

Current Awareness Service and its importance among the users' of the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped: A study

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Abstract: In this paper the investigator tries to find out the importance of current awareness services among the users and to look out the users' input concerning the awareness as well as availing of the service. Data was collected through a self-designed questionnaire. 80 questionnaires were distributed randomly among the users and from the 94% response rate it is revealed that the majority of respondents feel it, as an essential one. But it is observed that the response rate of availing the service is low due to the low response rate of awareness among the respondents.

Keywords: Current awareness, National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, India.

Introduction: Library is a social institution. The three components of library i.e. information professionals, information seekers and resources are interconnected with each other. Missing of one component effects on other and the chain became disconnected. In the informatics society, everyone wants to be aware of current news in their related field and to satisfy the information need of users; is the main motto behind the establishment of any library. We can categorize library with their different types but the motto behind them remain same. The today's users are being changing by the environment of digitization and now they became information seekers. They wanted their information in their one click and it is right also because the information has its value in the required time; after the time, everything lead down its importance. It creates a big issue in front of the professionals. Due to the exponential growth of literature 'awareness' has been stressed out. Professionals, decided to categorize their functions and prepare themselves for anticipation.

Current Awareness Service: As the name show its importance, to keep aware and up-to-date their users with current developments related to the matter of special interest to an individual.

Hanson says about CAS "that keeping up-to-date in narrower fields is mainly achieved by regular and methodical scanning of current specialist publications, plus plenty of talks with colleagues and contact" (Kumar, 2004, p.163).

In Ranganathan's study, he defines CAS "as listing the documents appearing during the period covered, and without being selected to suit the requirements of a particular reader as of a specific topic under investigation. This is of the nature of a

general appetizer. It endeavour to keep the clientele informed promptly of all the nascent thoughts created in their fields of work and related fields" (as cited in Prasher, 2003, p.65).

In the International encyclopedia of Information and Library Science edited by J Feather and P Sturges defines "a current awareness service as one notifying current documents to users of libraries and information services" (as cited in Naqvi, n.d., p.100).

In various studies CAS is also known as "selective dissemination of information", "current contents" and "alerting service" (as cited in Naqvi, n.d., p.100).

Due to the enormous growth of literature, everyone wants to at least themselves keep up-to-date and well informed with the current developments. CAS enables them to serve this. Thus, to bring out notice of newly generated information to its users is called current awareness service. There are various forms to keep a user abreast with the latest information:

1. Routing of periodicals
2. Newspaper clipping service
3. Current Content Service
4. Current awareness list
5. Notification of forthcoming conference, meetings etc.
6. Library Bulletins
7. Announcement of Research-in-progress
8. List of periodical received

National Institute for the visually handicapped: NIVH is one of the top most institutions who play an important role to empowering the visually impaired persons since nineties. It created various milestones in its history and today's also continuing its position by creating the historically events to make VIPs independent in every aspects of life through various skills.

Methodology: Eighty questionnaires were randomly distributed to the users and seventy five were received back, to find out awareness and utilization of service among the users. Thus, the sample size is shown through the table 1.1:

Distributed Questionnaires	Received Questionnaires	Response rate
80	75	94%

Thus, the table 1.1 shows the response rate of users i.e. 94%.

Methods for providing Current Awareness Service in NIVH

Display of currently received document

Telephone call to an individual

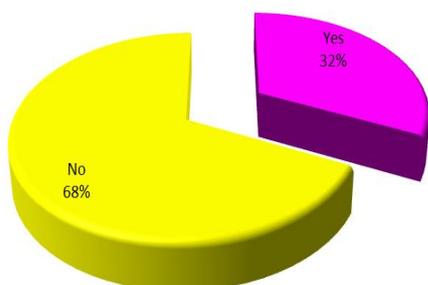
Routing of Journal

NIVH adopt various methods for providing current awareness service by displaying of currently received document, telephone call to an individual as well as routing of journal play an equally important role to keep abreast from the latest information.

Awareness among the respondents

The following table 1.2 shows the awareness of current awareness service among the users of NIVH.

Awareness of service	No. of respondents
Yes	24
No	51

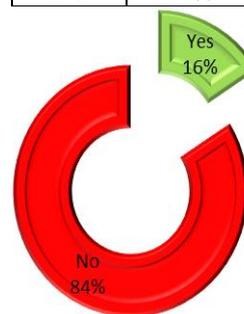


Therefore, the figure 1.2 revealed that majority of the respondents i.e. 68% respondents are not aware of the service while 32% of them are aware.

Availing of the service

The following table 1.3 shows the utilization of service by the respondents.

Availing the service	No. of Respondents
Yes	12
No	63

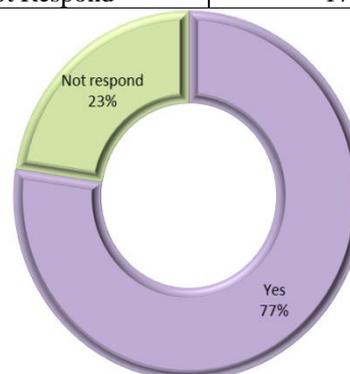


Thus, the figure 1.3 evident that majority of respondents are not availing the service while only 16% of respondents availing the service.

Essentiality of Current Awareness Service in the perception of respondents

The following table 1.4 shows the essentiality of service in the perception of respondents

Essentiality of the service	No. of respondents
Yes	58
Not Respond	17



Therefore, the figure 1.4 inferred that majority of the respondents feel current awareness service as an essential one.

Thus, the results revealed that Current Awareness Service play pivotal role to make aware users from the current development and up-date them on their concern field. The respondents also thought it is as an essential, for them. But; due to the lack of awareness, result out the low availing of the service.

Conclusion: Information centres play an important role in the age of information overflow for those who cannot take a decision after seeing a menu; which dish should be order, to make their brunch more delightful. Information centres are only hope, which serves their information need in effective and efficient manner so that they can satisfied their information related hunger. To satisfied information related hunger professionals categorized its functions in sub categories. Current awareness service is one such part of sub categories to make users aware of; what's new information they had collected for them.

National Institute for the Visually Handicapped is standing up with its brightening image in worldwide to strengthen the visually impaired person in every aspect of life through its various activities. While current awareness service is a part of its library which play an equally important role to abreast with the latest information. A glimpse over its result out, current awareness service is essential in perception of users but NIVH needs publicized it, while the observation evident that NIVH publicised its service by adopting various methods. But there is a need to familiarized it among users through orientation programme to take a benefit from the current awareness service.

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Abbreviations

- CAS Current Awareness Service
- NIVH National Institute for the visually handicapped
- VIPs Visually Impaired Persons

Acknowledgement: It is my pleasant duty to acknowledge the benefits that I have derived from the writings of numerous researchers and authors on this subject. The consulted works have been duly acknowledged.