CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY
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4.1 Introduction

There are many current awareness services available now from libraries i.e. in-house services as well as from commercial and non-commercial agencies.

4.2 Scope

The commercially available current awareness services are manual as well as computerised. What type of current awareness service is needed for the library or information centre of an industry/laboratory/research & organisation of a developing country like ours (India) is a question which remains unanswered in the studies conducted so far. Hence, the present investigation. The study is essential to know the effectiveness and quality control of any service of the library and information centre. The present investigation is conducted to know the effectiveness from the user's point of view.

In the present study, the various problems of CAS are identified and analysed. The approaches to current awareness are discussed in terms of their effectiveness
etc. It also demonstrates the benefits of CAS to the scientific and technical community.

As explained in Chapter III, most of the studies conducted so far cover only CAS rendered by the Local Documentation Lists (LDL).

Strauss et al. enumerates the following methods for providing the current awareness services:

1) Telephone to individuals
2) Noting references on slips and sending to individuals
3) Routing of periodicals, possibly marking certain articles for attention
4) Maintaining a card file of references in the library
5) Preparing a bulletin for wide distribution at regular intervals
6) Duplicating tables of contents of periodicals
7) Subscribing to centralized commercial services
8) Utilizing automation for selective dissemination.

The current awareness service rendered by any of these methods is useful. The present study will give the total

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picture of the various methods used by current awareness
service.

4.2.1 CA Bulletin

The attitude to the use of the information bulletin
(CA bulletin) concept as a means of dissemination is
changing. To get an idea of the trend, the present
investigation is planned.

4.2.1d Production of CA Bulletins

The study aims to bring some of the points to be
considered at the time of production of current awareness
bulletins. The study stresses what is being done by some
of the science and technology libraries. The investigation
lists the problems faced by the CA bulletin producers.
An overall picture of the current awareness methods is
presented. The following are the objects of the present
study.

4.3 Objects

1) To know the extent of the CAS being rendered in
science libraries.

2) To evaluate the role played by different types of
current awareness services.
3) To know whether the libraries modify the CA services to meet the changing needs.

4) To know whether the regional centres depend for their CAS on their main centre or central agencies.

5) To examine the problems associated with all kinds of CA publications.

6) To know the internal arrangement of the CA publications.

7) To study the physical aspects of CA publications.

8) To know how the computers have affected the CAS.

9) To know the effects of the databases on current awareness services.

10) To know the effect of the wider availability of secondary services through commercial data bases on current awareness services.

4.4 Methods of Study

There are different methods of studying the current awareness services. Firstly, the study of current awareness services by various methods of one or more libraries. Secondly, the study of the use of single bulletin from the user's point of view. Such studies are conducted by the library and information centre which
prepares it. It helps in knowing the use of the bulletin. This method is useful to those who are interested in a particular subject. Hence the user group is homogenous. Thirdly, the study of the use of a number of current awareness bulletins by a homogenous/heterogeneous group of users.

4.5 Terminology

4.5.1 Scientists and Technologists

Instead of using the two words 'scientists' and 'technologists', only one word i.e. 'scientists' is used because the difference between the two is not clear. Price has tried to make a distinction between the scientists and technologists. To quote Price, "They are quite different social groups, comprising on the one hand, the people who create new knowledge the scientists, theoretical and applied—and, on the other, those who make new things, new chemicals, new machines, the engineers and technologists. The dividing line is by no means clear; there are many people with scientific and technical skill and training who make nothing new, adding neither to our knowledge nor to our artifacts, but work, with their know-how, well
behind the research front."² Hence, for the present investigation, the word 'science' is preferred instead of 'science and technology'. The word 'science' in the present investigation includes the 'applied science' or 'technology' also.

4.3.2 Organisation

The word 'organisation' is understood here to include the scientific/research laboratory, institute, centre and the industrial concern.

4.3.3 Librarian

The head who is in charge of an information centre or library is called by various appellations. In some he is designated as librarian, while in others he may be called an 'information officer', 'scientist' or 'scientific officer'. The duties of all these persons are almost similar and they overlap to a great extent. Hence, the designations are regarded as synonymous.

4.5.4 Research Institutes and Industries

The institutes which are carrying on research in subjects like aeronautics, plywood technology, machine tool techniques are all applied science institutes. These institutes also do some research in the pure sciences.

4.6 The Field (Geographical)

A detailed study of current awareness services is based on the data from the organisations in the Karnataka state. Karnataka is selected because it has a large number of scientific and technical institutes with sizable manpower. It is 3rd state in India in this respect.

Karnataka is 2nd among the states in India which spends more money on the research and development. If we observe the statistics Gujarat state has spent ₹1181.97 (in lacks) (1982-83), Karnataka has spent ₹1182.34 (in lacks) (1982-83) and Maharashtra has spent ₹989.95 (in lacks) (1982-83) which are first, second and third respectively. 3

4.7 The Discipline

The science libraries are chosen because traditionally, the current awareness services have been rendered by the libraries serving science or technology more than the other disciplines.

The users data is also collected from Karnataka. Although it is collected from only one state the conclusions hold good for all the other states in India.

As referred earlier the research was conducted in only research institutes/organisations and not in industries. The CA services were rendered only by the research organisations about three decades ago. The situation has changed now. A good number of industries have been engaged in Research and Development (R & D). They have well equipped libraries and information centres. Hence, the industrial organisations are also included in this study. They are covered because they are 'Applied Science' research organisations.

4.8 Data Collection

The required data is collected by the following different methods.

4.8.1 Literature Survey

The literature on current awareness service was surveyed with the help of documents in the libraries.
4.8.2 Questionnaire

A suitable questionnaire was designed and copies of it were sent to as many as 150 organisations (Appendix I). Out of these 105 organisations responded which is satisfactory. Another suitable questionnaire was designed to study the user’s reactions regarding the use of current awareness bulletins.

4.8.3 Personal Visits

The visits were made to 70 (seventy) organisations in Karnataka. The visit to the libraries helped to know the reactions of the librarians for current awareness services.

4.8.4 Interview

Interviews were conducted with librarians and chiefs of information centres. This helped in knowing their personal reactions about the current awareness services which they are rendering. 78 (seventy eight) scientists were interviewed to know how they use the CA bulletins.

While collecting user data through interviews stress was laid on the users representing several institutions rather than on the number of users of a single or a couple
of institutions. It was the prime concern of the author to collect information from as many institutions as possible. It was, therefore, necessary to keep the number of users to a satisfactory level. It was decided to study the stratified samples just to see their reactions to the service of a particular organisation.