

Information needs of users

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Abstract

Definitions of information, origin of information, study of past literature, points like need of information, role of library in sharing of information, objectives of information, information, approaches, quality of information, attributes of information, principles of information, beliefs regarding information etc. are briefly discussed in the research paper.

Keywords: Information, Information need, Users, Library sharing, Objectives of information, Approaches, Quality of information, Attributes of information, Principles of information.

Introduction

21st century is called as era of explosion of information. Needs of information are also varied in this era of science and technology, according to specialty of subject-topic of users. It is also a principle of library that a user should never be neglected. Every reader should be provided his reading and information needs.

Now the problem is raised against every library that how much and in how much variety, library should collect reading material, so that every user can be satisfied. But, it is generally not possible. Because, sources of every library is limited. An academic library has also to be adhered on government grant and grant from U.G.C. But again, it is also not sufficient. Then what to do? Another problem is that library does not know exact nature of need of user. User study is required at this time. This type of study can bring out some aspects of the use of literature. But, it is not sufficient. It is realized that, what we required is more than what these types of studies could reveal. A complete picture of information needs of users is needed. Superficial studies can not reveal the exact need of users.

The advent of 'cyber' culture has also promptly changed information needs of users. Now, every person and library adhere on ICT for its requirement of information.

There is a proverb that 'Wealth decreases while using but information increases with its user.'

Thinking is always continuously happening in human mind, as human being is a thinking animal. Human mind is never idle, it ever thinks regarding one or another thing. One thought ends and the other enters. Even we are at steep, human mind works. Sometimes it appears as dream. In this way, it can be said that, human mind is generator of thoughts. Even in unconscious stage of body, thinking continuously happens.

Some Definitions: Oxford English dictionary defines it as "Knowledge communicated concerning some particular fact, subject or event."¹

Navneet concise global dictionary defines it as "Knowledge acquired through experience or study."

Bhattacharya defines it as "Information can be said to be organized thoughts or ideas expresses through a message."

Nil Mecghan defines it as "Information means successful communication of a message."

Definitions: According to Shera "Information is fact, what we obtain by our senses is information. It is also a unit of thought."

(Shera, 1972, p.175)

According of Denial Bell, "News, facts, statistical figures, reports, laws, rules and regulations, ruling or resolution are in information. This increase of information does not own by any particular institution, but it is examined by politics, economics, newspapers, journals and television or radio.

(Denial Bell, 1979, p.163)²

Some other scholars have defined as "Communication is instructive knowledge."

"Communication of knowledge of news of some fact or occurrence."

From the above-cited definitions if can be said that the word 'information' deals with the words like communication, instruction, knowledge, Interaction of fact, subject or hold extensive form by joining all these words.

Study of Past Literature: Ralph R. Shaw (1956) and Davis, Bailey (Drexel University) compiled information in bibliographical and index form.

Professor Herbert Menzel has grouped types of users in three main categories.

Researchers like Al-Suqri M. N. and Lillard L. L. (2011), Kumar K. and Tholkapian S. (2013), Siddiqui (2011), Mohan M. M., Aravinthan M. (2013), Sudha K. (2013), Khan, J. (2014), Oluwaseye John Adebayo (2014) (Nigeria), Moly T. M. (2014), Vallachamy A. and Jeysankar R. (2014), etc. have explored on various

aspects of library users, behaviour of information seekers, web based information and barriers of information seeking in different universities at different times.

Origin of Information: Our ancient Vedas say that "Thoughts emerged from four Vedas are only true knowledge. The other things are only interaction of information."

Origin of information lies in views of Socrates, Aristotle and Plato, the Greek and Roman Philosophers. Socrates always believed in discussion. He believed that extraction emerged out from discussion is fact or information.

Need of Information: We have seen in the information that no human being can live without information in this era of science and technology and explosion of information. A man always runs to get information. After the advent of computer, cell phone, internet and other latest devices like blog and twitter, ways to get information are very easy. Lots of information is interacted through social media and various channels of television. Google and other websites have provided treasure of information.

Role of Library in Sharing of Information: Origin of the word 'library' was emerged out from Latin and French word "Liber". Liber means bark of trees. During the ancient era, information was carved and preserved by engraving it on bark of trees and then it was preserved in library. Hence, library means a place of preserving information. The words librarian' (Latin), 'Liber' (Roman), are prevalent in the world for library.

So we can conclude that library is a place of preservation of books and other reading material by which information can be communicated.

Library is a place where three parties, books, readers (i.e. users) and library staff meet. Till 19th century library was only the place of collection of books and other reading material. But now, it is not the thing. Now a criterion of library is totally changed in this 'cyber' era.

With the advent of 21st century, new techniques, new means of communication and latest appliances like blog and twitter, the concept of library is entirely changed. Now a student can use internet sitting in a computer room. Name of authors, publishers and title are of the apex of finger.

Information can also be shared by inter-library lending (sharing) and by forming consortia among member libraries.

Objectives of Information: (1) Inspiration (2) Knowledge (3) Latest awareness (4) Productivity (5) For future prediction (6) For solution of problem (7) Education, (8) Research (9) For decision-making (10) For adjustment.

(Parashar, 1986, p.134-40)

Information Approaches: (1) Creative approach (2) Knowledge approach (3) Message approach (4)

Meaning approach (5) Effect approach (6) Process approach.

(Wersig and Neveling 1975, p.127-140)³

Types of Information: (1) Conceptual information (2) Experimental information (3) Processing information (4) Inspirational information (5) Decline making information (6) Referring or indicative information.

(Shera, 1972, p.175-76)

Quality of Information: According to Rojas following elements should be there in information:

1. Information should be easily available.
2. Information should be comprehensive.
3. Information should be scrutinized.
4. Information should be solid.
5. Information should be without any binding of time.
6. Information should be precise and clear.
7. Information should be flexible.
8. Information should be testable.
9. Information should be without any prejudice.

(Rojas and Dev Rajan, 1999, p.2-3)⁴

Attributes of Information: According to Williams attributes of information are as under:

1. Proportion of information should be quantitative.
2. Structural information
3. Subjective information
4. Language-oriented information
5. Durative information
6. Qualitative or efficient information. (Williams (Devrajan) 1989, p.3)⁵

Principles of Information: (1). Information is for use. (2). It should be obtained to every user. (3). Every information should have its user. (4). Time of information seeker should be saved. (5). There is always increase in the world of information.

(Sen, B. K. 2008, p. 88)

Beliefs Regarding Information:

1. Only objective information is precious.
2. More information is always better.
3. Objective information can be evaluated in terms of need.
4. Information can be obtained only by traditional sources.
5. Information according to any need is obtainable, by which need can be satisfied.
6. Need is remedy of every situation.
7. Information needs are always possible.
8. Active units of information like books or television always satisfy information needs.
9. Individual situation, time and opportunity can be avoided in information seeking and its understanding of use.
10. People create easy and frictionless union between external information and their personal realities.

(Cresh, 2003 p.7-8)

Conclusion

Factors like difference of information needs, objectives of users and form of work affect on information behaviour. It is essential that selection and

collection of information should be according to information needs of users. Girjakumar (2001, p.125)⁶ says in his study that psychological, economic and subject-topic impact on special pattern in information seeking of user. So, it is difficult to understand their behaviour in certain situation with reference to intricate and difficult problem.

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