CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1 Background Profile

1.1 Information and its Use

Information is an amorphous concept, less susceptible to a precise definition. Yet, everyone has to deal with it in many ways throughout one's life. Indeed, information has been described as the fifth need of man ranking after air, water, food and shelter (Kemp; 1976 p.101).

Knowledge in general and information in particular become more meaningful when they are transferred and communicated. The concepts 'information' and 'communication' are so coexistent that they are often used synonymously without much distinction in common usage and one often implies the other in many situations. Further, information is very closely related to communication. A discussion of the one brings to the fore, the other. The information explodes into power only when it is transferred and communicated. In other words, information is activated by communication (Sridhar; 1995p.26).

The purpose of transfer and communication of information is 'use'. Without the intention on the part of the ultimate receiver or beneficiary of information to use it, the whole exercise of transfer and communication becomes futile and information transferred becomes redundant. On the other hand, seeking and communicating information are two sides of the same coin from the view point of individuals concerned. Both have the same purpose: use. Information which has no use is no information. Thus the central thread of the whole range of activities relating to information-transfer and communication is 'use'. Hence the emphasis on 'use' and user-orientation to communication and information - whether from a formally designed and operated information-systems or from an informal source. A wide range of research works centered on 'use' and user of information called 'use and user studies' have cropped up during the past fifty years.
Information needs, seeking and using are the areas of fundamental concern to library and information science professionals. During the past 30 years or so, a considerable body of literature has been produced dealing with the information needs and seeking behaviour of both individuals and groups in a variety of contexts. According to Talija (1992), it is understood that information needs arise when an individual finds himself in a problematic situation, when he or she no longer can manage with the knowledge that he or she possesses. It is the information needs that triggers information seeking which is caused by "uncertainty due to a lack of understanding, gap in meaning, or a limited construct" (Kuhlthau, 1993, p. 347). We, as individuals and groups, "repeatedly find ourselves in situations where information is needed, gathered, sought, organized, retrieved, processed, evaluated, and used" (Solomon, 1996).

In this age of information explosion, our lives are based on information. Rapid changes in every field have made it a key resource for survival in this world. Every moment of our life depends of information, without which, it would be difficult to exist in the present information oriented society and the process does not stop anywhere as technical, economical commercial and cultural fields changes are occurring almost every moment. With the deep-rooted transformation of the world, our crucial need is to be informed of what is going on around us. Ever-growing competition among nations in the field of trade, education, technology etc leads to the acquirement of information and knowledge.

With the revolution in information and communication technologies, flow of information is tremendously increased. Access to information has become rapid and cheap. People can get to know a lot of every thing without going anywhere. Abundant information is available in their houses and offices. Now they can enter in libraries, information centers, documentation centers or an organization in cyber environment and use their resources without entering their four walls. We can say that the physical movement of people in this age has decreased while the movement of information has increased.

There are so many electronic channels and sources available by which speedy and rapid communication of information has become possible. As information has
become easily accessible, the use of information, cultivation of ideas and rate of generation of new information doubles each year.

"The total volume of information generated worldwide annually is approximately 2exabyte (1,000,000,000,000,000,000 bytes) of information" (Tidline, 2002, P. 221).

The term information overload is familiar due to ever increasing growth of information. It is available in variety of formats. Magnetic and optical storage (C.D. and DVD) are the compact and high capacity devices. Use of print sources has decreased due to these electronic storage mediums. Printed documents of all kinds comprise only .003% of the total volume of in existence today. The cost of magnetic storage is dropping rapidly. Digital information is getting dominance on printed information. Growth rate of printed sources has increased by 2% while growth rate of optical and magnetic media has increased by 70% and 50% (Lyman and Varian, 2000).

1.2 The Problem

Libraries and information systems are designed and built with the primary objective of meeting the information needs of a group of people who constitute their users. In the past, information systems and services were developed basing more on 'literary warrant' rather than 'users warrant'. However, in fact, the key to the aims, direction and contents of any and all information activities is the user. The first requirement for designing an information system, service or product would be to study its users. The users should be studied not only before designing an information system or starting of an information service or product, but also, during the life cycle of the system or services. The study of users increases the probability of a longer life cycle of such a system, while the lack of a careful study may decrease it sharply. There is a much higher probability that products and services based on user studies will be better designed than those based on intuition, anecdotal evidence or committee deliberations. Thus, the users form an important component of any library or information systems. How people find and use information in the course of their daily work has been a topic of great interest to LIS scholars and is an area of research that has been extensively developed for several decades. The different aspects relating to
users study has become the trend of research in the field of library and information science at present time.

According to Wilson-Davis (1977), one of the most important developments of research in the libraries and information field has been the growing emphasis on the user. This trend means that the focus today is not so much on the system per se, but on the system and its response to the needs of its users. One important consequence of this shift in emphasis to users and their needs has been the production of a great quantity of user surveys of different types and of varying quality.

The user is the key person in any information-system. All the luxuries of information revolution and problems of information explosion are centered around 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. The user is not only the most important aspect, but is also a dynamic component of information system. As such, understanding 'user' is an important and a continuous activity.

There appears to be an asymmetrical emphasis in library and information field on user education than on understanding the user. This is largely due to the system designed and implemented, which are unfriendly, complex and not concerned with the perceived needs of users. Hoadley and Clark (1972; p. 133) say that a library can achieve its goal if the library is more precise about who its users are. This precision, coupled with more research into behaviour and information-gathering patterns of these user groups, will assist the library more effectively in developing programmes and using its resources and limited funds to achieve desired goals. Accurate and up-to-date knowledge about users and their information behaviour is one of the essential ingredients for designing an information system. The effectiveness of library and information system depends on the extent to which the system characteristics correspond with the user and how much the potential user is willing and able to make use of it.

System designers, planners and managers have, by and large, failed to properly consider the role of human factors and their effect on acceptance and
utilization of information (Mick; 1980; p. 21). **Oldman** (1976; p. 1) reviewing the research in librarianship says, "the user has been given inadequate consideration from almost any point of view in most information-supplying systems". **Landau and others** (1975; p. 422) further say, "in a great majority of cases, the user is neither understood nor studied nor, in some cases, even identified until after the system is already evolved or in a completely operational state. Some have characterized this as an "upside-down system design".

Research in library and information science is more meaningful if the findings increase the efficiency and effectiveness of information flow. To do this, the emphasis should shift from system or service-orientated research to user-oriented research. Like in business, efforts should be put in primarily to relate product or system design to the perceived needs or those for whom the product or system is intended and the system operation should be guided by the knowledge about the user (**Cronin**; 1981; p. 37).

Finally, selling or promoting the information-services and user-education should only take a secondary position subject to the condition that the system design is based on a proper understanding of the user. In this way, only a librarian can improve upon his role as an information-transfer agent. He has to intimately and individually understand the requirements of his users and continuously update his knowledge about users through systematic studies and observations.

There is another very interesting line of argument from Garvey about why librarians should actively involve themselves in user-related research, communication and information-transfer process. Himself a scientist, **Garvey** (1979; p. 5) analyses the role of librarians and pleads, "the sooner librarians can interact with scientists in this process of communication the better they can fulfill their information-service functions". In the words of **Foskett** (1984; p. 61), "it is not enough for librarians merely to respond to new ways of recording and disseminating information. A more creative approach will come from a much great involvement with both producers and consumers of information. User-studies are necessary not only for planning and designing information systems but also for their efficient and effective operation.

**Markee** (1972; p. 119) stresses the need for user-research in the parent organization and says that, "a review of the library literature reveals that the amount
of library research being done by the librarian at his institution is not in proportion to his professional responsibilities". He answers the question as to where the research should originate by saying that the "library research should begin and continue right in the parent institution". This bottom-upward approach can only provide a solid foundation for national information systems of developed and developing countries.

User studies are the means for systematic examination of the characteristics and behavior of the users of the systems and services. Coover (1969) says,"........the value of the information centre [library] can be known only in terms of satisfying the users' needs."

According to Brittain (1982; p. 139), most of the user studies have looked at the situation through the eyes of the information professionals, rather than user; studies are therefore carried out in terms of information resources (books, indexes etc.) and processes (searching, borrowing, reading etc.) rather in terms which make more sense to the users in their work situation. There have been over-concentration on how users obtain information, rather than what they want it for, and what they do with it. Like wise, there has been emphasis on formal communication rather than informal.

Wilson ((1981; p. 3) has made similar comments, 'there would need to be a consequent shift in the focus of research from an examination of the information resources and systems used by the information seeker to an exploration of the role of information in the users everyday life in his work organization or social setting'.

The study entitled "A Comparative Study of Information Needs and Information Seeking Behavior of Print and Electronic Media Journalists in M.P. with Special Reference to Rewa Division" is a topic of great significance and interest not only to the scholars of library and information science but also to the information society as a whole. Journalists in particular, who occupy a place of eminence in the society and shoulder the responsibility of reforming the society and nation building through their writings, constitute a dynamic and potential group of library and information users. They are charged with the duty of translating the whole public life of mankind. Having been entrusted with such a heavy task and a great social onus, the journalists need to maintain a sound communication order in the
society. The phenomenon gives rise to the provision of supporting services to enhance their professional standard and to improve their writing skill.

In addition to this, present study also intends to identify the status and position of journalists in M.P. with special reference to Rewa division, their emotional attainments, professionalism, research activities in journalism and mass communication, and the available information resources so as to assess the future requirements in the process of making an overview of the journalism profession in M.P. with special reference to Rewa division.

Therefore, the present study is an attempt to make an in-depth survey of various information requirements and reading interests of journalists, their approach to information, and the existing library facilities available to them in the state of M.P. which has yet remained unexamined and unexplored.

1.3 Focal Problem

Researchers in the past have repeatedly pointed out that unusually more attention has been concentrated on information-behaviour of scientists that of engineers, technologists, technician and technocrats (Passaman; 1969; p. 8, Fishenden; 1965; p. 167, Marquis and Allen; 1966; pp. 1150-1160).

As mentioned earlier, it is important to note the contingency nature of findings of user research. Importing findings of user-studies of an alien culture or country would not only be inapplicable, but mislead local professionals. It has been observed that most of the user-studies are done in the western culture with either American or British samples. Experts caution in applying the finding of such studies for other groups (Wilkin; 1981; p. 21, Meadows; 1974; p. 108, Ford; 1977; p. 18).

More user-studies are needed not just to determine and confirm the general patterns of information-gathering, but to identify departures from the norm which, even if only in small areas, have significant practical effects (Hanson; 1974). The study of communication-behavior of users within the population would help librarians to identify and understand linkage roles of users and how their informal contacts complement and supplement the formal sources of information. Finally, as mentioned
earlier, user-studies help to check and improve upon the place of existing information system by objective performance evaluation and to formulate future policies.

We have seen the importance and the general lack of the user-related research. For various reasons, the literature on user research has necessarily been voluminous. Yet, findings are disproportionately smaller. Ignoring extensive data, repetitive as well as fragmented presentations, the literature does not appear to be so voluminous. The behavior-related research in information-storage and retrieval is not great - either absolutely or relatively.

Very little is known about user's preferences which can be used with confidence in the design of a new information-retrieval system. Due to its contingency nature very few studies can be considered to be relevant for a given user-population. The means for gathering needed information may be similar all over the world, but styles do differ according to local conditions (Lingwood and McAnany; 1971; p. 16). As such there is a need for localized comprehensive studies looking for correlation between various factors before they are generalized.

Even though considerable research has been done in the area of user-studies in developed and information rich countries, especially U.S.A., Britain, western and eastern European countries, practically nothing substantial is done in less developed countries in general and India in particular. Not even a single major user-study in any of the areas of science and technology has been done in the country. Even the major national information system designs were not preceded by systematic, reliable and comprehensive user-studies. As such, many present systems are surviving under 'symmetry of ignorance' (Kunz et al.; 1977; p. 67-68).

1.4 Research Topic

The topic for research is, "A Comparative Study of Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Print and Electronic media Journalists of M.P. with a special Reference to Rewa Division".

1.5 Objectives of Study

The present study has the following objectives to achieve:
1. To determine the academic background and area of specialization of the journalists of Rewa Division.

2. To find out the ways and means of collection of data for preparing report on any event.

3. To identify the areas on which the journalists gather information.

4. To study the nature and level of accredited of the journalists with print as well as electronic media.

5. Identify the sources which are used/consulted by the journalists for gathering information and preparing reports.

6. To identify the facilities provided to the journalists by the parent organization.

7. To identify the information institutions which help the journalists in enriching their knowledge.

1.6 Scope of Study

Journalists working as regular or freelance in the mass media like print media (news papers), and electronic media (radio centers and TV centers) coming under Rewa Division comprising of Satna, Rewa, Sidhi and Singrauli districts of M.P. are included in the survey.

1.7 Literature Reviewed

If something is not done to reconnect the study of use and users to their intellectual roots in the social sciences, then the spasmodic and non-cumulative kind of library research will continue (Ennis, 1964).

Academic research conducted by those in the library/ information science field studying issues surrounding U.S. reporters has been sparse and devoted more towards single technology adoptions, information management practices, and education (which will not be covered in this review). A review of the literature reveals that a holistic approach considering all information methods and types has not been pursued by the researchers studying American Journalists recently.

The findings of the work "Information Seeking Behaviour and the preparations of information channels by Journalists of two daily newspapers" by
Nancy LeeHerron (1986) has revealed that, newspaper journalists surveyed prefer informal channel use over formal channel use two to one, and the personal communication especially with colleagues was found to be the most important factor across all six principal areas of journalistic specialty. While journalists were relatively consistent on their use of the various source types, there was diversity in the way, the different type of journalists look for and use varied information sources. Although reliability of channel and source types use was perceived to be important to journalists, the extent of use of a library and its accessibility tend to affect the frequency of use.

Dervin and Nilan (1986) stated the trend of exposing the contexts of information seeking and using. Their approaches included the aim of being receptive to differences manifest in different information seeking and using situations.

Eden (1993), in his study on information needs and seeking behaviour patterns of journalists in Nigeria has clearly depicted specific areas of information needs and information seeking behaviour patterns of journalists in selected Nigerian towns, formal information sources consulted and the role of libraries and librarians in the media organizations in the concerned areas.

Kulthau (1993) adopted similar approaches of Ellis and Hauyan in analyzing of lawyers.

Rosamma Joseph (1993) conducted a survey of Indian journalists in the Indian state of Kerala who were in environments that had very little access to technology. This particular study focused on journalist's use of libraries – both news libraries and other libraries. The results of the study suggest that journalists in Kerala used the library mainly for background information on stories, while editors use the library to assist them in editing said stories. 86% of journalists surveyed use the library more than once a week, with most respondents spending an hour or less there. Time constraints due to deadlines are discussed at length, but the issue is not directly addressed in the survey. Instead, questions focus on who looks for information needed for a story, the type of print material journalists use and the purpose of its use, how often journalists use print material for a story, how much time they spend in a library and how long they have to wait for information.
Nicholas and Martin (1997) used semi-structured interviews, and concluded that journalists needed information basically for 5 functions such as fact-checking, current awareness, research, context and stimulus.

Ellis and Hauyan (1997) reported on an information seeking pattern of engineers and industrial research scientists. The information seeking activities are limited to detailed account of project types and projects phases in the context of (i) Surveying (ii) Chaining (iii) monitoring (iv) browsing (v) distinguishing (vi) filtering (vii) extracting and ending.

Rose and Middleberg (1999) who surveyed American daily newspapers, reported that 80% of their respondents used the Internet daily and another 13% used it two to three times weekly. The internet was used for article search (89%), email (83%), reading publications online (65%), finding news sources and experts (57%), getting story ideas (50%), downloading data tables (36%) and news group communication (16%).

Nicholas et al (2000) investigated the impact of the internet by surveying both journalists and media librarians. They reported that 68% of their respondents used the internet.

Millen and Dray (2000) studied the use of a particular listserv by American journalists who were early adopters of digital technologies. Data collection techniques, including participant observation, were utilized. Their quantitative analysis of the archive of this listserv revealed that there is a small, active community of journalists interested in utilizing new technologies, such as databases to aid them in reporting. Their study indicates that there are reporters who have a positive, active relationship with technology and that they found it to be useful in their work.

Majid and others (2000) in the study entitled “information needs and information seeking behavior of Agriculture Scientists in Malaysia” found the research scientists spent 16% of their office time on reading and literature searching, whereas academicians spent 9.3% of their time for this purpose. The study also revealed that the Scientists preferred using primary sources of information, pertaining to journals and review articles.
Information communication with professional colleagues was also considered for exchanging current research information. A large number of the participants felt that they had not been keeping in touch with scientific literature due to deficient library collections and services.

Maho and Hass (2001) in the study entitled “Information seeking behaviour and use of social science faculty studying stateless nation: a case study” showed that the main reason for the use and nonuse of government information was not due to lack of knowledge of the faculties about information services and sources but was due to deficient library collection and services.

Shokeen and Kaushik (2001) in the study entitled “Information seeking behaviour of social scientists of University of Delhi” conducted a survey and used structured questionnaire for collecting data. The result showed that qualification and teaching experience have a significant effect on visits to the library by the social scientists.

Kuhlthau (2001) on journalists – qualitative interview schedules on journalist on the Times London Newspapers to identify a series of information activity of newspaper journalist on the basis of the need to describe the forces of motivation of these behaviours, to describe the constraints imposed by the requirement of the product they produce to describe the situation within which it is produced and provide the means for its production.

The study of Chin Lissa (2001) on three American journalists concluded that the extent of change in information need brought about by the emerging of new technologies.

Padmamma and others (2002) in the study entitled “Information seeking behaviour of VISL scientists: a study” revealed that one third of the scientists visit the information centre to satisfy the information needs for the research activity, about 31% scientists opined that teaching in the department is one of the factors which hinders their information seeking behaviour. The study also found that 76.19% scientists used journals, 60% used books and 96.43% used newspapers to fulfill their
information needs. More then 83% of VISL scientists utilized lending services and (45.24%) used newspaper clipping services.

Atfield and Dowel (2003) studied 25 journalists working at Times of London to conclude that journalistic work was uncertain as a function of an uncertain context and their continually evolving plans.

Anwar et al (2004) concluded after interviewing 92 journalists in Kuwait that the use of electronic media is seriously lacking, non availability of in-house, electronic library, never the less fact-checking, background information and press releases are high constrain point in the Arab world.

Ojha (2004) studied the information need of the newspapers journalists in India. The findings of the study showed that journalists rely more heavily upon source types within informal channels of information for their day to day work. Personal communication with journalists within the newspapers organization was the most frequently used informal channel sources type. The library available within the organizations is the most frequently used sources type formal information channel.

Heinstrom (2005) Conducted a study "fast surfing, broad scanning and deep diving: The influence of personality and study approach on students' information seeking behaviour". The study was based on the five dimensions of personality i.e. neuroticism; extroversion; openness to experience; agreeableness; and conscientiousness. It was found that the personality characteristics of an information seeker greatly influence the information seeking behaviour of seeker.

George et al (2006) study aimed to explore graduate students' information behaviour related to their process of enquiry and scholarly activities. It was found that graduate students often begin with a meeting with professors who provide direction, recommend and provide resources. Other students help to shape graduate students' research activities, and University library personnel provide guidance in finding resources.

Shen's (2007) study aimed to examines how social scientists utilize information in the course of their research. Results were drawn about the use of
information resources and channels to address information inquiry, the strategies for information seeking, and the difficulties encountered in information seeking for academic research in today's information environment. These findings refined the understanding of the dynamic relationship between information systems and services and their users within social-scientific research practice and provide implications for scholarly information-system development.

Fatima (2008) conducted a survey on information seeking behaviour of the students at Ajmal Khan Tibbya College, Aligarh Muslim University. The findings concluded that textbooks and journals were the most popular sources of information for the students' course work and suggested that guidance in the use of library resources and services was necessary to help students meet their requirements.

The study conducted by Gwoda (2010) to explore the information seeking pattern of the researchers of various discipline in the University libraries in Karnataka State. The study identified the preference of the researchers over channels of information, various modes of literature search, purpose of visit, type of information gathered, frequency of library visit and time spent in the library. The results showed that there is significant difference among the research scholar of various discipline in the preference of various channels of information, modes of literature search, purpose of visit to the library, time spent in the library and modes of communication.

The purpose of Zhang's (2011) study was to report on users' information behaviour in China, a topic which had not been researched extensively. The aim was to help producers and providers collect and develop more electronic resources. The study investigated users' information behaviour at seven "211profect" universities in Wuhan, a city in central China. All these universities have access to the resources of the National Science and Technology Library (NSTL). The questionnaire included questions about respondents' basic identifying information (educational level, job, etc.) and their information service requirements. The correlations among users' education level, users, jobs, users' retrieval methods, literature use, etc. were analyzed. The results showed that most NSTL users were graduate students and young staff members and the number of male users were slightly more than the female ones. The purpose of the utilization of electronic resources for customers was scientific research,
teaching and the need for self-development. During a year, the demand of users was the highest in March and the lowest in August.

1.8 Hypothesis

The hypotheses of the proposed study are as follows:

1. The journalists of Rewa Division are academically and professionally much qualified.
2. The journalists adopt different ways and means for collection of data in different situations.
3. Most of the journalists of Rewa Division are accredited with print media.
4. Most of the journalists work in the urban area.
5. The journalists are provided with adequate facilities/amenities for performing their duty.

1.9 Methodology Used

Information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists and media personnel of the Rewa Division being the crux of this study dictates the very nature of the methodology to be adopted i.e. generation of primary data through interview schedules that investigate the information seeking nature of journalists and media personnel with focus upon the aspects of

(i) Types of information sources
(ii) Purpose
(iii) Satisfaction level
(iv) Level of search skills
(v) Problems encountered

The questionnaire is essentially a skilful translation of objective into a set of questions intended to be answered in writing. Simply put, it is a written list of questions requiring answers in writing.

This is a common tool for data collection which has been proved useful on its own and also when combined with other methods such as interview and observation.
According to Bush (1980) methodology plays a crucial role in every social research which ultimately influences the magnitude of data along with its scientific approach and the quality of its findings.

The present investigation adheres to survey method and employs a structured questionnaire to elicit information from the intended respondents. Questionnaires are often used in surveys as the instruments for primary data collection. The purpose of the present research is to obtain valid and reliable information through the questionnaires administered as appropriate tool for obtaining data about the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists in M.P. with special reference to Rewa Division: A comparative study. After data are collected, the same will be classified, tabulated and then to be treated statistically inferences relevant to the study.

1.10 Scheme of Work

In order to arrive at a convenient and distinct approach, the present study has been arranged under six broad chapters.

Chapter I: Introduction
Chapter II: User Study
Chapter III: Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour
Chapter IV: Journalism as a Profession and Journalism in Rewa Division
Chapter V: Data Analysis and Interpretation
Chapter VI: Findings and Suggestions

1.11 Originality and Significance of Study

Incidentally, user-studies would help to improve the relation of the library with users in an objective way provided it is done within the organization concerned. An organization-oriented user-study like the present one helps to stratify users into some homogeneous groups by various characteristics of users, their information-seeking behaviour and their interaction with the information system. Many similarities and dissimilarities among user groups would help to increase the effectiveness of information-services and information-transfer process by focusing information-services to appropriate groups.