1. What are biographical sources of information? Explain the process involved in evaluating such sources.

Ans: A good collection of biographical source books is, therefore, a very important part of the reference book collection in any library. Acquaintance with such sources and an understanding of their scope are essential components of library science training. There are wide variations in scope in different biographical dictionaries. Some are data type which contain factual information of the biographee, others are collection of long essays on the lives of the persons covered. Even in a single volume, details about the lives of persons covered varies a great deal. Those who are more famous get longer treatment in comparison to lesser known figures. In some cases even the most famous person get brief description as enough reliable information about them is not available. Apart from variation in details about lives of biographies in a particular biographical dictionary, they also vary in coverage of persons in terms of period, geographical area and subject discipline.

Biographical dictionaries can be categorised by using any one characteristic at a time or by using period or time as a characteristic. They may be grouped as:

i) Current biographical information sources, and
ii) Retrospective biographical information sources

27 From the point of view of geographical area covered they may be classified as,

i) Universal, and
ii) National, regional or local or institutional

Biographical dictionaries are also grouped as: (i) General (ii) Specialised or subject (iii) By gender such as men and women and (iv) By language. The biographical dictionaries available in libraries are often found to possess more than one of these characteristics in various combinations. Examples of current universal specialised biographical dictionaries have their counterpart in current universal general biographical dictionaries. Similar is the case with retrospective dictionaries. It would be convenient if we study them under two broad heads - Current and Retrospective.

2. Who are peripheral information professionals? Explain their role as disseminators of information.

Ans: Peripheral information professionals are

1. Lawyers

Form purchase of assets, to solving disputes, getting a society registered, and for various other purposes, we require legal help. Lawyers are the persons who provide us the necessary information. Like doctors, the lawyers also charge fees. There are various categories of lawyers. Some of them deal with civil cases like marriage registration, registration of journals, sales tax, income tax; legal procedure involved in the sale or purchase of properties, obtaining licenses for doing business, etc. Another category of lawyers deals with criminal cases such as cheating, theft, robbery, murder, etc.

2. Doctors

A person suffering from an ailment goes to a doctor for medicines whereby s/he is cured. The doctor first of all acquires information from the patient about the symptoms. Thereafter the doctor examines the patient. If the doctor can diagnose the disease, s/he informs the patient about the disease s/he is suffering from, prescribes medicines which the patient has to take or apply, tells her/him how many times and for how many days the medicines are to be taken, and also how the medicines are to be taken - by mouth or injection or they are simply to be applied on the affected area.

3. Teachers

Teachers possess information on the subject they teach, books and journals on the subject, institutions where the subject is taught within the country and abroad, other teachers on the subject, availability of scholarships and opportunities, research facilities available within the country and abroad, etc.

4. Experts

An expert is a person who possesses sound knowledge on a subject, technique, etc. On many occasions we need their help. For example, for appointing an information scientist in an organisation, we set up an interview board comprising of experts.

5. Resource Persons

The connotation of the term ‘resource person’ varies depending on the context. Normally a resource person enriches a programme by virtue of her/his vast knowledge.

6. Technological Gatekeepers

A technological gatekeeper is a well-informed person in a particular field. Usually, some scientists, technologists, and professionals in business, etc. have got a tendency (possibly inborn) to acquire information from various sources, to keep herself/himself abreast of the development in the field, and to disseminate the information to a person or group who may be interested in the information. There is no formal course to train a person as a technological gatekeeper.

7. Invisible College

In reality, an invisible college is not a college. Around 1645 A.D. a group of persons interested in natural philosophy and other parts of human learning started meeting secretly at Gresham College and elsewhere in London under the name of the ‘invisible college’.

8. Common People

Children – A growing child starts picking up information while exploring her/his house, meeting relatives, playing with toys, etc. By the time a child is three, s/he can tell where a particular toy s/he has kept. In the pre-school a child learns about her/his friends, teachers, toys and equipment for playing available in the school, school building, environ of the school, etc. S/he gives this information to parents and others. In this way even in pre-schools s/he becomes a source of information.