UNIT 3: REFERENCE AND INFORMATION SERVICE IN ANTICIPATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Types of Reference and Information Service

3.4 Public Service

- 3.4.1 General / Universal / Essential Public Service
- 3.4.2 Enhance / Selective Public Service

3.5 Extension Services

3.6 Online Services

3.7 Let Us Sum Up

3.8 Further Readings

3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.10 Probable Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Know about different services provided by libraries;
- Explain the technical services in the library;
- Know about public services in the library;
- Define CAS and SDI services;
- Know about the library extension services.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The library is a service institution. The library services fall into two main categories - information in anticipation and information on demand. Information in anticipation relates to the current awareness / selective dissemination of information service. The information on demand relates to the past information sought by a user and for which there is the provision

of reference and information service known as retrospective searching. The provision of information in anticipation aims to keep the users well informed and up to date in their field of specialization and also in the related subjects. The service in anticipation can be divided into three broad categories - technical services, public services, and public relation and extension services.

Technical services are vital for all other services provided by the library. Any library would find it impossible to provide public service for their patron without the work performed in “the backroom” by technical staff. The Card Catalogue or in a modern library OPAC is the result of the library technical services. Other technical work includes classification, preparation of shelf list, preparation of various kinds of guides, etc.

3.3 TYPES OF REFERENCE AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Previously, people used to differentiate the reference service from that of information service, but in reality there is no borderline between the two. The two services cannot be differentiated based on the fact whether the librarian is referring the user to the sources of information or is directly providing the information himself. Even, referring the user to the sources of information itself may serve the function of information service for a particular user. The emergence of web has further changed the whole scenario. Now the reference and information service goes side by side and they cannot be differentiated as it was done earlier. If one however likes to differentiate then the information service can be treated as an extended form of reference service. Infact, the information service is a relatively new term for reference service. Characteristically, information service denotes the ultimate existence of the reference work to all kinds of answers to questions which are based on all sources and which requires the service of the library staff. However, the library services can be differentiated based on the user approach into two i.e service on demand and service in anticipation. In case of service on demand, the staff waits

for the users to approach and make a request. The user gets the answer to their specific inquiries pin pointedly, exhaustively and expeditiously. In the reference and information service in anticipation, the staff goes to the user and the user waits for the staff / document / information. The information provided is of general type mostly referred to the document rather than providing exact information.

3.4 PUBLIC SERVICE

The library public service manages the activities that directly assist the end-user. The public service can be grouped into two major headings essential public service and enhanced public service.

Generally, reading room, circulation, list of accession, printed catalogue, etc are treated as essential (general) public services and Current Awareness Service (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) are treated as enhanced (selective) public services. The public service of the library generally depends upon one major factor i.e. whether it provides open access to its collection or it is closed access.

The library public service sometimes is also known as information service. L. M. Harrod defines information service as “service provided by or for any information centre which draws attention to information possessed in its departments in anticipation of demand, this is done by presenting and circulating news sheet, literature surveys, reading lists, abstracts, particulars of articles in current periodicals etc which, it is anticipated, will be of interest to potential users of the service”. The information service is provided directly to the potential user of the service.

3.4.1 General / Universal / Essential Public Service

The following are the general public services

a) **Collection of Reference Material:** It will include acquisition of dictionaries, encyclopaedias, bibliographies, indexing and abstracting periodicals and so on. The library can also bring out different types of bibliographies, indexing and abstracting of different types on its own to draw the attention of the user.

b) Card Catalogue: The card catalogues are filled in a cabinet containing many drawers. In a large library, the card catalogue often filles a large room.

c) Accession List / List of Recent Acquisition: Here, a list of books newly added to the library is regularly compiled and distributed. These lists provide new books and journals added to the library and are generally indicative, bearing very few details like author, title, publisher, pages, call number and accession number. Sometimes, the library can also display the book jacket of new additions prominently in the library to bring it to the notice of potential users.

d) Book Display: Displaying of library material pertinent to a special interest or illustrating a historic occasion like man's flight to space, and so on can be helpful. This enables the users to keep themselves currently aware of the recent developments.

e) Newspaper Clipping Service: In this type of service the important topics / news published in newspaper are cut and filed subject wise for being provided to the user.

3.4.2 Enhance / Selective Public Service

The enhance public services are of the following types

a) Current Awareness Service (CAS): The awareness service provides knowledge to the user regarding recent developments in the field of general interest. This type of service is directed towards all users of the services. It does not deal with the exact or specific requirement or interest of the user and is thus distinguished from SDI service.

The CAS helps the user by keeping him up-to-date & well informed with the latest information on a particular field and also in the related field. It indicates what one should read and thereby it saves the time of the reader. It also serves as a rapid survey of retrospective literature. CAS helps the user in the following ways:

i) *Keeps Well Informed:* Due to great advances made in the field of knowledge, it is becoming more and more difficult for the users to keep themselves up-to-date and well informed in their field of specialization. CAS meets this end for the researcher and others. Otherwise, too much of information would make it difficult for them to use information effectively.

ii) *Helps the User in Scanning the Literature:* There may be users who do not possess the ability or willingness to do the scanning regularly on their own. CAS provides aid in such situation by widely and regularly scanning the literature and sending to the user the relevant topic of interest.

iii) *Saves Time:* The Library and Information Centres by scanning the sources of information and notifying the members of the community, saves their valuable time. Again, in case each user scans literature individually then this will lead to unnecessary duplication of effort. So, the CAS can helps the user avoid this duplication.

iv) *Promotes and Supports Library Service:* All services of the library are not free nowadays. So, in this context, it is essential to promote and market library services. CAS is one of the ways to bring the resources of the library / information centre to the notice of the users. This will in turn lead to greater demand for the library service, giving opportunity to the library to prove its value and justification for the money spent on it.

Librarians have been providing the CAS service on manual basis for a long time. But nowadays computers are used to mechanize the procedure. The current awareness service through computer may be provided through E-List (a Web-enabled contemporary reference service offered to the registered members), online groups, blogs, RSS, E-Mail, SMS, etc. The steps involved in CAS may be of the following types

i) *Creation of User Profile:* The profiles of the user, who are to be given CAS/SDI service, are prepared. A profile consists

of the key words that collectively characterize the subject interest of an individual. The profile can be of a single user or a group working on the same project or some limited subject field. The profile obtained thus must be kept up-to-date. Therefore, if the topic of inertest changes then the corresponding profile must also be modified accordingly.

ii) *Acquisition of Resources:* The different sources of information, periodicals, research papers, which are relevant to the parent body, must be selected and collected from different sources. In the next step, through rapid reading the resources are scaned by the LIS professionals to find out the key concepts.

iii) *Creation of Document Profile:* The relevant and significant information is recorded in the form of content list for different contexts. The recorded information may be in the form of an abstract or an extract. Depending upon the significance of the document, the bibliographical details and indexing terms and the information itself are stored on the file / magnetic tape / computer document.

iv) *Matching Profile:* In a regular interval, the user profile should be correlated or matched with the document profile. The computer compares the two inputs; the output is printed out in the form of two cards. One card is called information card that contain either the list of document or the information itself along with bibliographical details of document which also has a tear off strip request note. The other card is called response card.

v) *Notification / Information Communication:* If there exists any matching between the two profiles then the matching information is sent to the user or group of users, who may require it, through different means of communication in anticipation, like telephone calls, postal mail / email / SMS

with a request to call at the reference desk to get the pertinent information. In case of postal communication, the two cards are sent to the user. The information can also be sent through a messenger.

vi) Feedback Mechanism: The user keeps the information card for his use. In case he wants to consult the document, he tears off the request note strip and sends it to the library along with the response card, in which he indicates the degree of interest in the particular document.

vii) Library Action: The library takes action on the request note strip to send the document(s) to the concerned user or to keep it in the library for him. The response card helps the library to know about the usefulness of the information provided as well as the shift in the information need. The library accordingly modifies the user profile page for improving performance.

b) Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Service: SDI is a refinement of CAS service which is directed to individual / personal requirement (personalized). It provides a deeper analysis of literature. If two people exactly match in terms of their interest, then SDI also can be provided to the two people. H.P. Luhn is a pioneer in this field. The steps in providing SDI services are same as that of CAS, the difference is only in the depth of the interest.

The aim of SDI is to see that the user should neither be provided too much of information nor made to miss information essential for his requirements. It should also meet the user need at individual level.

SDI service may take the following forms-

i) Contents Alerts: This service is provided by photocopying, scanning the content pages of learned journals and other important publications keeping in view the interest of the users.

ii) *Routine of Periodicals (Automatic Loan):* In this procedure, the current issues of periodicals are routed. There are two systems of routing the current issues of the periodicals. In the first method, the library sends the current issue to the first person on the last, who passes it on to the next name in the list. The last person in the list returns the periodical to the library. In the second method, the library sends the issue to the first person on the list, who returns it to the library, and then the library sends it to the next person on the list, who again returns it to the library. Next the library sends it to the third person, and the system goes on like this.

iii) *Notification of Forthcoming Conferences, Seminars, etc.:* The information about forthcoming meetings, conferences, symposias, seminars, workshops etc. on a specific field should be notified to the members belonging to that specific domain. Keeping this purpose in view some library provides this kind of service to the user.

c) Liaison Service: In Liaison service, the library professionals go to the users to identify the problems encountered by them in course of their activities, analyze their information need, and put them in touch with the information sources or services.

3.5 EXTENSION SERVICES

Extension work is defined as those activities which are undertaken with the objective of reaching the group of people who might otherwise be unaware of the library services and book stocks. Mc Colvin considers it as means “to increase the number of readers and the volumes of work and later to make the library more useful to more people”. ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science 1983 defines it as “the provision by a library of materials and services (including advisory services) to individuals and organizations outside its regular service area, especially to an area in which library service is not otherwise available.

a) Objectives: The main objectives in providing extension services are

i) To convert a library into a social, cultural and intellectual centre;

ii) To convert non reader into reader, non user to user.

iii) To bring books and readers together.

iv) To inform those who do not use the library services and to attract them to the library services.

v) To inform the reader of all the facilities offered by the library.

vi) To remind both the reader and the non reader of the library about its resources.

vii) As a means of publicity to enlist financial support or otherwise for the libraries.

b) Prerequisites for Extension Services: The prerequisities for extension services are as follows

i) The library should have a good collection to support all extension activities.

ii) The trained and experienced staff is obligatory.

iii) The library should have a lecture hall, an exhibition hall for holding meeting of different groups.

iv) The library should possess audio-video equipment i.e. LCD projector, slide projector and mike arrangement.

v) The librarian should be a good organizer, should understand the needs of the different categories of the community and be knowledgeable about the collection of the library.

c) Forms of Extension Services: The Library extension services may be of internal or external type. The internal extension service includes orientation programmes and the external extension service includes the mobile library service, publicity programmes etc. Some of the main forms of extension services are as follows

i) Library Orientation / Library Tour: Many potential library patrons do not know how to use a library effectively. This can be due to the lack of early exposure, shyness, or anxiety and fear of displaying ignorance. These problems led to the emergence of the library

instruction, which advocates library user education. Libraries inform the public of what materials are available in their collections and how to access that information. The reference staff may orient the user either in formal way or informally into the library system.

ii) *Reading Circle, Study Circle:* Persons with common interest may be bought together by the library to a reading circle. Each reading circle should be given necessary facilities regarding the materials and a suitable place to hold the meeting.

iii) *Forming Friends of the Library Group:* The Library can also think of forming "Friends of the Library Group"; such group can assist the library through fund raising, volunteering, and advocacy.

iv) *Reading to Illiterates:* Reading hours for adults who cannot read should be arranged by public libraries. Once they become neo-literates the public library then should take upon itself to see to it that they do not lapse into illiteracy again.

v) *Meeting, Public Lectures and Talks:* A library should organize public lectures and talks by eminent persons and also by library staff.

vi) *Celebration of Festival and Events and Arranging Cultural Programmes:* It is a good idea to arrange popular festivals and events in the library which may also arrange a drama, a puppet show, a music concert, a film show, a magic show etc. Such cultural programmes can prove great attraction for the community. On such occasions a book exhibition related to the programme should be arranged.

vii) *Book Fair and Exhibition:* At the time of talk, festival, fair, drama, etc. a book exhibition on the relevant topic may be arranged. Exhibition on local history, local festivals, art, photograph and painting can offer great opportunity to attract the attention of the community.

Periodical exhibition of books which have a bearing on topical theme enhances the chances of books finding their readers. Occasional exhibitions of unused books might prove useful for the reader in getting interested in books and using them.

viii) Mobile Service: Introduction of mobile library services to provide service to citizens without access to central or branch libraries has devised an interesting variety of delivering methods. For offering this service, the time for each locality is to be fixed and notified earlier.

ix) Publicity/ Propagenda: Propaganda through the newspaper, radio, television can be introduced.

x) Book by Mail and Telephone Request: The public library should also provide library lending service through mail and Dial a book and Dial a fact method. A public library can also think of delivering books to any home bound person on a request. Introduction of library website is also a good form of extension service.

xi) Publication: Publications like annual report, reading guide, library magazine / bulletin and other similar publications are also helpful.

- *Library Bulletin:* The library bulletin should not only list fresh books and some important articles published in current issues of journals but should also give brief annotations wherever the content of new material needs. The library bulletin can take the form of indexing or abstracting service or table of content of periodicals received in the library or the list of recent publications or acquisition.
- *Annual Report:* The annual report is the official document of the library for recording the annual library activities in totality. It is the statement of assessment and evaluation of all the departments of the library. It is the survey of works carried out during the preceding year with summarization of the activities and achievements of the library.

3.6 ONLINE SERVICES

Online means the state of being in direct and immediate communication with the computer on which the database is loaded from a remote terminal. It is an interactive system i.e. it allows the user to input instruction, receive responses and then modify or manipulate the retrieved results. Almost all organizations today have shift to the online services by way of the following-

i) Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) / Webcats;

ii) CD ROM search facility;

iii) Developing library websites;

iv) Developing different kinds of databases;

v) Acquisition of database, e-journal, e-book;

vi) Building digital library / institutional repository;

To provide access to all the above resources, a modern library offers internet facility to the user. Introduction of digital section in most of the 21st century libraries also acts as a base of many modern services.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : Match the Following

a) Information in anticipation.	a) OPAC.
b) Information on demand.	b) On demand reference and information service.
c) Staff waits for the user.	c) Deals with retrospective resources.
d) Online service.	d) Deals with current information.

.....

Q 2 : Find out True and False Sentences

a) CAS and SDI are examples of information in anticipation service.

b) CAS deals with the general interest of the reader.

c) SDI deals with the specific need of the user.

d) Reference and information service is also known as retrospective searching.

e) Library orientation is an example of online service.



3.7 LET US SUM UP

An efficient library service does not merely depend on its stock and staff but also on the awareness and attraction of the clients to the services offered by the library. It is a prime responsibility, therefore, of the librarian to effectively interpret its activities to the public.

Computerized Current awareness services began with bibliographic databases that contained references to periodicals, books, and other documents. Services then were expanded to include online catalogues, CD-ROM sources, networking of libraries and library systems, full text retrieval, and the Internet.

Public relation is as much a part of the daily life of the library as of any business, perhaps more so, as the library is not self supporting and primarily depends even more than the usual business, on the good wishes of its patron. The precisely stated public relation and extension service of the library is the task of lending or delivering books and other forms of information to the users who are distant from a library or who may be relatively near it but somehow unable to travel to it. Staff news sheet, exhibits, guides to exhibit are all part of a library publicity programme. Libraries can also supplement and complement the mass media of communication i.e. Newspaper, Press, Radio, Television, Cinema for public relation.



3.8 FURTHER READINGS

1) Guha, B. (1983). *Documentation and information: services, techniques and systems*, 2nd rev. ed.. Kolkata: World Press

2) IGNOU (1999*). MLIS-02: Information sources, systems & programmes, block 4,* IGNOU.

3) IGNOU (2001). MLIS-04. *Information institutions, products and services, Block 1 (Information Institutions)*. New Delhi: IGNOU.

4) IGNOU (2001). MLIS-04. *Information institutions, products and services, Block 2 (Information Services)*. New Delhi: IGNOU.

5) Iyengar, Sreenidhi, ed (1966). *Library public relation*. New Delhi: Amol Publication.

6) P. S. G. Kumar (2002). *A student's manual of library & information science (on the lines of the NET syllabus of UGC)*. Delhi: B.R. Publishing.

7) Pearsall, Judy. (ed) (1999). *The concise oxford dictionary*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

8) Penna, C.V. (1970). *The planning of library and documentation services*. Switzerland, UNESCO.

9) Sarkar, P.K. (1977). *Administration of technical libraries*. New Delhi: Sterling.

10) Tripathi, S.M., Lal, C and K Kumar (2002). *Descriptive questions in Library and Information Science*. New Delhi: Ess Ess.

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

a) Information in anticipation.	a) Deals with current information.
b) Information on demand	b) Deals with retrospective resources.
c) Staff waits for the user	c) On demand reference and information service.
d) Online service	d) OPAC

Ans to Q No 2:

a) True. b) True. c) True.

d) True. e) False.



3.10 PROBABLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Answer Type Questions

a) What are the two main types of information service?

b) What are three main types of service that are provided in anticipation?

c) What are the two main type of library public service?

d) Write a brief note on essential public service.

e) Write a short note on online services provided by the library.

B) Essay Type Questions

a) Describe the library public services.

b) Describe the library current awareness service.

c) Write a descriptive note on library public relation and extension service.

*** ***** ***