CHAPTER II

NATURE AND SCOPE OF USERS SURVEY

C H A P T E R - II

NATURE AND SCOPE OF USERS SURVEY.

1. DEFINITION OF USER

    1.1 Types of Users

    1.2 Users & Information Use.

2. PLANNING A SURVEY

    2.1 Defining the objectives of surveys.

    2.2 Coverage of the Survey

    2.3 Timing of the Survey

    2.4 Method of Investigation

    2.5 Selection of Sample of Users

    2.6 Pre-Testing

    2.7 Full Scale Survey

    2.8 Analysis of Data

    2.9 Reporting

3. TYPES OF SURVEYS

    3.1 Descriptive Survey

    3.2 analyatical Survey

    3.3 Surveyer-Based-Survey

    3.4 Users based Survey

4. <u>NATURE OF INFORMATION NEED &</u>

   <u>ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION</u>

   4.1 Nature of Information Need

        4.1.1 Current Approach

        4.1.2 Everyday Approach

        4.1.3 Exhaustive Approach

        4.1.4 Catching up Approach

   4.2 Access to Information

        4.2.1 Sources of Reference (Bibliography)
               Information

        4.2.2 Accidental or Unplanned or chance
               Acquisition of Information

        4.2.3 Delegation of Information -
               Gathering Work

        4.2.4 Time spent on Information -
               Gathering Activities

5. <u>DATA COLLECTION METHODS</u>

   <u>USED FOR SURVEY</u>

   5.1 Questionnnaire method

   5.2 Interview method

   5.3 Diary method

   5.4 Observation by self

   5.5 Operation Research Study

   5.6 Special & Unconventional method

        5.6.1 Computer Feed-back

        5.6.2 unconventional method

C H A P T E R - I I

NATURE AND SCOPE OF USERS SURVEY

1 . DEFINITION OF USER

Library is composed of three basic factors : Users,
Books and Staff. Use of a library means the use of books
or recorded knowledge in any other form by the users.
As all economi activity is governed by the consumers so
is the library shaped by its users. The needs and
requirements of the users form the base for the
composition of library stock. It is the user and extent
of use made by him that determine the quality and quantity
of library resources. It is beyond imagination to think
of a liibrary without users. All the library activities
centre roun the users. Traditionally, library users have
generally been termed 'Readers' which means those who are
acquainted with the art of reading but it is no longer
true, for the library may now have literature users as
well. Hence the term 'Reader' should be taken in much
broades context of 'user' or one who uses the resources
of a library.(1)

In a library or information centre environment the
users are the last link or the receipients of the

information in the communication cycle. There are a
number of terms used as synonyms or near synonyms to user
such as patron, client, member, customer etc.

The user is an important component in an
information system. It was revealed from the library and
information science literature that for a long time
information workers focussed their studies only an
components of information system except user. Attempts
to study user. Component were initiated only in the
1930's.(2)

1.1) Types of Users

Users may be studied through observation and
categorised on the basis of professional background, way
of adopting ideas, mode of conversation and temperament.
Personel friendliness with library personnel,participation
in extra-curricular activities and use of library
resources may also help in recognising their tastes. This
will help in building up the library collections as per
requirements of the library users. It is gnereally found
that the interest of any two users may seldom be identical
thought both of them amy belong to the same group. On
account of the development of one's mental faculty,
attitude and inclination there would be definite

variations amongst the users which would be reflected in the presentationn of the subject matters and other library requirements. Users in the libraries can be categorised by their temperaments and moods, unreliable, unpleasant, proud, cruel, critical, sober, pleasant respectful, co-operative, sincere and similar types.(3)

Besides, this general consideration, users are broadly categorised according to their library requirements. The people at large literates and neoliterates - need public libraaries to meet their reading, informational, recreational and inspirational requirements. The people attending the agencies of formal Education i.e. schools, colleges and Universities need academic librariesand those engaed in special studies and projects in some organisations require services of special libraries.

The users of one type of library are different from those of another type. In a public library, the users asre mainly children, students, housewives, researchers, retired persons, neoliteratre etc. In an academic library, the userss are students, teachers and researcher. Whereas in a special library the users are mainly researcher of specialists who are specilaising in a narrow field of subject for an effective information service an

information manager should ascertain about the information requirements of his library users. In fact he should understand the following, who are the users? for these, studies focussed on library users directly or indirectly are necessary.(4)

1.2) Users and Information use

Today information users live in a complex environment the major environment facts are the following

(i) Increasing laziness or uncertainty of users informaton needs.

(ii) There is a vast quantity of information gathered as well as pouring into the system which have their own ways of presentation.

(iii) The mechnanics of matching information needs with information sources have been increasingly made efficient, such mechanism are sophisticated and complex.

(iv) There is thereofore a need for training, users of informatio with respect to the ways in which information needs are expressed new methods of searching and manipulating with mechanisim of information retrieval and,

(v) the modern concepts of user friendliness user assistance, and user education have developed several devices and courses to incalculate in the regular information seekers a methodology for productive approach for information gathering and self education.(5)

2. PLANNING A SURVEY

The planning of a survey involves a number of stages of work. These are.(6)

1) Defining the objectives of the survey.

2) Decision regarding the coverage or scope of the survey.

3) Choice of the timing.

4) Selection of the method for conducting survey.

5) Selection of the sample of users.

6) Pre-testing.

7) Full-scale survey itself.

8) Analysis of data and,

9) Preparation of the report.

2.1) Defining The Objectives Of The Surveys

The first step in the planning of a survey is to decide what we want to know. Carefully defined aims and

ojectives will explain the purpose of the survey and gerate apropriate methodology and analyse, this means that once the ojectives have been formulated, the method of data collection and analysis can be decided. A draft plan of the survey can also be drawn up and its cost calculated. It is possible that the cost considerations may lead to the reformulation of objectives. A clear statement of aims and objectives helps the surveyer to clarify his own ideas also.

2.2) Coverage of The Survey

The second step is to be clear about the coverage or scope of the survey. Coverage means the users or the libraries or the records to be covered or fixing the scope of the survey geographically or otherwise. It is an important to define the scope of the survey clearly and precised. It should also be decided at this stage whether the survey is to be complete if all the units of enquiry under study are left out and information is not sought from them. The survey will be a sample if units of enquiry are selected by accepted statistical methods and information is sought from them only.

"When total library situation is studied, a typical pattern of problem has generally been considered. This

pattern differs only slightly from that found in non-library enterprises. The history of institution, the governmental relationship, educational objectives, finance organisation, personnel controls methods, facilities and equipment and physical facters are consistently parts of the library survey approach. Integration of the library within the university, the state, the region and the country and education for librarianship, and other factors which are sometimes examined."(7) The coverage will limit the scope of the survey to the aspects to be investigated.

2.3) Timing of The Survey

In order to get clear picture of the situation, choice of timing for the conduct of survey is important. To choose an unrepresentative time for survey may be as serious a defect as to study an unrepresentative sample, for instance the use of the library on the eve of examination may be muc more than what is otherwise. The conduct of survey during the days of examination may therefore not give true picture of the use of the library.

In order to arrive at the accurate facts, it is necessary that the schedule for the completion of various stages of survey may also be determined.

2.4) **Method of Investigation**

Most of general methods or techniques of social surveys are being used for the users and library survey also. The methods used so far may be categorised and listed as follows.(8)

(a) General of Conventional Methods

1. Questionnaire

2. Interview

3. Diary

4. Observation by self

5. Operation research study.

(b) Indirect methods in the context of information use.

6. Analysis of library records

7. Citation analysis

(c) Special and unconventional methods

8. Computer-Feedback

9. Unconventional methods

From among the above methods, choice can be made keeping in view the situation to be surveyed use to be put and for collecting complete data. Also more than one method may be used for completing a survey.

2.5) <u>Selection of Sample of Users</u>

because of the constraints of resources the examination of the entire population is not possible. Surveys are therefore conducted by examining a part of population representing a whole of it. A truely representative population or sample is that which is free from bias. This means that no factor should have more influence that it warrants. The individuals with particular characteristics can be left out for eliminating known bias. a sample selected randamly is likely to be the true representative of the whole population as also free from bias. But it should be large enough to allow for non-response. A random sample is that in which every itme is the population had an equal chance of being included and bias is eliminated as far as possible.

2.6) <u>Pre-Testing</u>

Before full scale survey is undertaken its pre-testing is advisable to sea that the objectives of the survey will be achieved mistakes are rectified and methods are improved to make the full scale survey a success.

2.7) Full Scale Survey

After the successful pretesting the full scale survey should be conducted following the correct norms and methodology. All the relevant facts should be collected honestly to make the conclusions based on them as accureate as possible.

2.8) Analyasis of Data

After data is collected it is necessary that the data is analysed properly, and statistically valid conclusions are drawn out of it. Otherwise the survey report is likely to degerate into a collection of opinions without any worthwile analysis. A careful analysis of data makes a survey a specialised survey and provide insight into the functioning of the library or information centre. Its services and information system.

2.9) Reporting

The objectives of survey details of its methodology, its conduct the conclusion drawn and the suggestions offered are presented in the form of a well-organised written report. The use of tables, graphs, diagrams, charts etc.makes the survey report precise and

effective. The report should give at least passing attention to each of the following aspects of the investigation -

"1. Purpose and coverage

2. Mention of and reference to any related surveys.

3. Nature, method and extent of collection of information.

4. Method of numerical manipulation

5. Assessment of the achievement of the survey including any conclusion and the extent to which the purpose were fulfilled.

6. Cost.

7. Note on the person or organisation responsible for planning and executing surveys."

The most important thing to see is that the true picture is conveyed.(9)

3. TYPES OF SURVEYS

Surveys are of four types -

1) Descreptive

2) Analytical

3) Survey-based and

4) User's based

3.1) Descriptive survey

A descriptive survey simply describes the situation It doesnot attempt to theories. Its purpose is to collect and interpret the facts regarding a situation without looking for connections between two events and offering explanation for these.

3.2) Analytical survey

Analytical survey is also known as explanatery survey. It attempt to formulate certain hypothesis or theories about a phenomenon. It looks for connectons between two events or a series or actions, and tries to explain these connections.

3.3) Surveyor-Based survey

Users surveys are also categorised into three different types of the basis of the surveyor conducting the survey.

Self-surveys

Self surveys are normally conducted by an individual or a group from within a library or information

centre. The advantage of such surveys is that the investigator is throughly acquainted with the working of the library or information centre. The disadvantage is that the survey can be subjective.

Surveys by Outside Experts

Surveys by library and information science experts from outside may be suggested either by the librarian or information scientist himself or by the University administration. These are more objective.

Surveys by Non-Librarians

Some non-librarians such as efficiency engineers or public administration analysts may also be called upon to conduct library surveys. The only problem in such surveys is that these non-professionals may not have adequate knowledge about the working of the libraries or their services.

3.4) Users-based surveys

Ennis has also categorised library surveys into four goups.(10) The first category studies general users inside the library, the second studies specialised users

inside the library, the third studies general users outside the library and the last category studies specialised users outside the library.

4. NATURE OF INFORMATION NEED & ACCESS TO INFORMATION

It has now been realised that information need is a composite concept of different types of requirements and approaches to information. A remarkable analysis of this composite nature was made by Melvin Voigt. His study revealed that the same person could interact with the information system in different ways at different times depending upon his purpose in relation to his work, stage of his work, general interest amount of information already available to him and so on. Melvin Voigt clearly identified three types of information requirements. Factor on fourth type was added by other workers in the field. Now it is generally accepted that there are four different types of information requirements or approach. They are.

1) Current approach

2) Everyday approach

3) Exhaustive approach

4) Catching up or Brushing up approach

4.1.1) Current Approach

Every active worker has to keep himself abreast of current developments up to a fair degree, not only in his specific field of work, but also in the broader field or fields of interest or areas, whose developments can substantially change the course of his present work. Here the worker interacts with the information system in very general way browsing through his favourit periodicals going through the abstract journals etc. but all these without keeping in view any specific search for information. This type of approach is called current approach. The very nature of this approach requires constant interaction with the information system.

4.1.2) Everyday Approach

The second approach steams from the research worker's frequent need, in the course of his investigation for specific piece of information, such as, data, e.g. boiling point of a substance a method, a formula etc. The nature of information sought in such a situation is very specific and a quick answer is usually expected. Librarians are used to calling more or less a similar approach as 'short range reference' queries. Because of its frequency ofoccurence as compared to other approaches,

this is called everyday approach.

4.1.3) Exhaustive Approach

The third approach for which dependence on documents is very much necessary and hence bad attracled the attention of documents quite early is for all or almost all relevant literature or a subject. That is why it is called exhaustive approach. When a worker or a team of workers want to take up a new area of investigation or have come to the stage of reporting the results of an investigaton, such an approach to information is necessary. It can be easily realised that such approach would be occasional only.

4.1.4) Catching-up Approach

Next comes the catching-up approach which is still more occassional. A worker may at times need to have a brief but a complete picture of the recent developments of a related subject or a subject in which he was not very much interested or which didnot come within the area of his main interest. This is likely to be an area in which he is not an expert. As a result of this he is not quite current with the subject. Hence in such a situation, he experts to have in the communication system a device which

will help him in quickly catching up with the subject.(11)

4.2) Access to Information

Having seen the motives and purposes of seeking
information and nature and type of information required,
it is natural in the study of information behaviour of
user to raise the questions relating to how users reach
or interest with sources or information. How do users
and documents come together ? How do they discover
bibliographic references to formal sources ? Do they
search for information themselves or delegate it to other?
Is such searching for information deliberate ? Is
information largely obtained in an accidental way ? How
much timeand efferts are expended by users in gathering
information ? Some of these questions need to be answered
to know the information behaviour of users.

4.2.1) Source of Reference (Bibliography) informtion

Interestingly, the user researchers done so far,
have shown slightly greater consistency in their findings
on use of sources of reference information and how users
discovered reference-information than other aspects of
information behaviour. Recommendations of collegues,
chance acquisition, braowsging and searching an library

shelves, indexing and abstracting services and library catalogues in that rank order have yielded reference information to uesrs. The findings of Herner, Urghart, Bernal, Barber and many others closely follow this generalisation with variations due to methoUologies adopted and with a special note about users going to library shelves frequently rather than to card catalogues and acquiring with colleagues rather than searching abstructing and indexing journals.

About the use of library card catalogue as compared to direct consultaters of books on shelves, many studies have clearly established the fact that most of the users prefer to go straight to the shelves than consulting the card index and even avoid the catlogues. Further catalogues are often approached as a technical problem, than a problem in communication and as a result, they act as formidable barriers than keys to the contents of library. Strain found that library materials are selected by browsing as agianst using the card catalogue in the ratio 3 : 2. There is no extensive research about the browsing activity of users. As such too little is known about it. However catalogue-use studies have confirmed that a majority of the searchers are for known iteams. The rank order of approaches is subject headings

(80%), personal authors (50%) and title (43%).(12)

Some studies have reported a rather low usage of abstracting ad indexing journals by scientist and much lower usage by engineers and technologist. In one of the earliest studies Urq hart(1948) found that U.K. physicists had their references from abstracting journals (Urqhart, 1965) and 48% of U.S.;physicists used abstracts for reference. Radalls(1959) claims that library publications have succeeded in creating an awareness about the existance of literature. Further, the more creative scientist is less likely to seek assistance from library staff and the chances of pure scientist seeking the assistance of the library staff is much less than an applied scientist or technologist.

4.2.2) Accidental or Unplanned or Chance Accquisition of Information

in additions to getting bibliographic references by chances, users do get actual information itself in an unplanned and unitentional way in unfocused browsing and scanning of literature which is termed accidental acquisition of information. An important role is played by accidental acquisition of information in the work

of a researcher with individual accident summin g up to a systematic regularity in terms of occasions, places and times in an information rich environment where users can depend reasonable on such accidents to keep up to date and even to learn answers to specific questions. It is discouraging to find that information is found by chance as often as it is by formal use of bibliographical tools. It means coming across one relevant piece of information while searching for another having an item brought to one's attention unsolicited by a collegues or learning relevant information while visiting another laboratory for a different purpose is termed accidental acquisition of information.(13)

4.2.3) Delegation of Information Gathering Work

In a typical problem-oriented information seeking situation, a user can either search for information on his own or delegate this task to others. (Junior collegues and library staff) Delegation of information-gathering task may become necessary for more than one reason like of time as a part of division of labour among collegues in a collaborative work team, lack of access and/or acquaintance with source of information etc. Library researchers were not much worried to find out the

possibility and extent of delegation of information gathering task to junior collegues and other. It is generally found that the delegation to library staff is very low, and libraries plays a passive role in research process. It is important to note that when we talk of delegation of information-gathering, we refer to how often delegated. There cannot be a user who delegates on all occasions.

Lack of willingness on the part of the user to delegate information searching task to library staff depends on the nature of the information and nature of the problem or work for which information is needed. Some users do believes that others cannot analyse and digest information for lack of a scinetific empathy between the requester and the searcher.

4.2.4) Time spent on Information-Gathering Activities

As time is limited for any purpose including purpose communication and information-gathering, it is believed that nrmally users use their time economically and judiciously among alternative demands and in relation to the benefits or rewards expected. Spending time in such activities necessarily involves physical,

intellectual or congnitive efferts. Users-studies have attempted to measure time spent in informain activities by users either in terms of time spent on scientific communication or time spent in searching information or time spent on reading literature. It was also found that scientists spend more time on oral communication than written communication. Japanese scientists spent 2-5 hours a week on oral communication. In a recent study, Raitt has concluded that his respondents spend most of their time in written comunication rather than oral comrunication. An Indian study showed that 'time spent' is independent of specialisation, qualification and rank of user-scientist.(14)

5. DATA COLLECTION METHODS USED FOR SURVEY

From the sizeable literature on the subject it is quite evident that most of the general methods or techinques of social surveys e.g. interview, questionnaire, diary etc. have been extensively used by workers in the information use study fields.

5.1) Questionnaire Method

Questionnaire method is useful for collecting information from a geographically scattered sample or population at a little cost. This method consists of a

careful translation of the objectives of survey into a set of questions to be answered in writing by the respondents. A factual question may ask for the opinion or factual information. The questons are framed in such way that the answers can be given by checking yes or no or by selecting one of the possible answers provided in the questionnaire.(15)

The questionnaire method has some limitations also Firstly the return of duly filled-in questionnaire is never complete. Only a portion of population responds, bringing in bias in the sample. Secondly, some questions are left unanswered. Thirdly at times questions are also misinterpreted. Fourthly sometimes the respondent gives ideal or best answer rather thatn real answer. This tendency disterts the findings of the survey. There limitations notwithstanding, questionnaire design is now a well-established technique in social surveys and therefore suitable remedies are available to look after the above limitations.

5.2) Interview Method

Interview method is used to collect data through asking the questions in person. The misinterpretation

of questions can be avoided in this method as the interviewer can provide the correct interpretation and the answers can also be checked. Secondly there is no questions of poor response as in the case of questionnaire method.

Interview can be either formal or informal, formal interview is structered, controlled and inflexible. In it questions are worked out before hand and are asked in a particular order. In a formal interview no set questions, are asked and in fact answer of one question may lead to the next questions. This type of interview, however demands greater skill on the part of interviewer, though it may dig deep and becomes useful for the complicated cases.(16)

5.3) Diary Method

In the diary method the respondent is requested to keep a written or tape-recorded record or diary of his activities over a period of time. To help the respondent in maintaining the record as also to faciliate the final analysis of data, diary forms are supplied to the subject for different activity.

Since maximum effert is involved on the part of the respondents in this method, some of them may record the information incompletly, particualrly, when the period of diary keeping is long. This method may however prove useful for a short period. It is very useful method for a short period. It is very useful method for obtaining facts about respndent's habits.(17)

5.4) Observation by self

This is actually a modification of the diary method for survey using this method sampling techniques are used both for the selection of the study population and the individual observation periods of various information activities. Demand on the subjects effert and time is cosiderably less than the diary method. Hence there is a greater probability of obtaining complete records.

In some study of scientific journal reading habits of chemists and physcist, using this method as many as 30,000 observations could be collected made by 300 chemists and 400 physicists. The participants carried alarm clocks with them during all working hours for the fourteen consecutive days of the study. The alarms went

off at random intervals at an average of 3.5 times per day. At the sounding of an alarm if the participant was reading a journal, he noted down what he was reading by checking off a form. The report of the study brought out details lide part of journal read, ownership of journal. Where reading took place. Purpose of reading, language and title of journal read.(18)

5.5) Operation Research study

This method is actually observation by others. Selected participants are observed at random times during working hours and the tim spent on various information activities recorded. To study the apportionment of time is useful technique. A number of such studies have revealed that scientists generally spend almost half of their working hours in some form of communication, like perusing literature, looking up for references, actual reading, talking on listening to a colleague and so on. Within this only half the time is available for actual reading. Such findings have impportant implication e.g. if more time is to be spent on actual reading then the searching time has to be cut down than persently available are necessary.

The above five techniques as has been said are can be used for any type of surveys also. Naturally they are available for information need surveys also. After these let us consider some indirect methods specially used for information need surveys.

5.6) Special and Unconventional Method

5.6.1) Computer-Feedback

The computer-feedback method makes use of records obtained as by-products of a computer search. This method is an indirect on and can be used for studying user's search strategies and their improvement.

5.6.2) Unconventional Method

The conventional methods of surveys are either structured or semi structured and are intended to highlight those areas which the surveyer thinks are important. The areas which the respondents think are important are left out. In order to make the surveys more comprehensive and responsive to the needs of users the unconventional methods are suggested for instance biographical and autobiographical works of the respondents may yield useful information as to how they conduct their

literature search and make use of the formal and informal channels of communication.(19)

6. UTILITY OF USERS SURVEY

Users surveys have many advantages, more important among these are stated as follows -

1. Through a systematic users survey a careful evaluation of the library and information services can be had and these services can be further improved.

2. Sometimes the authorities may be in different to the problems of the llibrary and the librarian may be helpless in the situation. A survey of the library by an outside expert may help the library to bring to the attention of the authorities the problems facing the library as brought out by the surveyer for their intervention. Expert opinion of an outsider may not be ignored so easily.

3. A users survey draws the attention of the library authorities towards various aspects of library administration and service. It educates them about the role of the library in teaching and research.

4.   The day to day knowledge of the working of the library on the part of the librarian may not give him adequate insight in to the real problems of the library and information services.   A well planned users or library survey is needed for this.   It educates the librarian or information scientist too.

5.   routine annual reports may give complete information about the condition of the library and information services because these lack perspective and breath of view which are available in a through users or library survey.

6.   A users survey may result in laying down a policy for the library or information centre.   It also helps in developing a programme of action for them.

7.   A library survey may get greater financial support for the library when it is found that funds are a constraint in its effective working.

8.   A outside expert with special experience of survey in other libraries may recommend some new methods or solutions which have proved successful elesewhere for solving similar problems.

9.   A users survey may solve some of those problems
        which were retrading the progress of a library
        or information centre.   It may also inspire the
        library staff to put in move towards achieving
        the objectives of the library.(20)

REFERENCES

1. Sharma C.D. : Use of Libraries, New Delhi,
    Metropolitans Book Co.Ltd.,1978, P.43.

2. Ibid. P.44

3. Ibid P.46.

4. Ibid. P.47.

5. Brittan, J.M. ; Information and its users, Bath
    University Press, 1970, P.15.

6. Guha B. : Documentation and Information, Calcutta,
    World Press, 1983, P.62.

7. Mittal R.L. : Library Administration, 4th Ed.,
    Delhi, Metropolitan,1978, P.678.

8. Kashyap M.M. : Planning Library Survey, Lib.Hɔr
    11 (1-2) July 1969, P.98.

9. Prasher R. G. : Information and its communication,
    New Delhi, Medillion Press, 1991, P.P.211-217.

10. Ennis P.H. : Study of the Use and Users of
    recorded knowledge. Lib. 34, Oct.1964, P.304-14.

11. Guha B. : op-cit P.48.

12. Sridhar M. S. : Users Research : A Review of Information Behaviour studies in science & technology, Bangalore, Biblio. Infor. Service P.74

13. Ibid. P.75.

14. Ibid. P.77.

15. Guha B. P.56

16. Ibid. P.58.

17. Ibid. P.59.

18. Ibid. P.61.

19. Ibid. P.62-65.

20. Wilson R. L. : University Library Survey Its results. Coll. Res. Lib. 8, 1947, P.P.368-75.