ABSTRACT

Essential to management is decision making and essential to decision making is information. Information derives its value from the effect it has on the behaviour of the organisation. If Management Information System (MIS) provides information, and if that information is used to make decisions, then MIS has an impact on management and on the organisation.

Managers are called upon to make a number of decisions in their daily lives. The type of decision depends upon the nature of the problem. Routine or minor matters can be handled by a procedure - a programmed decision. More important decisions require a non programmed decision, a specific solution created through a less structured process of decision making and problem solving. Because most decision involve future events, managers must learn to analyse the certainty, risk, and uncertainty associated with alternative courses of action.
Whatever the level of risk or uncertainty on one hand and the nature of decision to be made on the other, a manager needs information for making such decisions. In the olden days, information travelled very slowly, about as fast as a horse could gallop. Competition was scarce. As a result the only way of securing information about the market and the competitors was by venturing into the market and visiting the premises of the competitors. But with passage of time, quicker means of sending messages had to be adopted. This is because only with accurate and timely information can managers monitor progress towards their goals and turn plans into reality. All these information is filtered through managers values and backgrounds, which also influence the types of problems and opportunities they choose to work on. Their background and expertise also influence what they see as problems and opportunities. It is said that managers from different departments will define the same problem in different terms. Rather managers of different functional areas will deal
with decisions in a different content. Also managers at different levels will deal with information of a different nature.

The present study on management information system in selected industries have been undertaken with the objective of finding the information needed by managers for taking a variety of decisions. Seven organisations were taken up for the study. The study covered decisions relating to the four functional areas of management - namely production, marketing, finance and personnel. The data collected have been presented and analysed in this research work to find out:

(i) What information are needed to take a particular decision in a particular functional area

(ii) How far there exists a lines of similarity between decisions in different organisation manufacturing different products of differing nature;
(iii) The extent of variability, if any.

The study has been presented in seven chapters.

**Chapter One** traces the historical evolution of information, describes the theoretical framework of management information system, the decisions managers are called upon to make and the role information plays. It also deals with the various approaches to placing of MIS in an organisation. The researcher has suggested an improved model to overcome the deficiencies or weaknesses of the other systems.

**Chapter Two** deals with the methodology of research. The need for study has been identified on the basis of which the research design has been formulated. The nature of research, design of questionnaire, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection methods, the technique of presentation and analysis of data, the accompanying problems and the limitations of the study have been highlighted in this chapter.
Chapter Three surveys the available literature to familiarise the reader with the work already done. The academic and non academic work accomplished with regard to management information system in the national and international context has been presented. This chapter has been divided into various sections which deal with impact of MIS on decision making, traces the influence of computers on MIS, lists the different views regarding structure, design and implementation of MIS, and also emphasises its impact in the functional areas. The last section of the chapter presents a review of the texts available in MIS.

Chapter Four and Five analyses and interprets the data collected for the study. Each of these chapters have been divided into two sections. The first section of chapter four analyses and discusses the information required for production oriented decisions while section two gives an analysis and brief discussion on the information requirements of marketing decisions. Chapter five
also has been divided into two sections. The former section deals with analysis of finance related decisions while the latter deals with personnel decisions.

Chapter Six briefs the findings of the study in the same order in which analysis has been presented. Chapter Seven concludes the present study with a brief direction for future research.

References made in the research study are documented at the end of the respective chapters. A Bibliography presented at the end of the dissertation compiles the list of books, and journals referred to during the course of study.

The major Conclusions of the study are:

(i) For control of production, information regarding scheduling is a must. As such, all organisations surveyed made use of process sheets/charts to help them in this regard.

(ii) The concept of Just-in-time was not applicable in most of the organisations surveyed. This
was majorly because of the differences in the political, cultural and social set up, which did not ensure strict discipline.

(iii) For information regarding inventory, it was observed that it was done by first classifying inventory as 'normal' and 'buffer' inventory. Also information regarding the system of inventory control was an important indicator of this. It was observed that most organisations adhered to the 'P-system' or the 'Q-system' of inventory control.

(iv) Decisions regarding care of equipments and parts when in idle or running condition requires information regarding periodic inspection, major overhauls and minor overhauls.

(v) Decisions on quality largely based on information regarding whether quality is checked at incoming raw material stage, semi-finished goods stage and finished goods stage.
(vi) Initially budgets and forecasts were based on historical data but a shift has been noted towards zero based budgeting.

(vii) Decisions regarding attitude of customer was based on information revealed by administering questionnaire as well as setting of customer panels.

(viii) For decisions regarding wage and salary information regarding the number of existing grades, guidelines of National Productivity Council and paying capacity of organisation is required.

(ix) For manpower planning, information is needed regarding the nature of jobs and also the skill requirements of the different grades.

Though the organisations undertaken for survey were manufacturing organisations, the researcher concluded that the needs of different organisations differ because the products produced were different. Therefore, there exists slight
variability in the information requirements and hence decisions of differing industries. Yet, there does exist a common thread in the pattern of decisions taken in every organisation because the very nature of decisions would be the same.

**DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

1. This study may be extended to cover the service sector also along with the manufacturing industries.

2. Also, all subsidiary, dependent as well as related or associated organisations could be covered.

3. Only core sector industries were covered. The same study could be undertaken to cover the consumer durable goods only.

4. Further, whether there really exists any difference in the pattern of decision making in varied industries like sugar, textile, - the traditional industries and the core sector, needs to be studied.