

Unit 5

Traditional Sources of Information : Documentary & Non-Documentary Sources of Information

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5.0 Unit Overview and Description

This unit will provide the information about documentary and non-documentary sources of information.

This unit will impart following knowledge and skills:

- Documentary sources of information
- Non-documentary sources of information

Resource Material:

1. Mittal, R.L. (1979). Library administration theory and practice. 5th edition New Delhi: Metropolitan book Co. (Pvt.) Ltd. 648p.
2. Doyle, Luran B., Information retrieval and processing. Melville Publication : Los Angeles.
3. Enright, B.J. (December, 1970). Non-book/ media materials and the library: a note. Library Association Record, 72 (12), 368-9p.
4. Otto Frank (1961). Modern documentation and Information practices. The Heague: FID. 23-30p.
5. Umapathay, K.S. (1978). Information sources: An International Selective Guide. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House 154p.

Duration: 20 Hours

Learning outcomes

Unit - 5: Traditional Sources of Information- documentary and non-documentary Sources of information	Learning Outcomes
5.2 Documentary Sources ● Primary Sources	You will be able to understand about : ● Periodicals ● Research Monographs ● Research Reports ● Patents ● Standards ● Trade Literature ● Dissertations ● Unpublished Resources
5.2 Documentary Sources ● Secondary Sources	You will be able to understand about : ● Periodicals ● Indexing and Abstracting Periodicals ● Bibliographies ● Reviews ● Monographs ● Textbooks ● Reference Books

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encyclopedias ● Dictionaries ● Handbooks ● Manual ● Tables
5.2 Documentary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tertiary Sources 	You will be able to understand about : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bibliography of Bibliographies ● Directories ● Guides to Literature
5.3 Non-documentary Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal Sources (Ex. Research organisations Govt. Departments, etc.) ● Informal Sources (Ex. Conversation with visitors, Professional Meetings etc.)

Assessment Plan (for teachers)

Unit - 3	Topic	Assessment Method	Time Plan	Remarks
5.2	Documentary Sources	Activity Exercise Question & Answer		
5.3	Non-documentary Sources	Activity Exercise Question & Answer		

5.1 Introduction

Literature is the foundation of a subject. It represents the achievements of records of human race. The nature of the Literature is diverse, complex and multilingual. It is becoming more and more inter-disciplinary. It is growing at a fast pace. The informational needs of various kinds of users are served by Literature. It forms source of information.

Education and research activities require more and more information. Students need it relating to the prescribed syllabuses for pursuing academic studies, more specifically to pass their examination. Some years back, there was no problem in identifying the information sources in libraries as the majority of materials were only in printed form. It is true that printed sources still predominate but the other are fast becoming more obvious, more varied and more important. On the basis of very physical nature, use and arrangement, the information sources have been divided into two following categories, namely documentary and non-documentary sources.

Review Questions

Fill in the blanks:-

- i. The informational needs of various kinds of users are served by _____.
- ii. The information sources have been divided into two following categories, namely _____ and _____.

5.2 Documentary sources

These sources available in the printed form, so they are also called printed sources. The printed sources can be used for a long time and even today a large quantity of printed sources available throughout the world. These documentary sources may be divided into three following parts:

- Primary source
- Secondary source
- Tertiary source

5.2.1 Primary Source: - Newly generated information is primary information and therefore, Primary documents are those documents which record and disseminate it. Primary documents are also called primary literature. This type of information is categorized as primary information. The journal is the most widely used primary document. These are the container of information. Through the primary sources researchers producing new information can make it available to the particular community. Primary sources are unorganized sources, which are rather difficult to use. The rate of growth of a discipline to a large extent depends upon the amount of literature being produced in the form of primary sources reporting developments in the concerned field.

These aid the researchers to:-

- (a) Keep themselves up-to-date and well informed of the new developments,
 - (b) Avoid duplication in research, and
 - (c) Help others to build on this by means of further work and thus generate more information.
- i) **Periodicals:** - Periodicals include journals, bulletins, transactions, proceeding or similar works, which appear regularly and continuously in numbered sequence. However, the newspapers and annuals are excluded. The bulk of primary source literature appears in the periodicals form. The main means of communication for the exchange of scientific information is the periodical article. An article in the same journal would not be considered a primary source of information, if it were to contain summary of findings of others or reports produced by other persons. Information contained in periodicals is almost invariably more up-to-date. If all the information appearing in periodicals was also covered in books then libraries would no longer be expected to maintain long files of back volumes of periodicals.

Examples: - Historical journal, 1958, New York, Cambridge University Press, Quarterly. Physics of fluids, 1958-, New York, American Institute of Physics, Monthly.

- ii) **Research Monographs:** - Research monographs are “Separately published reports on original research that are too long, too specialized, or otherwise unsuitable for publication in one of standard journals. Each monograph is self-contained, frequently summaries existing theory or practice before presenting the author’s original and previously unpublished work, and is likely to be one of a series of such research monographs in the field. A research monograph presents results of original research.

Examples: - Children of very low birth weight, by Alison MacDonald (Research monograph, VOL.1), Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1967.

- iii) **Research Reports:** - These are reports regarding research and development projects. These are primitive form of literature because these are produced earlier in a research programme. To serve as temporary reference often these take the form of progress reports. Research reports are issued as separate documents, due to the inadequacies of the periodicals offer a successful alternative. Especially in the areas of aeronautics and applied atomic energy these form vital part of primary sources. This kind of literature is often called 'unpublished or 'semi-published' literature because normally these are not available through regular book trade channels but are made available to interested parties under certain kind of control.

Examples: - Scientific and technical aerospace reports, National Aeronautics and space Administration (NASA)

- iv) **Patents:** - A patents is a government grant of exclusive privilege which allows making use or selling of a new invention for a term of years. A patent takes the form of an official document, having the seal of government attached to it, which confers an exclusive privilege or right over a period of time to the proceeds of an invention. Patents are primary sources because an invention has to be new, only then it can be patented. Patents are of special interest to chemists and engineers. Indian Patent Office is responsible for granting patents in India every year.

Examples: - World Patents index abstracts journal, 1975, London Derwent Publications Weekly.

- v) **Standards:** - Standards are primary source of information. Progress of modern society would be difficult without standards. A manufacturer simplifies the production and distribution of products. These ensure reliability for the consumers. A pamphlet covering definitions, methods properties, measurement, etc. is a typical standard. It may be illustrated with tables and diagrams. Bureau of Indian Standards is a major organization issuing standards in India. It brings out about 300 standards annually.

Examples: - British Standards Institution, Microfiche, BS 4187:1976.

- vi) **Trade Literature:** - For getting information about particular products and their development Trade literature is an important source. A particular trade literature may become a primary source when the required information is not available elsewhere. Trade literature aims to describe and also illustrate equipment or goods or processes or services

relating to manufactures. To sell products produced by a manufacture or to advance the prestige is the basic objective of such a literature. Usually trade literature lies outside the scope of usual trade channels. The booksellers are disinterested to handle this kind of literature. These are normally available free, but they are arbitrarily priced for those who are not buying the concerned component or equipment, product or service.

- vii) **Dissertations:** - Under the supervision of a guide, Universities normally require a candidate working towards a doctorate degree to write a dissertation. These are usually expected to show evidence of original research, to form an important category of documents for researchers in the concerned field. These should be considered primary source of information. Worthwhile information in dissertations is later published in the primary periodicals or books but frequently certain data relating to an important original work may be included in traditional forms of literature.
- viii) **Unpublished Sources:** - There are certain primary sources of information, which remain unpublished. These may be consulted for historical interest Very often. In some of the subjects in social sciences, their percentage is as high as 40 per cent of the total literature.

Examples: - 1) Laboratory Notebooks

2) Memoranda

3) Diaries

4) Letters to or from a particular individual

5) Company files

6) Portraits

7) Coins, etc.

5.2.2 Secondary Sources: - Secondary Information is derived from primary information and they are recorded in secondary documents. To facilitate access to information contents of primary documents Secondary documents are created. For examples:- a computer scientist interested in getting information about the 'computer applications in information retrieval' will be required to go through a host of primary source not only in the field of computer science but also in the field of library and information science. This evidently is a time-consuming process to scan each issue of the journals to find out whether it contains any paper on the subject. The tasks get simplified if someone had already scanned the journals and had prepared a list of papers dealing with the subject. Such a list belongs to the category of secondary documents. The importance of secondary literature is to be underlined in the context of the rising growth of primary literature.

- i) **Periodical:** - All periodicals do not report original work. There are a number of periodicals which specialise in interpreting and providing opinions on development reported in primary sources of information. Such periodicals may be considered secondary sources.

Examples: - New Society, London, New Science Publications, 1962-, weekly.

- ii) **Indexing and Abstracting periodicals** : - An index to a work contains an alphabetical list of names, topics, places, formulae; titles of any significant item referring to materials presented in the main part of the work, these items may be arranged chronologically, geographically or in some other way. Usefulness of a work depends on a well compiled index.

Examples:-Index given to the present book entitled Reference service is another example of an index to a work.

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

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

An abstracting journal gives a summary, or 'abstract,' as the information an indexing journal gives. The length of the abstract may vary. They are usually arranged according to some subject classification, with alphabetical author and subject or title keyword indexes.

Most indexing and abstracting journals provide a list of journals covered by their service.

Examples: -

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

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

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

- iii) **Bibliographies**: - A bibliography is an organized list of primary or other sources relating to a given subject(s) or person. It is usually arranged alphabetically by author or chronologically or topic-wise. It may be comprehensive or selective. Sometimes, it may be provided with annotations. The basic aim of a bibliography is to assist the user in locating the existence of or identifying a book or any other materials which may be of interest to him. A well prepared bibliography provides a definitive coverage of documents over a period of time within specified limits. Thus, it also serves the purpose of retrospective searching of literature.

Examples: - Dudley David Griffith, Bibliography of Chaucer, 1908-53, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1955.

- iv) **Reviews (Survey type)**: survey of the primary literature is called reviews. It aims to digest and correlate the literature. It also indicates the developments and trends in the field concerned. It may appear in the form of an article in a periodical or as a collection of papers on regular basis. A review provides background information to a new problem in a suitable form and serves as a key to literature. List of references given in a review can serve as a first rate bibliography of the concerned subject for a period covered by it.

Examples: - Annual review of biochemistry, 1932-, Palo Alto, Annual Reviews, Annual.

- v) **Monographs**: A short treatise on a specific subject is called a monograph. The difference between the two is that a monograph is an attempt on a limited scale. A monograph may be brought out as a part of a series.

Examples: - Study in the history of ideas, by Baldwin Smith. Princeton University Press, 1971.

- vi) **Textbooks:** A book of instruction is called a textbook. Its primary aim is to enable one to develop proper understanding of the subject. Presentation is extremely important and it is prepared to serve a particular level of readership. It cannot be comprehensive. Often presentation is colourful and attractive, giving plenty of illustrations and diagrams. The method of teaching and level of readership is the concern of a good textbook. Keeping in view new developments and changing methodology of teaching it is revised.

Examples: - Textbook of crop production, by P.C. Raheja, etc. Bombay, Asia, 1973.

- vii) **Reference Books:** Reference books are considered secondary sources of information. These include encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, tables, formularies etc. These form an important part of secondary sources of information. These are ready reference sources. These are compiled so that everyday information can be provided readily.

- viii) **Encyclopedias:** An encyclopedia is a book giving information on all branches of knowledge or a specific subject. It is an ideal book, which deals with concepts. It is best used for finding answers to background questions related to general information and self-education.

Examples; - Encyclopedia Americana, New York, Grolier, 1976, 30 Vols. International encyclopedia of social sciences, New York, collier and Macmillan, 1968, 17 vols.

- ix) **Dictionaries:** - Dictionary deals with words of a language or of some special subjects, author, etc. It is a word book but it is supposed to deal with words but often it may go beyond this.

Examples; - Encyclopedic dictionary of Sanskrit on historical principles, Poona, Deccan College postgraduate and Research institute. 1976-, vol.1

- x) **Handbooks:** A book containing miscellaneous information in a compact and handy form. It contains data, procedures, principles etc. Tables, graphs, diagrams and illustrations are provided. These are frequently used in the fields of Scientists and technologists.

Examples:- Handbook of chemistry and physics; a ready reference book of chemistry and physical data, 52nd ed., Cleveland Ohio, Chemical Rubber, 1971.

- xi) **Manuals:** A manual is an instruction book, which instructs how to do something by means of specific and clear directions.

Examples: - Manual for the handling of applications for patents, designs and trademark throughout the world, Amsterdam and Loose leaf.

- xii) **Tables:** - Many of the handbooks contain data in the form of tables. Tables are a convenient form to present data. These are extremely useful in science especially physical sciences and technology.

Examples;-International critical tables, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1926-33, 7 volumes and index

- xiii) **Translations:** - Translations are an important part of secondary sources. Their characteristics are the same as those of primary and secondary or tertiary sources.

5.2.3 Tertiary Sources: These sources contain distilled and collected information from primary and secondary sources. The primary function of tertiary sources of information is to aid the searcher of information in the use of primary and secondary sources of information. Most of these sources do not contain subject knowledge. Due to increase in literature, tertiary sources are becoming increasingly important.

- i) **Bibliography of Bibliographies:** These sources list bibliographies which direct readers to useful bibliographies through subject, name of an individual place, institution, etc. The bibliographic reoffered to may be in the form of a separately published book or part of the book or part of a periodical article or some other type of document. As the number of bibliographies published every year is large, therefore, bibliographies of bibliographies are highly selective in nature.

Examples: - Bibliographic index, cumulative bibliography of bibliographies, 1937-, New York, Wilson, 1938-

- ii) **Directories:** A document containing list of names and addresses of persons, organisations, manufactures; or periodicals. It may list information in a way which best serves the requirement of its users so as to enable them to get the required information readily. The word 'directory' may or may not appear in the title. The range of subjects dealt by directories is tremendous.

Examples: - World directory of mathematicians, 4th Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1975.

- iii) **Guides to Literature:** A guide to literature helps a user to use literature of a specific subject. It helps to evaluate and introduce literature. It lays emphasis on literature rather than the content of a specific subject. It mainly covers secondary and tertiary sources.

Examples:- Reader's guide to the social science, edited by Bert F. Hoselitz, revised edition, New York, Free Press, 1970.

Review Questions

- i. Write different types of documentary sources.
- ii. Name the different primary sources documents.
- iii. Write the examples of tertiary sources documents.
- iv. Define secondary sources document/ information.

5.3 Non-Documentary Sources

Non-documentary sources of information form a substantial part of communication especially in science and technology. User's studies have underlined importance of such sources. These sources provide information which other sources do not.

There are two kinds of sources

- Formal sources
 - Informal sources
- 1) **Formal Sources:** Research organisations, societies, industries, government departments; universities, consultants etc. are formal sources. Informal sources include conversation with colleagues, visitors, attendance at professional meetings etc.
 - 2) **Informal Sources:** Informal sources are live sources, which are extremely important in the process of communication. Informal sources tend to be more convenient sources because it is certainly easier to have a dialogue with an expert than use a bibliography or index or card catalogue or even consultation of a reference librarian.

Categorization of sources of information is based on the characteristics of the documents. Categorization of documentary sources of information is useful. It takes into consideration related currency and accuracy of sources of information. Primary sources are current. They are generally more accurate than secondary sources due to the fact that these represent original ideas. Researcher usually starts searching with secondary sources and tertiary sources and ends the search with primary sources. Secondary and tertiary sources contain information in organized form and these serve as guides or indicators to detailed contents of primary literature. With increasing amount of literature being produced, it is becoming almost impossible to use primary sources directly for searching of information. It would be almost impossible for a scholar to keep himself up-to-date and well informed in his field of specialization without the aid of secondary and tertiary sources.

Review Questions

- i. Write different types of non- documentary sources.
- ii. Explain formal source or information in the category of non- documentary sources.

5.4 Glossary or Terminology

The following terms are generally used in the traditional sources of information:

- **Knowledge** - This is collection of ideas.
- **Document** - Recorded graphic thought information for communication preserved through time.
- **Information** - An organized collection of data.

5.5 Summary

In this unit we described the traditional sources of information. We are able to understand about documentary and non-documentary sources of information.

5.6 Exercise

1. What are traditional sources of information?

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2. Describe the documentary sources of information

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3. What are differences between documentary and non-documentary sources?

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4. What are non-documentary sources?

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