

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1. INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the users even in a scientific library were considered a neglected component by librarians. But today the situation has changed. The librarians have recognised the significance of users as the most vital component in the communication cycle. In fact, modern libraries are becoming more and more user-oriented. The present trend towards national information system has made the need for user studies more significant.

Users are the last link or receipt of information in the communication cycle. It is therefore necessary to conduct from time to time users studies in order to determine the use of need for and demand of information and also to be acquainted with users behaviour. In fact that user study is necessary for meaningful library service was realised in western countries half-a-century ago. In India however, it is a new phenomenon. The present trend to the Indian Universities is that the number of students, researchers and teachers are increasing year after year. But the resource allocation to the university libraries is not commensurate with the increased rate of users and cost escalation of documents especially scientific documents. The aforesaid problems are forcing librarians to think more and more in terms of need based acquisition of documents

and providing appropriate information services. Considering this point in mind a user survey is conducted among the users in the university library.(1)

1.1) Definition of Users Survey

The term 'Users' refers to the users of the library/ Information Centre/ Documentation Centre and its resources. Users are individual.

In designing an information system users are identified and classified into types of users, does not refer to a 'group or class of persons' in the present context, but means a set of particular information needs.

Information needs refers to individual needs of users regarding information which should be satisfied by the specific information system used by him.

Line defines a 'user survey as a systematic collection of data from the users about the use of libraries.'(2)

For social phenomenon a survey method is an effective and sensitive instrument for collecting relevant data. Since libraries and information centres are social institutions, the survey method has been adopted with success

as a basis for many investigations into library services and users. The accurate data and quantifiable facts generated by the investigations can be used for making policy decisions or for implementing long-range plans.

The main purpose of the survey is to examine the user's approaches to information in their field of interest. The main purpose of Users survey may briefly be stated as follows -

1. To assess the existing situation of a library or information centre.
2. To check the effectiveness of the existing library and information system.
3. To evaluate an area of librarianship or information service with a view to removing inadequacies or shortcomings or to plan the next step, and
4. To achieve advancement in study as well as in the field of practical application of library and information science.
5. To examine the user's approaches to information in different types of information sources.
6. To examine the nature of search done by scientists for current information.

7. To get suggestions from the users for the improvement of library service.(3)

1.2) Importance of User's Survey

The user is the key person in any information system. All the luxuries of information-revolution and problems of information explosion are centered round the user and his convenience. Understanding the user is half the battle in providing information services. The success of any information system depends considerably on how best the system design is based on a close and accurate understanding of the users. In fact information system is not concerned with just demand. It has to stretch its hands to know the informationn needs, the motives and purpose of seeking information ways and means of gathering information and the entire user attitudes and practices in relation to information.(4)

Libraries and information centres are maintained for use of information services exists for the sake of users. To make the library and information services effective, an adequate knowledge about the users, their needs, wants, and demand is necessary. It is imperative for an information scientist or librarian to know.

1. Who among the potential users makes the use of the library and information services.
2. What services are being used.
3. What is the frequency of their use
4. For what purpose these services are being used.

Equally important for the librarians or information scientist to know is as to how the non users of the library and information centre can be transferred into regular users.(5)

For planning library and information services or for their improvement or for maximising the impacts of these services it is necessary to findout about the users and their information requirements and also their habits. It is believed that any labrarian or information scientists become aware of the requirement of his reader. It is because he deals with them daily, hears them, talks to them and observes them making use of the library, and information services. So that he can collect together the information regarding the requirements and behaviour of his clients.(6)

However a large number of the users, it is believed are shy and they refrain from making comments on the library

services or from approaching the librarian for their requirements on their own under normal circumstances. To ascertain the opinions and requirement of vocal as well as shy users, a systematic study through users survey is indispensable. Considering this vital point in mind a user studies must be conducted among the users in the library.(7)

1.3) Purpose & objectives of the study.

The library, its devices and operations aim to serve the needs and demands of clientele served by it. It is thus clear that the Librarian must know his users in order to be able to serve them effectively in this direction.

The purpose of the study can be categorised as :

- (1) To know what are the information requirements of a user.
- (2) How does they obtain information and keep track of the latest idea.
- (3) What needs to be done to make effective use of the library resources services.
- (4) To know the adequacy of library collection for the needs of users.

- (5) To get suggestions from the users for the improvement of library services.

1.4) Scope of the study.

The scope of the present study is confined to study the users of Barr.Balasaheb Khardekar Library viz. faculty members, Research scholars, Post graduate students and Administrative staff members as the users of this library. The efforts are made to study these users from the view point of their satisfaction about their requirements from the library.

1.5) Methodology

The following methodology has been employed to make the users survey of Barr.Balasaheb Khardekar Library, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

1.5.1) Pre Testing of Questionnaire

Before full scale survey is undertaken, its pretesting of the questionnaire is advisable to see, that the objective of the survey will be achieved at a greater extent. Due to this method mistakes are identified and rectified and accordingly methods are improved to make the full scale survey a success.

Keeping the same view in mind the researcher had undertaken the pretesting of Questionnaire. To conduct the pretest, the researcher had selected only one user from the five categories of users i.e. post graduate, M.Phil, Ph.D. students, Teaching and Non-teaching member.

1.5.2) Full-scale survey.

After the successful pretesting the researcher has undertaken full scale survey. For this the following methodology has been employed.

Selection of the Sample

The user population in this study consists of student, research scholars and teaching and non-teaching staff.

A sample consisting of 175 members has been selected from a user population of 4131 members. The sample group consists of 75 students, 50 Research scholars, 30 teaching and 20 non-teaching staff members.

Collection of Data

Questionnaire (Appendix 1) method was mainly adopted for the primary data collection, Interview method was also used among the scholars on a selected basis to corroborate the findings.

A improved questionnaire has been prepared keeping in view, the objectives of the study in mind. The 175 questionnaires were distributed amongst the teachers, non-teaching members and research workers. While collecting the questionnaires and at the time of their visit to the library the concerned users were interviewed.

Additional information was collected by talking to the users and members of the staff, certain records of the library were consulted and annual reports of the Shivajii University were also studied.

Analysis of Data

The data has been noted from duly filled up questionnaire the analysis of the data indicates the following trends in the proposed user survey. About 175 Questionnaires were distributed. Out of which 160 questionnaires received back. Some of the students of post-graduate and non-teaching members felt difficult and their response was poor. Whereas the response from teachers and Research scholars was good.

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