illustrations and maps.

Collier's Encyclopaedia Yearbook, 1968 - covers the events of the previous year arranged in alphabetical order.

The Macmillan Family Encyclopaedia. 2nd rev. and updated ed. London : Macmillan, 1982. 21 volumes.

It was originally published in 1980 as "*Academic American Encyclopaedia*". Articles are brief, often signed and half of them have short bibliographies. There are ample cross reference's. It is also meant for adult inquisitive readers. It strikes a good balance between the academic and popular approach.

Encyclopaedia International. New York : Grolier, 1970. 20 volumes.

It was first published in 1963-64 and is continuously revised. The articles are in clear and concise style and easy to understand. It has signed articles. Only a few articles have bibliographies. They are arranged in alphabetical order and are accurate, concise and unbiased. It has a comprehensive and well organised index.

c) Multi-volume Encyclopaedias for Junior and Children

There are many junior and children encyclopaedias as they are mostly referred by school going children although these are also interesting and informative for adults.

Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia. Rev. ed. London : OUP, 1961. 12 volumes,

It was first published in 1961. It is designed for the inquiring minds of children over ten years. Each volume is of one particular subject arranged in alphabetical order. There are no bibliographies. Articles are in simple language.

Children's Britannica. London : Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1981. 19 volumes

It was first published in 1960. The American edition is known as '*Britannica Junior*'. It is continuously revised and has lucid language of text, clear print, illustrations, etc. It is owned by many families as it is moderately priced.

New Book of Knowledge. New York : Grolier. 21 volumes.



It is the most famous set of encyclopaedia among the pre-school children's encyclopaedias. It Encyclopaedias was first published in 1912 as "*The Book of Knowledge*". The title changed from 1966. The set is meant for children of 7-14 years age group. It excels in coverage, authority, recency, objectivity, etc. compared to other children encyclopaedia sets.

Young Students Encyclopaedia. Rev. ed. Middletown: Xerox Education Publications, 1980. 21 volumes.

It is intended to be of use for children from 7 to 13 years of age. It has many small articles and numerous illustrations.

New Caxton Encyclopaedia. 5th ed. London : Caxton, 1979. 20 volumes.

It has unsigned articles with coloured illustrations. The text is less adequate and does not-contain bibliographies. It is expensive.

World Book Encyclopaedia. Chicago : World Book Childcraft International, 1989. 24 volumes.

It was first published in 1917, It is one of the best all-purpose junior encyclopaedia for school children above 10 years of age and is available at most of the American schools and public libraries. It is revised continuously. It is arranged word by word alphabetical order. It has short signed articles with bibliographies.

The World Book Yearbook reviewing events of previous year is also published every year.

Compton 's Pictured Encyclopaedia and Fact Index , Chicago: Compton, 1981. 24 volumes.

It was first published in 1922 as *Compton's Pictured Encyclopaedia*. It is well organised junior encyclopaedia planned especially for high school students. It is also useful for inquisitive adults. 'Fact Index' gives small sub-divisions for long articles of broad subjects in alphabetical order. It gives brief biographical sketches.

Merit Students Encyclopaedia . New York : Macmillan. 20 volumes.

It was first published in 1967, It has all signed articles with a bibliography in *long* articles. The set is meant for school going children having orientation of American school curricula. It has inadequate cross-references but vol. 20 carries a subject index with over 1,25,000 references..

d) One and Two Volume Adult and Junior Encyclopaedia

Since last half a century, publishers are concentrating on producing one and two volume encyclopaedias due to rising costs of production and advertising. They are arranged in alphabetical order and do not need to have an index. They contain brief information and universal facts. They are more reliable, economical and handy to use.

The New Columbia Encyclopaedia/ ed. Wild Harris and J.S. Levy. 4th ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

It was first published in 1935 as 'The Columbia Encyclopaedia'. It is a compact volume and planned for quick reference. It contains over 59,000 concise articles designed for the small library and family. It includes short biographical sketches and geographical information. Each article has a short bibliography of two to three articles. It contains neaps and line drawings.

The Random House Encyclopaedia. New rev. ed. New York : Random I-louse, [1983].

It is comparatively a recent addition to encyclopaedias. It is in two parts - Colorpedia and Alphapedia.

The Colorpedia consists of short articles grouped in seven sections. It contains many illustrations in four coloured photo plates and drawings. Every section progresses from broader to narrower subject, e.g., 'Universe' to 'Man and Machines'.

Hutchinson's 20th Century Encyclopaedia. 7th rev. ed. London : Hutchinson, 1981,

It was first published in 1947. It has short entries consisting small black and white illustrations. It provides abbreviations, customary forms of address, weights and measures, geographic-'World atlas' of 31 pages in colour. It is regarded as an outstanding one-volume encyclopaedia for children above 14 years age.

750 articles organised under five major categories : Islamic thought and practice, Islam and Encyclopaedias politics, Muslim communities and societies, Islam and society and Islamic studies. Articles range from large ones running upto 10000 words to brief ones of 500 to 1000 words.

7.4.2 Special or Subject Encyclopaedias

There used to be a limited number of subject encyclopaedias in 19th century, but now, there is encyclopaedias for almost every subject. Modern subject encyclopaedias first became available in philosophy and religion. Rendolf Eisler published his *Worterbuch der Philosophischen Segriffe* in 1889 and *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* came out in 1908-27. As general encyclopaedias have to cover all the subjects, they are dealt with in broad perspective and minute details are not covered; whereas subject encyclopaedias aim to serve the subject specialists and cover all sub-topics elaborately.

In past, subject encyclopaedias used to be multi-volume sets in broad subjects namely science and technology, social sciences etc. but now, encyclopaedias are published for each discipline and are restricted to one or two volume sets which are handy to use. They are excellent ready reference aids for the specialists who want to tr' ce information about a particular subject. They are economical as the librarian of the special libraries has a choice to acquire only those encyclopaedias needed by the readers instead of procuring costly multi-volume sets which occupy lots of space.

It is common for any reference librarian or the reader to turn to a general encyclopaedia for the information but in order to get in depth information on any subject, it is better to refer to subject encyclopaedias. A handbook is a working tool which gives facts and data to assist the user with the presupposition that he has some knowledge of the subject whereas subject encyclopaedia is a source of background information in detail and gives articles to the readers about the subject by making it elaborate. It helps the reader to self-educate himself thoroughly on the subject.

It is impossible to cover the countless subject encyclopaedias available in various subjects. A few important examples of special encyclopaedias available in big university and special libraries are listed here.

a) Multi-volume Subject Encyclopaedias

McGraw-Hill Encyclopaedia of Science and Technology. Ed. 6. New York : McGraw-Hill, 1987.20 Volumes.

International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences/ed. by David L. Sills. New York : Macmillan and Free Press, 1968-80. 18 volumes.

It is not a mere revision of the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* but a completely new work. Disciplines included anthropology, economics, geography, history, law, political science, psychology, psychiatry, sociology and statistics. A complete volume devoted to biographies of 215 social scientists was published as volume I R, in 1980.

Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science /ed. by Allen Kent and Harold Lancour. N.Y.: Dekker, 1968-69. 35 vols.+ supplements. Volumes 34 and 35 are author and subject index respectively.

Supplements which are still in progress, are designed to update existing articles, treat new topics, add biographies of important figures recently deceased and to cover certain topics omitted from the main set because of late receipt. Each supplement volume is arranged in a separate alphabetical sequence.

Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopaedia. N.Y.: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972-75. 13 vols,

v.1 lower animal; v.2 insects; v.3 Mollusks and echinoderms; v.3-4 fishes; v.6 Reptiles; v.7-9, Birds v. 10-13 Mammals. Each volume is made up of chapters by an international group of scholars.

Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Physics: general, nuclear, solid state, moleculars, chemical, metal and vacuum physics, astronomy, geophysics, biophysics and related subjects. London Pergamon, 1961-64. 9 volumes.

Dictionary of Art London ; Macmillan, 1996. 34 volumes.



A monumental work prepared by 6700 scholars from 120 countries. It is claimed to have summed up current knowledge about every thing from pre-historic cave paintings to multimedia installations of lesbian erotica. Texts have been translated from 26 languages.

The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics/ed. by J. Eatwell [et al.]. London : Macmillan, 1988. 4 volumes.

Prepared by the combined efforts of about 900 scholars, it has 2000 signed entries.

Marshall Cavendish Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Discovery and Exploration, 1990. 17 volumes.

Each volume is devoted to exploratory travels in various direction arranged by chronology. Beginning with first exploration in volume one to reaching the moon in the penultimate volume.

Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature/ed. By Amaresh Datta, [et al.]. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1987-92. 6 volumes.

Surveys literary movements, trends; notes on established Indian authors and on significant books in 25 Indian languages.

Encyclopaedia of Indian Cultures by R.N. Saletore. New Delhi : Sterling, 1981-85. 5 vols. Story of Indian culture encompassed in about 400 articles, beginning from the earliest time to the 19th century. Every topic is discussed from three angles: Brahminical, Buddhist and Jain.

b) One to Three Volume Subject Encyclopaedias

Bhartiya Itihas Kosh/by Sachchidanand Bhattacharya; tr. by Gyanchand Jain, [et al.]. Lucknow Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan, 1989.

Covers ancient medieval and modern periods of the Indian history. Describes, in brief, people, places and events of historical significance.

Encyclopaedia of Indian Archeology/ed. by A. Ghosh. Lieden : Brill, 1990. Compiled under the auspices of the Indian Council of Historical Research.

Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947/by Purshottam Mehra. New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1987.

In alphabetically arranged 400 entries, it covers places, events, leaders, political parties, etc. Appendices are given on Indian chronology, glossary of Indian terms, list of Governor-Generals of India, 1774-1947.

Encyclopaedia of Indian Tribes/by Shive Kumar Tiwari. New Delhi : Rahul Pub., 1994. 2 vols. Records names, alternative names, population appearance and physical built, religious belief: Entries are arranged alphabetically by the name of the tribes.

Golden- Treasury of Science and Technology. Ed. 2. New Delhi : Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1993.

A book of alphabetically arranged entries on scientist, scientific discoveries, scientific terms and events explained in simple language. There are eight appendices: List of Nobel Laureates upto 1993; derived units; multiplication factors; conversion factors; Greek alphabets; physical constants; sub- atomic particles; amino acid.

A Conceptual Encyclopaedia of Guru Gm-with Sahib/by S.S Kohn. Delhi : Manohar, 1992. Explains concepts of Sikhism and compares their connotation in other religions

Social Science Encyclopaedia /by Adam Kuper and Jessica Kuper. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989.

Contains 700 signed articles contributed by 500 scholars from 25 countries. Provides broad introductory essays on all major social science disciplines, biographical data on key scholars and theoreticians. Each entry is followed by a brief bibliography.

Cambridge Encyclopaedia of English Language/by David Crystal London: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Concise Encyclopaedia of Special Education /ed. by Cecil. R. Reynolds and E.

Fletcher-Janzen, N.Y.: Wiley, 1990.

Covers history, structure, variety and range of uses of the English language world-wide.

Self Check Exercises

- 3) i) List five differences to distinguish between general and special encyclopaedias
- ii) State four major criteria used for classifying the general and special encyclopaedias.
- iii) Match the following number of 'A' with its counterpart in 'B'

| A | B |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Random House Encyclopaedia | 1. Propaedia, Micropaedia and Macropaedia |
| 2. Encyclopaedia | 2. Encyclopaedia of Education |
| 3. Encyclopaedia Britannica | 3. Collier's Encyclopaedia Yearbook |
| 4. Special Encyclopaedia | 4. Colorpedia and Alphapedia |
| 5. Supplement of Encyclopaedia | 5. National Encyclopaedia |

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

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7.5 USES OF ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

We have surveyed different types of encyclopaedias in Section 7.4 In this section, we will discuss various uses of these encyclopaedias. An encyclopaedia is a store house of knowledge and provides information on all subjects. They form the backbone of the reference work in a library. Most of the users consider reference book as encyclopaedia without differentiating them with each other. Even though number of reference books are available in the library, librarian first turns to encyclopaedia for tracing information. In olden days, encyclopaedias were referred only by elite but now, they are used by all the common people. They are very popular among students and research scholars.

- i) Encyclopaedias are looked for concise, digested and in some cases simplified account on a topic on which otherwise there may be abundance of available literature.
- ii) Encyclopaedias also help us in such cases where the topic of enquiry is very restricted in scope and the library has no book on the topic.
- iii) Encyclopaedias generally present information in an impartial manner, giving all the view points on a subject.
- iv) They attempt to provide essential historical background to the topic of enquiry.
- v) References generally listed at the end of a brief or detailed description are selective and provide important help for further study of the topic.
- vi) Very often encyclopaedias are the only source for biographical information on an other wise minor figure not covered in standard biographical dictionaries.
- vii) The earlier editions of encyclopaedias have their own value. They are a rich source for an account of state of knowledge at a given time on any topic that may be omitted from



subsequent writings on the subject. Encyclopaedia Britannica 9th and 11th editions are often cited as examples for their scholarly articles.

- viii) The index is the most valuable part for accessing information on topic not featured in the main body of an encyclopaedia. The following table gives an idea of the extent to which indexes have detailed subject analysis in some encyclopaedias :

| Name of Encyclopaedia | No. of entries | No. of entries in index |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Encyclopaedia Americana | 53,120 | 3,53,000 |
| Collier Encyclopaedia | 25,000 | 4,00,000 |

- ix) The role of illustrations in making a subject more comprehensible can be hardly overemphasised. Colour plates, black and white photographs and line drawings in encyclopaedias not only add to their aesthetics but are a great help in clarifying descriptions.
- x) Scholarly treatment of subject is one point on which editors of encyclopaedias lay special emphasis. Without denying the truth in the statement "Do not rely on encyclopaedic work, suspect every statement and do your best to verify it". "General encyclopaedia can serve as a gateway to understand the most profound or intricate knowledge human beings have yet produced". As Grogan has rightly pointed out, New Britannica availed the services of 4300 scholars including Nobel Laureates, Milton Friedman and Linus Pawling, etc., in preparing the set

Let us examine the use of various kinds of encyclopaedias

- i) *General Encyclopaedia* is usually referred to get background information on any subject. They are used to find out information about unknown subjects or refresh the memory, the bibliography at the end of each article enables the readers to delve into the depth of the subject for extensive study.

They also assist in enriching the general knowledge of a person and self-educate the layman. They act as continuous link between the teacher and the tough and a guide for a common man who can approach them without hesitation. They provide facts,, illustrations, biographical, geographical and historical information In other words, general encyclopaedias cover almost all sorts of information which are found in other reference sources viz. dictionaries, year-books, almanacs, directories, biographical and geographical sources such as atlases, census reports, gazetteers, handbooks, manuals, etc. In fact, encyclopaedias enjoy high popularity and attract more users due to multi-dimensional information available in them. But, a user has to be cautious that they only serves as an introduction to the subject and for further information, some other sources have to be consulted. It should be born in mind that a general encyclopaedia should not be considered reference source for research.

- ii) *General Encyclopaedia - English Language*

The uses of the non-English western language encyclopaedias can be summarised as under:

- The collection of foreign language encyclopaedia in university, college and school libraries is useful for foreign language teachers and learners.
- They are useful for those who do not have proficiency in English language.
- They can be referred by the foreign language learners with the help of bilingual dictionary to know more about the country and to get proficiency in the language.
- They help the learners to imagine the life style of the people of a particular country.

- iii) *Regional/National Encyclopaedia*: Libraries all over the world possesses English language encyclopaedias in non-English languages which are rich in information. They should not be overlooked. The national encyclopaedia of a country provides detailed information about history, literature, culture, customs, festivals, geographical details, socio-economic and political conditions etc. of the country.

- The articles regarding the specific aspect of a country moved with accurate details in foreign, national encyclopaedias are not dealt with in detail in regional general encyclopaedias.
- Certain special topics such as biographies of notable persons, historical, topographical, cultural, socio-economic, political conditions of a small country may be either completely



7.6 EVALUATION OF ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

In the previous section 7.5, we have seen that encyclopaedias are most heavily and extensively used reference sources. A good and useful collection of general and special encyclopaedias form the backbone for the reference work in any library. The strong collection of general and special encyclopaedias in English and other languages ensure efficient reference service in a library. In this section, we will discuss various check points which can help in the selection and assessing the value of encyclopaedias before the acquisition for the library.

It is a very expensive venture to produce an authoritative set of encyclopaedia as it involves overall planning, engaging subject experts to write articles, competent indexers to provide exhaustive index, layout artists and photographers for providing apt illustrations, efficient editorial, accurate printing and proof reading, adequate advertising through reviews in journals catalogues and announcement leaflets to booksellers, distributors, librarians etc. All these cannot be done cheaply. Reputed publishers recognise this fact by their experience in the field of publishing encyclopaedias and incur considerable expenditure to produce an authoritative work so as to earn the profit in turn.

The prices of the authoritative sets of encyclopaedia are quite high, as the publishers have to meet with the expenses of high cost of production. Therefore the librarians have to make careful selection of the encyclopaedia and judicious expenditure depending upon the availability of funds and space. Again, the librarian has also to consider the needs of the reader. They should be used intelligently to get the maximum benefit. It is not possible to produce a perfect and complete encyclopaedia, as it is difficult to include all the existing information: Hence, the librarian should assess their value and find out their merits and demerits before acquiring them.

The checkpoints for evaluating encyclopaedias are :

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| a) Authority | b) Scope and purpose |
| c) Treatment | d) Arrangement |
| e) Format | f) Revision |
| g) Limitation | h) Special features |

Let us now examine each of these points in detail.

a) Authority

The authoritiveness of an encyclopaedia can be judged by the reputation of the editor, consultants, contributors who are responsible for producing it. The reputation of the editors, consultants, contributors can be assessed from their academic qualifications and such experience of publications in past. The success of an authoritative encyclopaedia also depends upon the reputation of the publishers and editorial staffs such as proof readers, indexers, artists, photographers, etc.

The publisher can be reliable and dependable only if he has gained recognition and reputation due to past experience of producing encyclopaedias. He has to take pains in producing each and every edition by continuous revision to keep up the name in the world of encyclopaedias. The editorial staff should be highly proficient in their skill and should do their jobs conscientiously. It is necessary to have a competitive, experienced and efficient team to produce a reputed encyclopaedia. It cannot be produced by a single individual.

b) Scope and Purpose

Editors usually state the scope and purpose of the encyclopaedia in the preface and introduction. After proper scanning, the buyers should check a few items in the volumes to verify whether the promises are carried out or not. The scope of an encyclopaedia covers plan, range and selection.

- i) *Plan*: The encyclopaedia work should have a definite plan. The articles should be even in length and content and continuous editorial supervision should ensure that the plan is followed consistently.
- ii) *Coverage*: The topics should be complete in coverage. It varies according to the needs of the users. The facts provided in the encyclopaedia should be accurate and reliable.



iii) *Selection*: There should be balance in the selection of topics and dealing with different periodical events, subjects, countries, etc.

c) Treatment

Readability, objectivity and style are the three important criteria of topics in encyclopaedias.

- i) *Readability*: The topics covered by the encyclopaedia should be readable and easily understandable. The information should make the unfamiliar subject clear to the user. The standard and the quality of the articles should be in tune with the readers' need and should be comprehensible both for the scholars and layman.
- ii) *Objectivity*: The articles should be objective without having any national, political or religious bias. National encyclopaedias may deal extensively with the national topics but there should not be exaggeration. As far as possible, they should be neutral and not prejudiced.
- iii) *Style*: As we have already discussed, encyclopaedias are meant for the varied audience of different age group and coverage. They have different style. The scholarly style is for the learned scholars, popular style for the common men and the college students, easy, lucid and simple style for children. Hence, the reference librarian should be conscious in selecting encyclopaedias to suit the needs of the readers.

d) Arrangement

The articles of the encyclopaedias are arranged either in alphabetical or classified order depending upon the nature and size of articles and the editors plan for their presentation. Some encyclopaedias have long articles whereas the others have small ones. The arrangement of the articles in the encyclopaedia should be such that users can locate the information easily and quickly.

It is usually found that the articles are arranged either in word or letter by letter alphabetical order. They have comprehensive, alphabetically arranged index covering all the minor topics and giving 'see' and 'see also' cross-references wherever necessary. The table of contents listing the topics should lead the user to the required information. Some single volume encyclopaedia has detailed table of contents but not index. The multi-volume sets have a comprehensive index in the last volume with the cross-references.

e) Format

The format of an encyclopaedia depends upon the physical make up of an encyclopaedia. It refers to the (i) general appearance, (ii) presentation of articles, illustrations, diagrams, maps, tables, etc., (iii) quality of paper, (iv) printing, page make-up, (v) binding etc.

- i) The physical appearance of an encyclopaedia, the cover page, the printing of title on the cover and spine etc. should be appealing to the eye of users. The size of the volume should be handy.
- ii) The presentation of the articles should be well planned. The illustrations, plates, maps, tables, drawings, diagrams, photographs etc. should be accurate and in natural colours. They should be positioned with the text in such a way that users find it easy to understand the topics. The maps and index are generally provided in the last volume. It becomes inconvenient for the readers to refer to, two volumes at a time and results in waste of time. Hence, it is necessary to at least give a sketch map of the country with the text even though the atlas is given with the index.
- iii) The paper should neither be thin nor thick to add to the volume. It should be opaque and of good quality.
- iv) The typography should be clear and legible. As an encyclopaedia is packed with lots of material, it is essential to have small but legible typefaces to bring down the expenditure and size of the volume. The headings and sub-headings should be in bold type faces with the marked distinction and easy to catch the attention. There should be enough margin and sufficient space on all the sides, between the column lines and letters.
- v) As encyclopaedia is bulky and has to be used very often, it should be hardbound losing leather, table or calico. This will enable it to sustain the wear and tear of frequent and rough handling. The title of the encyclopaedia volume number, coverage of alphabetical sequence should be clearly indicated on the spine of the volume.



f) Revision

It is difficult and costly venture to produce a really authoritative encyclopaedia. They get out of date in a course of time due to dynamic nature of knowledge. Hence, they have to be updated and revised at some intervals. They can be revised using different methods.

- i) *Publication of Annual Supplementary Volume*: Some publishers publish a supplement to encyclopaedia every year updating the facts that have undergone change and covering important events of that particular year. One has to take care whether the arrangement of the supplement is similar to that of the basic set.
- ii) *Periodical Revision* : There are some publishers who produced the revised and reset edition of the entire set of an encyclopaedia after a specific interval of time. This enables them to publish a revised, new edition updating the knowledge.
- iii) *Continuous Revision Policy* Some publishers employ permanent editorial staff who carry on systematic revision of incorporating changes in the contents of the articles. The articles covering the continents, states, cities, towns, villages that undergo changes various other reasons are regularly updated. Thus, the changes in such articles due to new developments are incorporated whereas the other articles remain stable.

The reference librarian should be cautious while examining the so-called new editions of the set. The publisher may claim to have continuous revision policy but there is a big gap between the actual revisions carried out and the claims made of updating. It is often found that changes are made in some evident science and technological fields but the other subjects are completely neglected.

g) Limitations

Every set of encyclopaedia has some limitations and the librarian must be vigilant about these limitations.

- i) In order to keep the size of the volume under control, some good articles are omitted to yield to the pressure of including the new subjects. This effects the overall coverage of the set in a long run.
- ii) It serves only as a background source of information. Reader has to refer to special encyclopaedias or those mentioned in the bibliographies appended to articles for de-tailed information.
- iii) It is not possible to update annually incorporating all the literature in every field of knowledge by bringing out the supplement to encyclopaedia. The purpose of bridging the gap is not fulfilled by publishing the supplements.
- iv) The national encyclopaedias do not follow the rule of objectivity but suffer from bias. The popularity of the publication is marred due to exaggeration in praising their own, country and not giving clear picture of the developments in other countries.
- v) The general encyclopaedias cannot treat all the topics equally and include all the developments in each and every field. Thus, it becomes necessary to publish more subject encyclopaedias to give detailed information in specific subjects.

h) Special Features

The prestige of the encyclopaedias is enhanced by some of the unique features employed in the publication of encyclopaedias.

- i) Most of the major articles in the encyclopaedia are appended with the *bibliography for* further reading. Some encyclopaedias provide bibliography in classified manner in the last volume. The current, exhaustive, updated bibliography in each subject is very useful for readers to pick up the thread and progress forward.
- ii) The appendices and *separate lists* of measures and weights, abbreviations, pronunciation, errata etc. enhance the value and are very handy to glance through information.
- iii) The unique feature of the encyclopaedia is the exhaustive index giving 'see' and 'see also' cross references to enable the user to locate the information quickly and easily.
- iv) The comprehensibility of the encyclopaedia increases with the proper *illustrations* in the

form of photographs, sketches, maps, diagrams, charts, tables etc., given at the appropriate places in the articles.

- v) The inclusion of *guidelines for using* the volumes and contents of each volume in the introductory pages are the important features to render help to the information seekers.

The librarian should be guided by the above criteria for purchasing valuable sets of encyclopaedias for the reference section. There are some secondary evaluation sources and library journals which review the new additions to the encyclopaedias. They should be properly scanned through before taking decision. There are some unscrupulous publishers who give copy right permissions to various other publishers for publishing a particular set. The same set of encyclopaedia is published by two to three publishers under different titles. They cause unnecessary duplication of expensive sets in the library which could be replaced by some other sets. Let us examine a few examples.

Arete Publishing Co. had published a set of encyclopaedia for students of high schools and colleges in 1980. This encyclopaedia has been published by three different publishers in different names.

- *The Macmillan Family Encyclopaedia*. 2nd fully rev. and updated ed. London : Macmillan, 1982.21 volumes.
- *Academic American Encyclopaedia*. Danbury : Groiler, 1983.21 volumes.
- *Lexicon Universal Encyclopaedia*. New York : Lexicon, 1984.21 volumes.

Similarly there is one more multi-volume encyclopaedia which has been published in two separate names by different publishers.

- *Encyclopaedia International*. New York: Lexicon, 1982.20 volumes.
- *The Webster Family Encyclopaedia*. Webster, 1984. 20 volumes.

Secondly, there is London based publisher namely Roydon Publishing Co. who has published one volume encyclopaedia. in the same year with two different titles.

- *The College Encyclopaedia*. London : Roydon; 1985.
- *The University Encyclopaedia* London Roydon, 1985.

These encyclopaedias are very costly. It is difficult to acquire a set with the limited budget available for reference books. Hence, librarian should be very cautious in evaluating these encyclopaedia sets lest they may unnecessarily get duplicated.

Self Check Exercises

5) i) Enumerate various features essential for producing authoritative set of encyclopaedia.

ii) List eight check points to assess the value of an encyclopaedia.

iii) Fill in the blanks:

- The format of an encyclopaedia depends upon five criteria namely,
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
- The authoritativeness of an encyclopaedia can be judged from the reputation of
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)



- The scope of an encyclopaedia depends upon three criteria namely,
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
- The three important aspects of the treatment of an encyclopaedias are:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
- Encyclopaedia can be revised using three methods:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

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

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7.7 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have introduced you to one of the most popular and frequently used reference source namely encyclopaedia. We have discussed scope and purpose of encyclopaedias. We have surveyed the genesis and growth of encyclopaedia from ancient time to modern period giving a few examples of encyclopaedias in different languages. We have also acquainted you with different types of encyclopaedias, their characteristic features and uses. Lastly, we have outlined some basic guidelines to assess the value of any encyclopaedia before, adding it to the reference collection of a library.

In order to have better knowledge of the contents of various kinds of encyclopaedias, you should attempt to do 'activities' given at the end of the unit. In the process of looking for more examples of the encyclopaedias and evaluating a few you will be well informed about the information available in them. This will prepare you to face and answer confidently the queries posed to you by the readers.

7.8 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) i)
- Modern encyclopaedia is a single or multi-volume reference source consisting of articles pertaining to all branches of human knowledge usually arranged in alphabetical order.
 - A fairly exhaustive bibliography is given at the end of every article.
 - It contains several illustrations, diagrams, photographs, and sketches by notable persons for better understanding of the subject.
 - It contains a detailed index with cross references to locate the information easily and quickly.



ii) a) Greek, 'enkyklios paideia', 'general education'.

b) 'Cyclopaedias'.

- 2)
- A1 - B4
 - A2 - B5
 - A3 - B6
 - A4 - B1
 - A5 - B3
 - A6 - B2

3) i) **General Encyclopaedias**

Special Encyclopaedias

a) It contains a collections of articles providing essential information about all the branches of knowledge.

a) It is a collection of articles limited to a specific field of area.

b) They are arranged either in alphabetical order.

b) They are arranged usually in alphabetical or classified order.

c) They are intended for general readers.

c) They are designed to satisfy the needs of the subject specialists.

d) They are occasionally revised to bring new editions. Annuals or supplements are brought out to keep them up-to-date.

d) They are published in abundance in all subjects to satisfy the user's demands due to knowledge explosion in all fields.

e) It is a huge and expensive task to produce an authoritative general encyclopaedia.

e) The cost of publishing is comparatively less due to its limited scope and coverage.

ii) General and special encyclopaedias can be further classified according to

a) Size and format

b) Users age

c) Area coverage

iii) A1 - B4

A2 - B5

A3 - B1

A4 - B2

A5 - B3

4) i) Foreign language and National/Regional encyclopaedias are useful

- for foreign language teachers and learners directly or with the help of bilingual dictionary.
- for learners of foreign language to imagine the life-style of people.
- for those who do not have proficiency in English but can read other foreign languages.
- for accurate details of a particular country not dealt with in general encyclopaedias.
- for biographies, historical, topographical, socio-economic, cultural and political condition of a country, which do not get many places in general encyclopaedia.

ii)

a) Stepping stone



- b) Bibliographies
 - c) General Knowledge
 - d) The year of publication
- iii) Four uses of general encyclopaedias are -
- They enrich general knowledge.
 - They provide information *on* known topics to refresh the memory.
 - They help to self-educate by referring to more sources given in the bibliography at the end of each article.
 - They provide facts, illustrations, biographical, geographical and historical information.
- 5) i) Some of the essential features of producing authoritative set of encyclopaedia are
- Overall planning
 - Selecting subject experts to write articles
 - Competent indexer to provide exhaustive index
 - Layout, artists, photographers for providing apt illustrations
 - Efficient editorial team
 - Accurate printing and proof reading
 - Adequate advertising to promote sale
- ii) The eight check points to judge the value of encyclopaedias are -
- | | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Authority | Scope and purpose |
| Treatment | Arrangement |
| Format | Revision |
| Limitations | Special features |
- iii) The format of an encyclopaedia depends upon five criteria namely-
- a) Physical appearance
 - b) Presentation of articles including illustrations
 - c) Quality of paper
 - d) Typography
 - e) Binding
- The authoritativeness of an encyclopaedia can be judged by the reputation of
 - *The editors, consultants and contributors;*
 - *The publisher and*
 - *The editorial staffs i.e. proof readers, indexers, artists, photographers etc.*

The scope of an encyclopaedia depends upon three criteria.

- i) Plan
- ii) Coverage
- iii) Selection

The three important aspects of the treatment of encyclopaedia are:

- a) Readability
- b) Objectivity
- c) Style



The three methods of revising an encyclopaedia are:

- a) Publications of annual supplementary volume
- b) Periodical Revision
- c) Continuous Revision Policy

7.9 KEY WORDS

| | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Cyclopaedia | : | Synonym of Encyclopaedia. This term is used when it is limited to a specific subject. |
| Kosh | : | Hindi term for dictionary. |
| Viswa Kosh | : | Hindi term for encyclopaedia. |

7.10 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Activity

- i) Collect three examples from each of the following types of encyclopaedias which are not mentioned in the text of this unit.
 - A) General, one or two volume, adult encyclopaedias.
 - B) General, one or two volume, junior encyclopaedia.
 - C) General, one or two volume, children encyclopaedia.
 - D) General, Multi-volume, adult encyclopaedia:
 - E) General, Multi-volume, junior encyclopaedia.
 - F) General, Multi-volume, children encyclopaedia.
 - G) General, Multi-volume encyclopaedia in any non-English, non-Indian languages.
 - H) General, Multi-volume encyclopaedia in any Indian languages.
 - I) General, Multi-volume national encyclopaedia.
 - J) General, Multi-volume national encyclopaedia.
 - Education
 - Social Sciences
 - Humanities
 - Science and Technology
- ii) Evaluate according to the checkpoints one encyclopaedia of the above ten types. You may visit reference section of any big university or special library or refer to any guides to reference sources, book-selection tools, publishers' catalogues to trace the examples for the activity (i). For activity (ii), you must thoroughly scan through the encyclopaedias to judge the value properly.