

# SUBJECT INDEXING: A LITERATURE SURVEY AND TRENDS

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## Abstract

*Mentions the literature survey and trends of Subject Indexing. Highlights the importance of pre-coordinate system in the context of having literature on Subject Indexing. Explains content analysis and bibliometric study both on the Subject indexing.*

**Key words:** Subject indexing, literature survey, content analysis, bibliometric analysis.

## Introduction

Though the subject approach to documents has a long history, it has become in recent years the main focus of attention of the scientists, technologists and researchers. A number of systems have since been evolved, new tools have been developed, and set of rules have been formulated from time to time for the preparation of subject entries of documents. The research efforts in a number of countries have been directed either to develop a new system of subject indexing or to improve upon the already existing ones. In fact, the cause of the problem today, is how to index better to meet the challenging demand of information.

The situation warrants that we set out for comparative testing of existing indexing system to reveal their comparative effectiveness to satisfy the information needs of the users effectively. It is directly concerned with meeting the information needs. An information system could be dynamic and progressive only if it is continuously reviewed and evaluated. Such studies are important management aids in design, operation and maintenance of information services at the high level effectiveness and efficiency.

**Index-** index is information on a document indicating the source of its availability. It provides information to the users on a subject, the book and its page number where the required information can be accessed. Therefore, an index provides information about the source of the requisite information.

**Indexing-** the method of the formation of index is known as indexing. Indexing is the most important component of an information system. In fact, indexing is the key to its success. The quality of the indexing reflects the quality information system.

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There are many kinds of information systems- pre-coordinate indexing system; post coordinate indexing systems do for easy access to documents.

### **Need and objectives of the study**

One of the major responsibilities of the information scientists and document lists are to furnish state of art of the different subject field to the users of information, especially to research scholars, scientists, technologists and social scientists, etc. to meet their required information needs, documentary survey of existing literature in the concerned area of knowledge is necessary to make them available the literature survey and trends. The advances, reviewing journals and abstracting journals are being published regularly through various agencies, academic, scientists and individuals to meet such felt needs of the seekers of information to a large extent.

But they are not to suit the requirement of the individual needs. Hence, they are not helpful to the extent desired and more over it require the readers to some large amount of published literature with their productive time. Frequently they may not afford. So to tackle their problem, library and information science professionals are provided with skill to accomplish the job literature survey and trends.

### **Objectives of the study**

The destination of the present study is to survey the literature and there by reveal the trends in the field of subject indexing.

### **Method of the study**

In the present study the abstracting periodical "library and information science abstract" has been taken as source material. The literature appeared in the form of abstract of the last years from 1995 to 2004 "library and information science abstract" has been consulted for the study. This abstracting periodical is available in the central library of Banaras Hindu University which made this job easy going.

The present study covers two methods. The abstract appeared in LISA from 1995 to 2004 has been thoroughly scanned and all the needed element of information were gathered from the abstracts given there. The advancement of the field concerned is given chronologically under the sub-fields along with reference to the authors. The cited references are appended at the end. This literature survey and trends method is content analysis.

The second literature survey and trend method covers bibliometric analysis. This method now a day is extremely popular in the field of library and information science and its results has indirect implication on library and information services with which users are concerned. Content analysis provides subject

developmental growth and trends, while the bibliometric analysis provides developmental growth of subject indirectly. Under bibliometric analysis form scatter, country scatter, time scatter, language scatter, subject scatter, etc. have been studied.

### Data collection

In the present study, an abstract from is as a unit of data for the topic “Subject indexing’ the data has been collected from the abstracting periodical “Library and information science abstract”. There were 400 abstract contained in 100 issues of LISA covering ten years from 1995 to 2004.

### Data presentation

The gathered data are presented in this text through various ways. All the significant abstracting literature is arranged chronologically. An author bibliography has been prepared for this literature and also has been given along with the literature for the retrieval of the literature to meet the author approach. They formed the body of literature survey and trends, based on content analysis. The information contained in the abstract is critically analyzed to find out the trends in the field of subject indexing. The other way of data presentation were provided country wise, year wise,, language wise, author wise, subject wise, etc. these information had been received from bibliometric analysis. This collected information presented in the table on the basis of different attributes and statistical analysis which performed to obtain the results.

### Trends in Form wise scatter

The literatures in any particular subject are published in a variety of form. It has been found that the works in the field of subject. Indexing are scattered in various forms like journals, books, services and reports.

The following table contains distribution of literature according to various forms.

**Table No. 1.** Form wise scatter of literature

Sl. No.	Forms	No. of Items	Percentage
1.	Journals	314	78.50
2.	Proceedings	35	8.75
3.	Bulletin	16	4.00
4.	Reviews	12	3.00
5.	Books	8	2.00
6.	Reports	6	1.50
7.	Others	9	2.25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

The maximum literature published has been found in journals at least 78.5% followed by proceedings 8.75 %, bulletin 4% and books and reports have very meager literature in the field of subject indexing.

### Trends in country wise scatter

The following table contains country wise scatter of literature in the field of subject indexing.

**Table No. 2.** Country wise scatter of literature

S. No.	Country	No. of Items	Percentage
1.	USA	116	29.00
2.	UK	89	22.25
3.	Germany	46	11.50
4.	USSR	27	6.75
5.	Australia	16	4.00
6.	Netherland	13	3.25
7.	India	12	3.00
8.	Slovakia	10	2.50
9.	France	9	2.25
10.	Poland	8	2.00
11.	Japan	8	2.00
12.	Denmark	5	1.25
13.	Canada	4	1.00
14.	Israel	4	1.00
15.	Spain	4	1.00
16.	China	4	1.00
17.	Switzerland	4	1.00
18.	Italy	3	0.75
19.	Brazil	3	0.75
20.	Belgium	3	0.75
21.	Austria	2	0.50
22.	Sweden	2	0.50
23.	Finland	2	0.50
24.	Iceland	1	0.25
25.	Guyana	1	0.25
26.	Albania	1	0.25
27.	South Africa	1	0.25
28.	Malaysia	1	0.25
29.	Hong-Kong	1	0.25
30.	Hungry	1	0.25
31.	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table 2 shows that maximum items of literature on subject indexing come from USA which is 29%, whereas, countries like Hungary contribute very less literature 0.25% on subject indexing.

### Trends in years wise scatter

The following table contains year wise scatter of literature in the field of subject indexing.

**Table No. 3.** Year wise scatter of literature

Sl. No.	Year	No. of Items	Percentage
1	1993	45	11.25
2	1994	30	7.50
3	1995	38	9.50
4	1996	21	5.25
5	1997	19	4.25
6	1998	50	12.50
7	1999	40	10.00
8	2000	44	11.00
9	2001	45	11.25
10	2002	39	9.25
11	2003	17	4.25
12	2004	12	3.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Data in table-3 shows that the most fertile year had been 1998 having 12.5% produced literature and the least productive year was 2004.

### Trends in language wise scatter

The main purpose of the analysis of language wise distribution of literature is to find out that which languages produce maximum literature.

**Table -4.** Language wise scatter of literature

Sl. No.	Language	No. of Items	Percentage
1	English	314	78.50
2	German	32	8.00
3	Russian	19	4.75
4	French	7	1.75
5	Spanish	6	1.50
6	Slovak	6	1.50
7	Japanese	5	1.25
8	Chinese	3	0.75
9	Others	8	2.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

The analysis shows that English is the most dominant language for communication in the field of subject indexing throughout the world.

### Trends in Sub-field wise scatter

The following table contains data according to sub-fields of subject indexing, which has been further analyzed to find out the trends of literature sub-field wise.

**Table No. 5.** Sub-field wise scatter of literature

Sl. No.	Sub- fields	No. of Items	Percentage
1	Pre-coordinate indexing system	152	38.00
2	Post-coordinate indexing system	86	21.50
3	Subject analysis	35	8.75
4	Classification	53	13.25
5	Bibliographic description	42	10.50
6	Others	32	8.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

The analyzed data presented in table5 reveals that 38% literature in pre-coordinate indexing followed by 21.5% in post-coordinate indexing. It indicates that maximum literature in pre-coordinate indexing system followed by post-coordinate indexing system.

### Trends in Journals wise scatter

The journal wise analysis of the literature provides literature scattering and trends among the journals and quantitative productive merits of the journals. The following table indicates the journal wise scatter of the literature.

**Table No. 6.** Journal wise scatter of Literature

S. No.	Name of the journal	No. of occurrence
1	Journal of American society for information science	23
2	Information processing and management	18
3	Cataloguing	16

Table-6 shows that the literature on subject indexing is widely scattered in many different journals published in various countries. So far as the productive merit of journal is concerned, "The journal of American Society for Information Science" stands first followed by "Information processing and Management", followed by "Cataloguing Australia". Rests of the journals are very less productive.

### Conclusion

The present study is a survey and trends on "Subject indexing" of literature published during the last ten years. The study applies the content analysis

method and bibliometric method to find out the trends. The study provides descriptive account of the surveyed literature and trends and analytical account of surveyed literature and trends.

The trends based on analytical account of surveyed literature states that in form wise scatter of literature, maximum literature published has been found in journals followed by proceedings, etc. thus, it may be said that journal articles in the main media for printed communication among the seeker of information country wise scatter of literature shows that maximum literature on “Subject Indexing” comes from USA followed by UK and Germany. Hence, it is remarkable that maximum items has been produced only 3% of the total item.

The year wise scatter of literature reveals that maximum literature had been generated in the year of 1998.

The language wise scatter of literature shows that English is the most dominant language for communication in the field of Subject Indexing throughout the world.

The sub-field wise scatter of literatures is covered by pre-coordinate indexing system followed by post-coordinate indexing system. “Journal of American Society for Information Science” stands first for the material on “Subject Indexing”.

The trends based on descriptive account of survey literature states that if it is overview the items published in the area of Subject Indexing; it is found that most of the literature relates nascent topics, which implies the dynamicity of Subject indexing.

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