HUMAN RESOURCES

- There are many non-documentary reference sources that have high reference value. These sources are not the type of conventional reference materials with which we are familiar. One of these kinds of non-documentary sources is human experts operating in different contexts. This is a unique and invaluable source, carrying expert knowledge/skills, that can very often be the only source of information for responding to certain types of enquiries.

- Generation of all types of data. information and knowledge credited to human beings is on account of human observations, experience, activities, creative abilities, ingenuity, etc. These data are documented systematically through different channels and media of communication and are made accessible and available for study, research, application and/or further developments. Channels here mean primary, secondary and tertiary types of documents and media refers to the physical mode of transmitting them such as audio, visual audio-visual and electronic forms.

- In every sphere of activity, there are human beings who have the necessary qualifications training and expert knowledge obtained/acquired through research and experience, in their fields of specialisation. This expertise of persons may also be supplemented through their know ledge of literature sources, peers, institutions, historical development of the field, significant landmarks in tile growth of the subject including reference sources pertaining to a given field. These kinds of persons operate in different types of institutions (not necessarily always) at different levels with various responsibilities. They may also he willing to share their knowledge and skills with others, offer help or guidance to those who seek assistance mostly with a fee charged for the same. Such persons constitute a very valuable resource.

Need for tapping such expert sources

- In libraries and information Institutions there are often enquiries on persons, institutions, intricate subjects at micro levels training facilities, rules and regulations for various entrepreneurial activities, say, manufacturing, diagnostic equipments for various medical tests, and many others. The conventional reference sources stocked in the host institutions may not have the right resources to answer such enquiries and hence may have to be collected from other special libraries and information centres. But this also likely that the libraries from where the information is sought, may not also have the right and appropriate resources.

- The service required here is only to identify a possible source from where the information may be individuals/institutions who are associated with a given discipline or work. It is necessary, therefore, for libraries and information centres, to have knowledge of such experts/ institutions.

CATEGORIES OF HUMAN EXPERTISE

The list given below is merely illustrative and not exhaustive and these are not mutually exclusive either. Their roles are interchangeable, depending upon the nature of work they undertake. However, by and large, they may be classified in accordance with their primary nature of work.

• Information Generators;
• Information Gatherers;
• Information Processors;
• Information Recorders;
• Information Disseminators;
• Information Retrievers;
• Information Technologists

Information Generators

• This group includes researchers, inventors, innovators, authors, writers, planners, policy makers, executives, and such others who have an assigned role to generate knowledge or create information. These persons are involved in different kinds of activities. The knowledge or information, arising out of these activities, may be made available in the form of books, journal articles and such others. These persons possess expert knowledge of their area of specialisation and hence constitute a very valuable source of information, particularly when they don't make their information available in any published form.

• Information Generators by their nature of work, produce primary literature. Many of them operate at the wave front of knowledge and have a good background of the literature of the subject and also keep themselves updated with what is currently happening in their discipline. Therefore the nature of queries they may be in a position to respond would be relating to:

• new developments in a given discipline where the literature has not come out sufficiently;

• innovative skills that have been developed;

• new product development;

• new fields for aspiring entrepreneurs; and

• similar others pieces of information

Information Gatherers

• There is a group of persons whose jobs require the gathering of information and report them through appropriate channels. Such groups include newspaper reporters, correspondents, journalists, compilers of reference sources such as bibliographers, encyclopaedists, lexicographers, etc. These persons do not generate knowledge or information, but gather information for various purposes and organise the collected information for a given purpose. By virtue of their deep involvement in the nature of collection they gather, they very often constitute a very useful source to tap for enquiries for which an answer may not be found anywhere else.

• Information Gatherers operate mostly in the designing and production of secondary information. They will, therefore, be knowledgeable in information already published or available with them. They may possibly answer questions on-

• current events and activities

• definitions and meanings of new words, technical terms or subjects;

• persons of eminence in any given field; and so on.

Information Processors

• Editors, software documentation specialists, and persons who are involved in giving a shape to collected information for ease of use is another category of specialists. Newspaper editors, editors in publishing houses, journal editors, and such others involved in transforming a draft into a fine reading material are very often invaluable sources of information. Software documentation specialists transform information collected in a highly user friendly fashion, for example, user manuals of software packages.

- Information Processor's acquaintance with information collected should provide clues to the type of enquiries they could answer. These may be relating to :
- analytical information on current activities;
- technical problems relating to software documentation; and so on.

Information Recorders
- Persons who engage themselves in activities such as translation work, printing, publishing, data entry operators, etc. and have useful knowledge of the information they re-record, are also sometimes excellent sources of information. Technical translators, who are involved in recording commercial transactions in business houses, language interpreters may have information which is not recorded anywhere. Competent data entry operators possess special skills in advising the use of software packages. These types of skills/expertise get nowhere recorded and would never be available in any published sources.

- Information Recorders may be useful in dealing with queries relating to:
- names of language experts available for interpretation work:
- problems of technical translation;
- technical skills to be picked up for data entry operations;
- similar others.

Information Disseminators
- Publishers, library professionals, documentalists, information specialists, extension workers, teachers, sales persons, consultants, advertisers, etc. are persons who are involved in disseminating information or knowledge, already collected and available in some form, each one having a particular purpose. They play an intermediary role in dealing with information already available in some form. They may be involved in dealing directly with various categories of users or involved in some publication activity. Here again their skills and knowledge may be a very useful source of information for certain types of enquiries.

- Extension workers play a very important role in disseminating knowledge to agricultural farmers, low-cost housing it rural areas, family planning and health care to rural people; social health persons, social welfare workers and such others are also specialists not only in their subjects but also in carrying information with them to be passsed to the relevant groups in a most useful manner, using all forms of personal communication techniques

- Teachers and educators have been the most traditional and conventional disseminators of knowledge and information. These persons deal with persons in different age groups, cater to different categories of professionals and even experts. They are also the persons who are always most willing to assist.

- Possibility of identifying a bibliographic reference, historical and geographical information for which there are answers that could be obtained only from their personal knowledge or reference sources.
- Extension workers render direct assistance to agricultural farmers with referenLibrary and information professionals may be consulted whenever there is a ce to various problems-cultivation of crops, such as the choice of high yielding variety of a seed, the duration of the crop and Library and information professionals may be consulted whenever there is a nature of water required, etc. and such other related issues.
- Social welfare persons would be able to answer questions relating to their experiences in dealing with a special health problem of slum dwellers.
- Banking persons could be useful for securing loans, travel agents for tour planning and ticketing or passports.

Information Retrievers
- We know persons working as classifiers, cataloguers, reference officers, indexers, abstractors, etc. are involved in creating tools for information storage and retrieval. Their nature of work makes them very closely associated with the subject areas they are handling. Their depth of knowledge of documents and subject ramifications, comes in very handy, to answer various types of enquiries relating to literature in a given discipline.

- Information Retrievers may help in identifying a technical thesaurus which has not been published, automatic indexing, standards for abstracts for an abstruse subject in philosophy and so on.

Information Technologists
- This group includes computer hardware and software specialists who get involved in many aspects of system design, maintenance, and similar other services. Telecommunication specialists maintain design network architecture, establish networks and extend facilities to share resources. Other technologists such as media specialists also provide services in creating audio/video cassettes. Although these specialists work with transmissions and are not dealing directly with information contents, they help in adding value to contents of information. These consideration are very necessary in modem library and information services. Therefore, tapping sources of expertise, are increasingly essential.

- Information Technologists may be useful in dealing with the various aspects of computer system selection for a particular set of activities, software selection and local or wide area networks and a number of related issues.
- There are indeed many groups of consultants, information brokers, intermediaries and others who specialise in offering their services at a price, of course, to deal with the many enquiries mentioned above. Even so, to identify the right source of information may be a problem.

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION SOURCES

- Today, we see every major task is performed through an institution. Education, research, health care governmental functions, defence and security, business and industry, cultural activities- in fact, almost every human activity is performed through institutions. It is the performance of these institutions that determines growth, development or progress of any society.

- Institution building has, therefore, become a prerequisite for any organised human development. It is also to be noted that in every institution, it is human beings that perform the different functions with a set goals for the development of their society. Every institution has invariably an information component, in the sense that some kind of information is generated by it.

- An institution is an organisation or establishment devoted to the promotion of a particular course or objective. It is expected to serve set goals, objectives and criteria for established preferences and priorities; respond to challenges and utilise opportunities. It has carefully conceived roles, well defined tasks, and a clear sense of purpose. Its programmes, infused with societal values, must be symbolic of what it stands for and its role in the society. It has a purpose, function and ability' to survive and a commitment to serve its client's relevant needs.

- In performing their activities, institutions generate information/ knowledge of various kinds, depending on their nature of activities. Some of these information get disseminated through formal channels such as journals, reports and special publications. Others get stored in the files of. the institutions in some form or the other. While published information get properly noticed in secondary sources, the information filed in the institutionshrecords, generally, don't get noticed in any secondary sources.

- Thus, institutions are sources of information in terms of their published and unpublished information. Very often unpublished information may be in the form of statistical data or other kinds of factual information, which may not be available from any other sources except the institution, which generates them.
- Libraries and information centres, therefore, should become acquainted with various types of institutions, their nature of work and activities, their publications and the types of unpublished data and information that may be available from them. Directories of institutions carrying all the details of functions and activities including their publications and other facts are also, sometimes available in published form. But most often one may have to tap referral centres to obtain the right location of these institutions and the way the information sought may be obtained.

We can broadly group these institutions into three categories as given below:

Knowledge creating institutions

- Research institutions and laboratories;
- Research and development establishments;
- Universities and professional institutions;
- Institutions of higher learning;
- Learned societies and professional associations;
- Government Ministries, Departments;
- Industries and Business Houses; and
- Similar others.

- Each one of these research institutions, (belonging to public or private sectors), may be related to research in scientific and technological subjects, socio-economic, political and other subjects of social sciences, humanities and other types of creative literature and cultural activities like performing arts, etc. These institutions disseminate information generated by them through learned journals, research and technical reports, and other specialised publications.

- Various executive, legislative and judicial bodies of governments also generate information of high research value which would, of course, not constitute information resulting out of research. But the potential value of this governmental information for research and development is immense. Statistical data, government legislations and their implications for various executive processes, significant judicial pronouncements and many other types of information generated by government agencies are as important as new knowledge created. All of these may not always be available in any published form. They may have to be sought from the respective institutions that generate them through specific requests.

Knowledge/information processing and disseminating institutions
- Commercial publishers (Books, journals, others);
- Statistical organisations;
- Data centres;
- Similar others.

- These institutions do not generate data, information or knowledge but have the means and mechanisms to collect and organise the assembled information and disseminate it in a form to suit different categories of customers.
- These institutions produce primary and technical periodicals, statistical data and other types of factual information.

Institutions that service knowledge and information
- Libraries;
- Documentation centres;
- Information centres;
- Information Analysis Centres;
- Clearing houses;
- Information Brokers;
- Information industries;
- PROs of and industrial organizations
- Similar others.

- The primary responsibilities of these type of institutions are to collect, store, process, disseminate and most importantly service knowledge/ information, already available in various pack-ages of primary or secondary forms. They create different access tools like indexing and abstracting services and distribute or deliver them to customers according to their needs.

- These institutions, it must be noted, have evolved over a period of time. We could also perceive a typical pattern of growth of these types of institutions, reflecting the nature of demands for information/knowledge at different periods of time by users and their needs. This pattern of growth can be seen in three groups of information systems as given below:

- Discipline-oriented information systems reflecting needs of academic studies, research in pure and applied sciences and the like;

- Mission-oriented information systems reflecting, mostly government sponsored projects/ programmes such as Nuclear energy missions, Space research and the like;

- Problem-oriented information systems reflecting the need for solutions to deal with various socio-economic and other developmental problems such as industrial planning, environmental problems and the like.

The End