CHAPTER - 2
2. **USER STUDIES**

2.1 Introduction

2.2 User Study: A Conceptual Framework

2.3 Genesis and Development of User Study

2.4 Classification of User Studies

2.5 Classification of Users

2.6 Methods and Techniques of User Studies

2.7 Trends in User Study

2.8 User Studies in India

2.9 User Study on Journalist
2.1. INTRODUCTION

Information is a vital resource. In the present era of information explosion, publication deluge, literature flood, and technological revolution, it has been increasingly felt, in library circles, that the better the services to users, the greater would be the organisational satisfaction. This is simply because, a library being a service institution is meant for users irrespective of their magnitude and desire. It is, therefore, necessary that the information generated at any point and on any subject be acquired, processed, organised, and be disseminated expeditiously to its appropriate users for their optimum use. User studies, therefore, over the years have attempted to explain the information-use phenomena, information-use behaviour, and information-use control and improvement in all its ramifications and essential conditions.

Thus, thorough knowledge about the users and their information needs is a pre-requisite for planning, organisation, and development of any Library and Information System. Studies about users and their information needs have, therefore, become imperative not only on the part of the LIS scholars, but also on the part of policy makers, planners and library administrators.

Most of the professionals today would agree that, a library in its true sense, irrespective of its type and location, is neither judged by its magnificent building nor by its huge collection, large human force, and still not by its rich fiscal resources but by its use. Because, the proper use of a library involves a number of issues, viz. use, non-use and misuse. With the pace of time, there is a spectacular change in the concept of information-use in the recent past and the role of library has undergone sea changes.
Initially, libraries were established primarily to make people aware about their documents and the type of information available. However, the real concept of library use as a part of library and information system emerged later owing to several factors, such as manifold increase in the rate of literacy and book production, information explosion and publication deluge, enactment of public library laws in different States in systematising their library services, emergence of interdisciplinary subjects, improvement in library techniques and procedures in bringing simplifications in the existing library systems, and rapid entry of computer and telecommunication technologies in the threshold of libraries, and many more.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, while formulating the five laws of Library Science, first published in 1931, had given immense importance to the use factor. His first law "Books are for use" followed by other four laws tremendously signifies the real concept of Document/information-use by the user. Inspite of Dr. Ranganathan's message to library world to keep "use of information" and their user in mind while developing a library and information centre and its services, the library planners and administrators have hardly paid any attention in this respect especially in India until the beginning of the sixties. The efforts in the past were mainly in the direction of initiation of freshers on the use of large university or special libraries, only as a part of their reference work. The last two decades, however, have witnessed commendable changes in the phenomenon of information use and control, whereby a good number of studies on "Information use" have been attempted by LIS professionals and researchers alike, so as to bring suitable reforms in the library systems and services in order to make the library more purposive, and user-friendly.

There are no generally accepted definitions on use-studies (Javelin and Repo,
However, a library use study is defined as any study that deals with the use of library, in any or all of its aspects, by its patrons or its staff (Tobin; 1974; p.101). These studies are primarily conducted to improve the existing conditions of the library systems and services. While users constitute one of the most significant trio of the library system, all directions towards improvement of a library system mostly concentrate upon them. Recognising the impact of the users towards the development of libraries, researchers, however, gradually become active and more inclined to undertake user-studies. The use-studies, as indexed in library literature, basically involves the study of one or three possible types of patrons. They include (i) individual users, (ii) specific group of users, and (iii) non-users. Of the 477 use studies indexed, 340(71%) of them were focused on individual users, followed by 132(27%) studies on specific group of users, and only 5(1%) of them are on non-users.

In a library and information environment, the term “user” becomes one of the most prominent terminologies on which, the very existence of the whole library system depends upon. If one asks “what for the collection?” for whom the library is meant? Why so much furniture? Why cataloguing... classification to be done? Why so much information services are to be undertaken in the library? The only answer to all these questions is perhaps, the “users”. It is, therefore, more transparent that the whole spectrum of the library system is directed towards users. Unless a given library system assesses the actual information requirements of its potential users and understands their reading tastes so as to make the library user-friendly and purposive, the whole efforts and energy employed in building up the library becomes futile. In order to create a good library and information environment to make the library services more effective and meaningful to the tune of its target audience, library researchers have
now started their research activities more towards users and their needs, than any other field of librarianship. Such research activities are often termed as "user studies," the concept of which has been dealt more lucidly in the succeeding paragraphs.

2.2. USER STUDY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A Librarian is usually responsible to answer certain crucial questions relating to library's effectiveness, choice and suitability of library materials, library’s collection, the degree of use and non-use of library materials and services, and the extent to which the users are satisfied with the library services. Professionals would, therefore, agree that thorough knowledge about the users and their information needs is a prerequisite for planning any library system. Thus, studies about users and their information needs are becoming imminent on the part of library policy makers, planners and administrators. Such studies which fall under the ambit of LIS research are popularly termed as "User Studies" (Subramanyam, 1983, p.200).

The role of the library as a social and service institution fulfilling the information needs of the society for its upliftment as a whole is being widely recognised world over. Although Librarian's role is not underestimated, he is primarily concerned with the needs of the users for whom the whole concept of the library exists. User Studies are, therefore, seldom considered as stigma of library usage.

Realising the magnitude of the concept user study, several information researchers/scientists have defined this phrase in their own ways. To Girija Kumar (1989, p.253), the phrase "user studies" refers to the diagnostic studies for discovering the casual relationship between the user of information, and the information system. User studies according to Lahiri (1990, p. 337), however, are often instigated as attempts to
understand, to justify, to explain or to expand library usage and consequently, to gain more knowledge about the process of communication concerning to their libraries and their respective clientele. Sangameswaran and Gopinath (1987, p. 142), however, have expressed a different denotation of the concept of 'user studies'. According to them, the user studies are hardly restricted to actual or potential users alone, as several such studies have also been made of non-users who are said to constitute nearly 70% of the population even in a developed country like, U.S.A.

User studies, in fact, were originated with the perception that, by understanding users' need and information-use, one could design an effective information system. Today, user studies are well refined using more sophisticated sociological techniques and focussing more on system-oriented studies as background research is primarily related to cognition and behaviour (Dhawan and Sachdev, 1987; p.103).

2.2.1 Why of User Studies?

The question as to why user studies are necessary, remains mostly undeated among the scholars. Without providing satisfactory reasons for conducting user studies, it seems the study would remain incomplete. The reasons for conducting user studies are varied and many. The following are some of the important reasons for which user studies are undertaken in libraries and information centers.

i. to know the users and their information needs;

ii. to identify the levels and kinds of user needs;

iii. to identify the approach, perception and information seeking behaviour of users in the parent library environment;
iv. to identify, by the results, the real strength and weaknesses of the existing library resources and services;

v. to specify the limitations or problems which might appear to discourage the use of the library;

vi. to understand the level of involvement and participation of the users in building a good library environment; and

vii. to improve the library system as a whole.

On the other hand, Sangameswaran (1987; p. 142) foresees five vital reasons that make user studies exigent. They include (a) to identify the potential users and to categorise them; (b) to identify their information requirements by the class of information needed and the level and type of communication media required; (c) to identify the existing resources and services so as to achieve comprehensiveness of information even without unwanted duplication of efforts and finances, (d) to evaluate various existing services in relation to their utility to their users so as to effect suitable modifications and to introduce new services as and when necessary; and (e) to achieve overall improvements in the parent library system from the feedback obtained.

The foregoing reasons are quite pragmatic in achieving the preordained goals of a given library system of any class, and to make the library environment more user-friendly and purposive. The basic necessity of undertaking such a study on users is, to know who are they, what are their information requirements, and what are suitable methods available to provide need based services to derive their optimal satisfaction.

Another factor that is led by the above is to determine the future demands for library development. Because, present problem will throw light upon the future prospect.
Moreover, any investigation into the current problems will definitely forecast the possibilities of future requirements of the users which in turn will help the library planners to bring suitable reforms.

2.2.2 Users and the Five Laws of Library Science

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan in his philosophy of library science has accorded immense importance to the users. He has incorporated the concept of “user” in a hidden manner in his Five Laws of library science. Because, these five laws centre round the user and the use of information. One can, therefore, describe the art of putting recorded knowledge or information to work/ the use by the application of the following five laws of library service propounded by Dr. Ranganathan retaining the basic philosophy intact.

1. Information for use;
2. Every user his/her information;
3. Every information its user;
4. Save the time of information user; and
5. An information system is a growing organism.

In the first law, he has categorically emphasised that information is to be utilised and exploited for its best use by the user. There is a clear indication of encouraging the use of information by the librarian for the user.

The second law, on the other hand, stressed the need of potential users for their specific information requirements at individual level. It refers to strategic aspects of
the authority to develop proper organisation of information system and services so as to provide the required information to all its users.

It is the information specialist, as the third law says, to promote effective use of information as custodian, agent and interpreter for the potential users. It denotes the right information for the right users at a right point of time.

It is an accepted obligation on the part of the information organisation to develop proper and adequate mechanism so as to ensure maximum speed and effectiveness in providing right and appropriate information to its users just to save their time which is the real motive of the fourth law.

The fifth law, however, says that, an information system is a growing organism - that inculcates the trio of information organisation - the specialist, the user, and the information proper which is one of the most important constituents of the information system. The growing number of users give pace to the growth of information to an extent beyond one's expectation.

It seems that, Ranganathan's five laws of library science give adequate weightage to users because, they constitute as the most vital and primary component of the system for which, the whole information system is destined. Again these laws offer an excellent framework for undertaking conceptual studies on user and its associated concepts.

The 'use' and the 'user' concept as reflected in the five laws, give much impetus and new dimensions to the problems of the library user in particular. This force, therefore, has propelled the researchers in the field to know more about their users and to devise new methods and techniques for understanding them and implementing
the strategic outcomes towards proper improvement of the existing conditions and developing new systems and techniques for their libraries best suited to their emerging needs.

2.3. GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF USER STUDIES

The capability of uses to select and use of information independently is a problem of vital concern to the libraries and information centres. The review of user studies show a strong interest in analysing the information needs and channels of information flow. Since the first quarter of this century, library workers have developed curiosity over their users. While a library is primarily meant for the users, all its activities and operations centred to a library are directed towards user satisfaction. In order to achieve the optimal satisfaction of the users, the librarian has to keep a very close contact with its users knowing their reading interests, behaviour, information privations and attitudes towards the library. These attempts can largely be considered as informal studies on users.

The libraries during the first quarter of this century are believed to have traditionally used to study their users through the records kept, especially the circulation record. Sometimes, the librarian used to find the use of catalogues, reference service related records and records concerning to library use by various age groups for conducting user studies.

The second quarter of this century witnessed a spectacular change in the structure, organisation and management of libraries, besides their rapid and extensive expansion. The most popular type of study undertaken during the said period was mainly on
this type of study, almost everything related in anyway to the use of the library was researched (Tobin; 1974, p.100) with new methodology of research called ‘operation research’ which was entered into the field of library and information science. User studies gradually became an object of research using the methods of this operation research.

On the onset of second half of this century, a vast number of studies were undertaken. The ‘Bibliography of use surveys, 1950-1970’ compiled by Atkins gives the evidence of nearly 687 studies for all types of libraries except for special libraries for which, 1200 studies have been undertaken (Kawatra, 1992, p. 100). In Academic libraries, there were over 100 such studies conducted (Ford, 1978). Wood in his studies ‘Factors influencing Student Library use : an Analysis of Studies’ presents a useful analysis and summary of some of the major studies on library use during the period 1930-1964.

Krikelas( 1983;p.6) has also brought out a ‘catalogue use studies and their implications’ that includes a chronology of catalogue use studies during 1930 - 1970.

The Centre of Research in User Study of the Sheffield University has brought out certain guidelines for the UNESCO for study of information user. The Annual Review of Information Science and Technology, makes a review of user studies and has been publishing the reports of research work on such user studies at regular intervals. The Library Literature and LISA used to index the current work taken up on user studies. In addition to this, there are a number of studies on library users which do not see the light of print. These unpublished studies give sufficient amount of information on growth and development of research on use, non-use and mis-use of library materials by the users.
If one tries to trace the development of user studies, it will be seen that, the real growth of user studies was mostly activated by two international conferences, namely, (i) The Royal Society’s conference held in London in 1948 and (ii) the Washington conference of 1958 (Devarajan; 1989, p. 5). Prior to these two conferences, an early user study in the field, however, was conducted in the late 1930s by the well known scholars, Louis R. Watson which was an attempt to investigate the distribution and status of libraries in the United States (ibid). A study entitled ‘Pilot Study on the use of Scientific literature by Scientists’ conducted by Ralph R. Shaw is considered another milestone in the history of user studies.

During 1950s and 1960s, user studies were conducted in a very limited scale. The other user studies that drew attention of the contemporary scholars include: (i) a study carried out by Glock, Menzel, Glessnor and Sewers involving the interview of 77 sample scientists to discover their information needs and information gathering habits, (ii) Study made by Voight (1959-60) to determine the approach of scientists to information, (iii) a comprehensive bibliography on user studies compiled by Davis and Bailey in 1964 containing 438 studies deserve special mention. Crawford also reported that by 1977, more than 1000 important studies were conducted on user studies (Prasad, 1992, p. 80-81).

The present trend of research in Library and Information Science, however, gives adequate attention to the use of library materials for the optimal satisfaction of its users for which they are intended. The trend of user studies further shows that, the present rate of studies on the subject is increasing year after year (Devarajan, 1989, p.6). Undoubtedly, the review of user studies shows a strange interest in analysing the information-flow among the users of various classes.
2.4. CLASSIFICATION OF USER STUDIES

User study is broadly a technique used to assess the pattern of using resources. While identifying the use pattern, the researcher can be able to examine and discover certain other factors associated with the use of resources. Since there is no fixed principles concerning to taxonomically decisions of user studies, grouping of user studies varies from author to author. Menzel (Prasad, 1992, p. 77) has classified the user studies under three broad groups. They are:

i. Studies dealing with users’ behaviour;

ii. Studies dealing with the information use;

iii. Studies dealing with information flow.

2.4.1 User Behaviour or Behaviour Studies:

User study is primarily a method of identifying the behavioural pattern of the users. In other words, user study is designed to reflect the information seeking behaviour of the users in a given library system and environment. The interaction of the user is more a factor which is verified and determined while identifying his attitudes towards the library resources.

2.4.2 Use of Literature or Information use studies:

The pattern of using literature by the users can be a form of user study. That can give a deep insight into the information handling and building a collection development for libraries as well as improving the user and the information intermediary
interaction so as to provide the information services effectively. In other words, studies which are conducted to find out the use of any communication medium falls under the ambit of information use studies.

2.4.3 **Information Needs or Information Flow Studies:**

The concept of information needs which is confined to the studies of users, use and uses forms one of the most extensive and amorphous areas of research in library and information science today. Information needs under the ambit of user study is primarily designed to find out the pattern of library use, information systems, library materials and catalogue, and such other tools, information seeking and gathering habits of various groups of users including the use of myriad information/sources.

R. G. Prasher (1991, p.208), on the other hand, has classified the user studies under the four broad divisions, perhaps, taking the type of explanation provided in the studies into account. These four divisions are: (i) descriptive studies, (ii) analytical studies, (iii) survey-based studies, and (iv) user-based studies. All these studies, however, seem to have attempted the ‘users as the focal point of their respective research.

2.5 **CLASSIFICATION OF USERS**

An information system is a heterogenous phenomenon which consists of various user groups and sub-groups. A library user can be any person needing information from a system. A user can be distinguishable by the type of information he/she needs. The users of one type of library are essentially different from those of another type. Information users, therefore, can be classified on the basis of their typology, occupation,
the purposes for which they need information, their age, qualification and professional position etc. The total population of main user groups primarily fall under two basic groups. They are: (i) Actual users and potential users (Lazer, 1985, p. 50).

Actual users are those persons who actually use information from an information system/library. The other group consists of persons who do not make use of the services of an information system, but have the potential to become users. They are, therefore, known as potential users.

A library and information system is more concerned with the actual users compared to the latter category. In terms of the information needs, a user can be a student, teacher, scientist, engineer, journalist, technologists, researcher, physician, manager and planner. Taking into consideration, the duty and responsibility, nature of job they perform, the position they hold and needs and attitude they develop, the users of information may be classified into the following three categories (Atherton, 1977, p. 124).

(i) Researchers in the basic science.
(ii) Practitioners and technician engaged in development.
(iii) Managers, planners and decision makers.

The exhaustiveness of this grouping has left some other core users of information. To define broadly the users of information in accordance with classification principles, they can either be living and non-living entities. Under living users- they are individuals or group of individuals. And under non-living entity - they are organisations, institutions and other corporate bodies who primarily deal with information for various developmental and operational activities.
However, in either case, an information manager or the librarian, in order to provide meaningful and effective information service, should ascertain the exact information requirements of his library users. In fact, he should reply to himself who are his users? What are their needs? How do they approach to information? How do they behave while using information? Answers to these questions are imminent on the part of the Librarian so as to justify its existence.

2.6 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES USED IN USER STUDIES

User study is the job of an information researcher designed to assess the psychological and social attributes of the user. Readers’ preferences, choices, attitudes and interests are determined on the basis of information they require. A thorough and deep study is usually made to measure their pattern of information behaviour so as to influence and design an information system. This user study can be undertaken by a number of methods and techniques.

In user study, the unit of analysis is typically the individual person, but there can be a group or an entity. In other words, it is called, sampling the population. Several methods are now used to try and achieve the goal of sampling, which is to avail the set of representative of the population being studied.

Survey method used in social science research seems to be the most widely accepted research techniques. Here, the approach is that, a sample of individuals having worked in the specific field or experiences, are requested to provide certain information. The response obtained there from constitutes the data upon which the research hypotheses are examined. This method is called, survey method. Survey technique cover any or
all the facts of a library or information system including myriad characteristics of users themselves. The following criteria can be considered while undertaking a survey on users.

In order to evaluate the decision making process and assessing the effectiveness of the library system, it is essential to determine the purpose fulfilling library and information system and level of success of a variety of programmes and services, so as to assist in designing, continuing, modifying the existing programmes and services, to establish priorities among programmes and services and to solve specific problems in order to overcome deficiencies, if any, found in the existing system.

To establish user interaction with the system, it is imperative to determine the level of user satisfaction and attitudes, to identify users' successes and failures, to determine the patterns and levels of use, to ascertain the potential and actual users, and along with their information privations and subject preferences.

User characteristics play a vital role in the survey in which the factors like user interests, life styles, information flow and literature use habits, information sources they seek and trends and needs etc. matter more crucial.

Although a number of methods are followed in user survey, three major methods seem to be popularly used to elicit information from respondents. They are: (i) personal interview, (ii) the questionnaires and (iii) the telephone survey (Nachimias and Nachmias, 1991, p. 181). There are other methods like observation, analysis of library records, citation analysis, etc. which are also being applied by some scholars taking the typical environment of individual library into account.
Interview is a face to face interpersonal role situation in which, the interviewer asks respondents questions designed to obtain answers pertinent to the research hypothesis. The questions, their wording and sequence define the extent to which the interview is structured. The structured interview involves the use of a set of predetermined questions and of highly standardized techniques of recording. Against this, the unstructured interview appears to be the central technique of collecting information research studies. Interview of users, most of the time, reveals data on user and non-user attitudes and perceptions about library use. The response received there from gives the greatest amount of probing and answer seeking.

Another method of survey of users is telephone interview. It is characterised as a semi-personal method of collecting information. This method has gained general acceptance during the last few years as a substitute for personal interviewing. It is convenient and produces a significant cost saving and higher response.

Questionnaire method is normally regarded as an impersonal survey method. In this process, a clearly and specifically defined group of users are asked to answer a number of identical questions. These individuals are administered with a questionnaire either by local distribution or through mail with an onus to fill out on their own. This method seems to be the most suitable and convenient due to its lower cost, greater autonomy and accessibility. A questionnaire is the most common accepted device used in measuring library use and users' attitudes towards library resources. This technique gives detail information about users habit, perception on the functioning of the library and opinion on improving the standard of existing library services.
Observation is regarded as the basic, most primitive and widely accepted modern method of scientific research. Scientific research begins with observation and ends in observation. It includes the most casual, uncontrolled experience and practical experimentation. User study in the library environments can be undertaken in observing the phenomena primarily associated with the library use. By observation, information concerning to different behaviour patterns of the users can be collected in the library without putting any obvious burden on the part of the users. Most of the user studies conducted through observation method in the libraries are confined to the use of card catalogues, circulation of library materials, type of reference queries they put and the extent of their independent approach to library resources.

Guha (Devarajan, 1989, p.7-9), however, has grouped the existing techniques for user studies under three main heads which include:

a) General or conventional methods,

b) Indirect methods, and

c) Special and unconventional methods.

2.6.1 General or Conventional Methods

Under this category, methods such as survey methods like questionnaire, interview, diary, observation by self and operation research are most popular. Of these, questionnaire and interview methods are found to have been used extensively by the LIS researchers engaged in user studies.
2.6.2 Indirect Methods

This method, as the name implies, helps to collect data in an indirect way i.e., without coming in contact with the users directly. This method is primarily associated with the citation analysis and analysis of library-related records. On the basis of the materials used by the library clienteles, the researcher can ascertain the users’ requirements indirectly. Some of the important records that need to be examined include circulation statistics, inter library loan records, personal indexes used by the researchers, service demand slips of the reference section, users-profile, etc. can be used. Analysis of the foregoing records, according to Devarajan (ibid), provides only a partial view of user needs or requirements.

Quite a good number of scholars, in the field of user studies, seem to have used citation analysis as an alternative and most popular technique for user studies. Citation or references provided by authors in their documents become the basis of citation analysis. The implicit assumption is that, the cited documents which are used by the authors become an index to the nature of materials required by the users. According to Devarajan (ibid) though citation analysis, compared to other methods, is mostly viewed as unbiased, gives rise to a number of perils. These include:

i. Citation analysis gives only a partial idea about the use of materials as secondary and tertiary sources, formal and informal sources, etc. which in fact, are not usually cited by the authors;

ii. the possibility of their citing unused materials; and

iii. the possibility of self citation by certain authors.
2.6.3 Special and Unconventional Methods

This method includes computer feed-back which makes use of records obtained as by-products of a computer search with the emergence of modern technologies, extensive use of computers in libraries and information centres easily brings this technique into an effective one in ascertaining the requirements of the users. By this method, the researcher tries to know the way in which the scientists work, the formal and informal channels of communication they use, etc. so as to make his studies meaningful and effective.

However, Paisley and Parker (Sarcevic; 1970; p. 88) described the methodology required for gathering information about information use pattern in a different fashion. According to them, such methods can be grouped mainly under three broad categories, namely:

a) by asking people about it;

b) by observing its occurrence; and

c) by examining its artifacts.

These methods can be used either individually or in a combination of two or more methods depending upon the nature and scope of the problem and the number of users to be studied (Maheswaruppa and Hiremath; 1995; 293). Since each method or technique has its own merits and limitations, the scholars should be careful in choosing a method suitable to his own population, environment in order to arrive at just findings.
2.7. TRENDS IN USER STUDY

Researchers in the Library and Information Science, as the time marches, have laid much emphasis on user studies, particularly in the field of LIS research. As a result, the research literature in the field of Library and Information Science, particularly during the last decade, witnessed a spectacular growth in all its ramifications. During the 1930s, when early research on user studies were undertaken, the scope then was mostly limited to inside the library. But taking into consideration the variety of users in multidisciplinary field, such studies were undertaken concerning to the problems of the users beyond the library premises. The same phenomenon can be exemplified through an illustration in which, two such studies i.e. one concerning to inside the library or other outside the library of the University of Colorado were undertaken. The study concerning outside the library i.e. Student Union is a better represented study of library use compared to the study made within the library premises.

Library being the centre of information for both science and social science research, researchers have stressed the need for developing an effective communication setting so as to make a sound system for free-flow of information. To practise the same, communication, as a scientific method of dissemination, was adopted to provide a comprehensive description of all facts of the subjects concerned. APA Project of scientific information exchange in Psychology, for instance, applied several methods and techniques to bring out a comprehensive picture of the free-flow of information in Psychology and of the characteristics of all major media used to acquire and disseminate information in the concerned field. This study was more concerned with the participants who were seeking specific information through their attendance, their success in obtaining it, and the nature of information they sought.
Another well known trend is the recognition of the social role of the scientific communication as reflected in the studies of invisible college. Since the information generators are also among the principal users, the system continuously fed back on itself. With the adoption of system approach to the study of scientific communications, inter-relations and interdependence of various methods of communication system too have received increased attention.

N.G. Satish (1994; p. 26-27) in his work 'Attitude towards Information ................." mentions one definite trend that is, however, discerned towards comprehensive description of all facts of scientific communication in particular disciplines. The major trend in the communication research which he maintains include - growing awareness of social characters and social organisation of scientific communication as reflected in the studies made by Derek J. De S. Price and Donald De B. Beaver (1966; p. 1011-18) on invisible college; and defining the role of scientific meeting and enhancing its effectiveness as a means of information exchange.

Early models of user studies are more related to the document seeking and library use. Researchers used to confine their work on the practical aspects of library usage by the users. The centre of their attention was more of the library than that of the user. All the early models of user studies were primarily concerned with document seeking or library use than with the characteristics of behaviour which might usefully discriminate among information users and provide guidance to service planning. On the otherhand, Wilson (1981; p.3-15) also recognises the necessity of identifying the ends served by the information seeking behaviour within the wider contact of users' totality of experiences or users life- world centred upon the individual as an information user. He feels much of the user studies in the past have suffered from a concentration
as the means by which people discover information, analysed in terms of how the users ought to have been seeking information.

However, during the later period, there was a shift in the focus. The behaviour of the users and the coverage received utmost attention in most of the studies. Information user, as an organisational user, influenced the whole spectrum of information environment and was taken as a model of study. "Information Requirement of Social Scientists (INFROSS)," a study taken at Bath University (Line et al., 1971) can be accepted as a remarkable example in the field of user studies. This study, in fact, gave a new direction to the problem associated with the user study especially in social sciences having identified the deep understanding of the behavioural pattern of the social science users.

Another study conducted at the Bath University in 1973 on 'Design of Information Systems for Social Science Project', a milestone in analysis of the requests made to the National Children's Bureau Questions and Answers Service, is a user evaluation of an information Service in Social Welfare (Satish; 1994; p. 34). This study, in fact, had shown that while 65% of the enquirers were for information in a great variety of particular subjects, less than 35% of users, on the other hand, asked for references, various research findings and statistics.

A three-phased research project on Information needs and Information Services in local authority Social Science Department (INISS) undertaken in 1975 to experiment the multifaceted problems of the users aptly concludes that, specialisation of information services according to the scheduled work roles where common needs can be discerned is desirable and information services should be integrated in the organisations communication
pattern (Wilson and Stretfield; 1979; p. 120-130).

The foregoing studies have, therefore, established the fact that a more comprehensive description of all facts of scientific communication in a given discipline becomes the prerequisite for every information system. The scholars in present trend should, therefore, agree that user studies should primarily be concerned with the document seeking approach of the library users rather than their behaviour.

2.8 USER STUDIES IN INDIA

An in-depth review of literature on the subject clearly shows that a considerable number of user studies have been conducted concerning to the use of individual libraries by the various scientists and the general public alike. The outcome of few such studies which have set examples for the future scholars and the LIS professionals, testing the gravity of the individual library environment, provided a sufficient scope for the library concerned to revamp the whole system and to rebuild the library collection so as to make it more purposive, need-based and meaningful for those it is intended.

Carl M. White’s study on University of Delhi Library in 1965 was the first of its kind in India (ibid) which gave a detailed account of the library development in regards to its services. No definite standard for use in developing a university library programme exists. Among other things, the quality aspects of the library development rather than ‘users approach’ seem to have been predetermined in his recommendations.

Krishan Kumar’s study (1973) on the use of Sapru House Library serving Social Science teachers and scholars provides sufficient clue concerning the average number days and hours the library is put to use, along with the priority of information sources
being explored, thereby giving a scope for the library administrator to reorient the library system suitable to the requirements of Social Scientists.

Dhaniy conducted a survey of 100 readers at Rajsthan University Library in 1974 which revealed that readers demonstrated their interest more in using the library at College level with an optimal approach to library catalogue and handling reference books. The study stressed the need for user education for the new entrants of the college library.

The other such studies that deserve mention include the study made by Karuna Shah (1975) on the quantum of library use and pressure of demand from various categories of users; the study of Karki (1982) on ‘Analysis of Industrial Information Service in India’; Rajgopalan and Rajan’s (1985) on user studies on users of Library and Information Science Periodicals' are some of the notable works in the field.

The seminar on User Studies and User Education held in Osmania University on 1985 also stressed the need for conducting User Studies in Indian university libraries. The libraries have to conduct user studies so that they can prepare an acquisition policy which can help in acquiring appropriate information best suited to their clientele.

The work on user studies, particularly in India, very often followed the findings of the studies taken place in U.K. and U.S.A. which are primarily based on theoretical and review type without providing adequate data on observation. In addition to these, several such lesser studies have also been conducted at Master and M.Phil level
dissertations of library schools in the country, but are relatively inaccessible as most of them remained unpublished.

2.9 USER STUDY ON JOURNALISTS

Journalists occupy a very distinct place in the communication system of a country, as because they shape ideas, events, opinions and problems in terms of news that tremendously influence the society. Journalists significantly dominate a whole print media of a nation, which apparently reflects their social position, profession and missionary objectives in making the nation more informative. Since public opinion is more crucial and viable force than the contribution of the journalists, truthful and unbiased news reporting are highly essential to the successful working of any democratic system (UNESCO; 1980; p.233).

Journalists of the developing countries in particular, very often make the right to seek information imperative without any hindrance so as to communicate the same more effectively. Hence, journalists' access to, and need for information appears to be of great significant for research scholars of LIS.

It is the distinct obligation of a librarian or information scientist, among other things, to know the user community better by assessing their information needs and determining their information seeking behaviour. In performing such a difficult task, the librarian has to understand the users and to acquaint himself with their myriad information requirements so as to ascertain the impact of the library on the life style of the users who can contribute substantially to social, political and economical environment of the nation.
Studying users and use of resources will ultimately pave the way for the librarian to design an effective information system tailored to the needs of the target audience. Hence, users study is one of the crucial weapons through which the information requirements of the journalists can be better addressed and the significant results thereof can be analysed to find out the most suitable methods of service/delivery which can help to develop an appropriate information system for them in India. Since no such comprehensive study has yet been undertaken concerning to journalists as potential users of the libraries, the present study becomes imminent.
REFERENCES


