INTRODUCTION: NEED FOR STUDY, OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESIS AND METHODS AND MATERIALS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Managing information has become an important aspect in almost all fields and activities. Users of libraries require to be educated to use the available information effectively. When we consider the need to educate the user, aspects of information location, organisation, management and communication have to be addressed, keeping in view the "Education for Life" (1). Educating the users to the right methods that would enable them to use the libraries and information centres has become essential part of continuing education and education for life, as the users especially in the academic and research set up are encouraged to develop logical, creative and critical approaches to their subject studies (2).

Emphasis on self education has led to increased use of tutorials, seminars, projects, guided learning, teaching methods with aids etc. There has been less reliance on formal lessons and lectures. There is an implicit assumption that the learner is capable of finding material relevant to his needs. Emphasis on inter, intra, extra and infra disciplinary research, the researchers always find their information contingent upon other peripheral areas which often creates the problem of information location, selection and organisation of the material for study and research. Electronic databases and information available now in various forms often is less known by the users. Thus, there has been a growing interest amongst the library professionals to educate the user in managing their information for education and research.
Concept of "Library College" - a library centered independent study and learning process propounded by Louis Shores in 1934 received impetus by the Monteith project of Patricia Knapp in Detroit, U.S.A during 1964 and since then the literature on user education has steadily grown over the last three decades\(^3\). A number of national and international seminars, workshops, conferences have analysed various dimensions of such programmes.

In India academic libraries have become more concerned with the fact that many library users do not know how to use the libraries effectively. Thus the orientation, guided tour, library awareness, information management skills programmes etc., have been introduced. A systematic study on the methodologies, curriculum, approach, etc., adopted in different libraries is now almost imperative.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Agriculture Education, Research and Training in India has been a well organised and model system. Many of the agricultural educational institutions have introduced library users training as part of their curriculum. It was felt necessary to make a detailed study of all educational institutions having graduate and P.G programmes wherever the user programmes have been introduced. The problem addressed in this study deals with "Information Management Programmes for users in Indian Agricultural Libraries : An indepth study on resources, curriculum design and development of learners packages".
1.2 NEED FOR THE STUDY

Agricultural universities in India were established on the lines of Land-Grant Universities system of U.S.A\(^4\). Since the user education had its beginning in the Land-Grant Colleges of U.S.A, these programmes have become an integral part of the curriculum in Indian Agricultural Universities\(^5\). Even though the programmes of instructions have been developed at university level, a uniform curriculum and teaching is quite essential as the graduates would be continuing their education, research and teaching in many diverse areas.

Agricultural education, research and extension spread over 50 disciplines in agriculture, veterinary, animal husbandry, fisheries, home science, extension, technology, rural development, social sciences and others. As food being the essential commodity for human beings there has been an increased concern and research undertaken in agriculture and allied fields all over the globe. This also has resulted in growth of literature in agriculture which can be seen from AGRIS database which indexes over 15,000 entries every month. This growth has caused great concern about its access, storage and retrieval.

Information requirements of agricultural scientists are diversified as the users are specialists. The publications in agricultural sciences are so diversified that it is inevitable for the libraries not only to switch over to modern
techniques of information storage and retrieval but also to devise methods and programmes of user instruction. Thus, user education for information management in agricultural libraries has more a need based emphasis because of the very characteristic features of agricultural literature.

The first unified effort for focussing the importance of user education in agricultural libraries was made at the seminar of the Association of Agricultural Librarians and Documentalists, held at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, February 2-5, 1977. It was recommended by the Workshop that a course on "Use of Library and Information Services" should be introduced in all the agricultural universities and institutions imparting education(6). This resolution was made with a view to put the scientific and technical literature to a maximum use so as to enable the post - graduate students to make use of the library and information services effectively. This recommendation was accepted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the national body for coordinating agricultural research, education and extension system of the federal government(7). Directives to all agricultural universities were issued to introduce a compulsory course on user education and information management.

During 1985 user education was once again taken-up for discussion in the seminar of Association of Agricultural Librarianship Documentalists of India, held at Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Mohanpur, West Bengal. It was reported that out of 23 universities then existing
only 12 universities confirmed the conduct of a formal course in user education\(^8\). In the National Workshop on User Instruction Programmes and Instructional Systems in Agricultural University and Research Institute Libraries held at National Academy of Agricultural Research Management, Hyderabad during September 1988, it was reported that out of 31 universities and institutions of ICAR 20 Organizations had introduced the user education programmes\(^9\).

It is hoped that this study will certainly enable the managers of the libraries, planners, decision makers and administrators to know the areas of information management programmes for users to be dealt in the educational programmes. Problems encountered in implementing the programmes and need for developing self learning, travelling workshop, training kits, teaching aids and other training material are also studied. Users impact study would help us in the long run to modify the programmes so that "education for life", "independent learning" are well addressed in library programmes for promoting maximum utilization of information. The study will encourage and stimulate future researchers to pursue and generate more information / knowledge for use in Academic / Agricultural libraries within and outside the country.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Major objective of the present study is to know the development, implementation, contents / curriculum, teaching methods, evaluation and other components of user programmes adopted in agricultural libraries in India. It also
aims at organisational problems, resource management and evaluates the impact of training and exposure to communication skills to these scientists who underwent training/participated in user programmes. Specific objectives of the study are to:

a) know the status of the users' courses and the course titles introduced in agricultural universities.

b) analyse the curriculum of all agricultural universities and institutions' libraries where education and training programmes are the prime activities.

c) use of instructional aids in teaching by the Tutor Librarians.

d) study the faculty associated with information management/ teaching in agricultural libraries for the users.

e) analyse the problems of multi campus and mono campus for implementing the user programmes.

f) analyse whether the user programmes in libraries cover only library skills or information skills, wherein communication and technical writing skills are also covered.

g) study the evaluation methods adopted in the library user programmes.

h) assess the need for developing self learning packages; trainers training kits and travelling workshop kits.

i) analyse the need to introduce emerging topics relating to information management and information technology.

j) conduct an impact study on those scientists trained at NAARM, Hyderabad.
1.4 HYPOTHESIS

Keeping in view the objectives of the study attempts have been made to test the following hypothesis.

HYPOTHESIS - 1
User education / instruction programmes have been introduced in all the Indian Agricultural universities with credit courses.

HYPOTHESIS - 2
User instruction programmes in Indian agricultural libraries are not restricted only to resource exploitation but also cover communication / technical writing, study skills and information handling skills.

HYPOTHESIS - 3
Curriculum and coverage in all Agricultural universities for the learners is not uniform.

HYPOTHESIS - 4
Information Management skills has a wider scope than library use skills.

HYPOTHESIS - 5
Information management programmes in agricultural libraries are handled by the library professionals.
HYPOTHESIS - 6

Teaching / Training kits for information management programmes for users in agricultural libraries is essential for effective communication and learning.

HYPOTHESIS - 7

Scientists working in agricultural sciences are well informed and exposed to information management skills.

1.5 METHODS AND MATERIALS

There have been many methods and techniques which can be applied for collecting data. Generally the questionnaire method, interview method, observation method, case study method, Delphi techniques, diffusion study techniques, critical incident methods etc. are used in one or the other context. Any of these methods or a combination of two or more can be used in studying the "Information Management Programmes for Users in Indian Agricultural Libraries". For the present study, the questionnaire, interview and observation methods were used.

As this study is probing in nature, it was decided to prepare three separate questionnaires for all the three target groups i.e agricultural universities, ICAR research institutes and impact studies based on experiences, assumptions and objectives of this study. The schedules developed were discussed at full length with
a few selected organisations and scientists in order to know the questions’ validity, simplicity, omission and deletion. Feasibility test was conducted at the following institutes and scientist groups for all the questionnaires.

a) Educational organizations:
1] Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, Hyderabad (A.P).
2] National Academy of Agricultural Research Management, Hyderabad, (A.P)
3] University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, Karnataka
4] National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal, Haryana,
5] Haryana Agricultural University, Hissar, Haryana,
6] Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi,
7] Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Bombay.

b) Research Institutes
1] Directorate of Rice Research Hyderabad
2] Directorate of Oilseeds Research, Hyderabad
3] National Research Centre for Sorghum, Hyderabad
4] Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture, Hyderabad
5] Plant Quarantine Division of National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Hyderabad.
c) Scientists

ARS Scientists (S1) working in the above mentioned research institutes in Hyderabad, who had undergone foundation training in Agricultural Research Management for five months at NAARM, Hyderabad, during 1989-90.

Based on the observations, suggestions and recommendations of the feasibility test the schedules were revised and three questionnaires were developed (Appendix Q1, Q2, Q3). These questionnaires were mailed to all the target groups.

1.6 CHAPTERIZATION

Information presented in this study has been broadly grouped into the following seven chapters.

Chapter 1 discusses the need for the study. States the objectives, scope, limitations, hypotheses and the methodology. Brief history of development of agricultural education, research, extension and training in India is presented in Chapter 2. Related concepts of the study, definition, types, importance of user instruction programmes, user education vis-a-vis information management skills and a brief review of related literature on user programmes has been presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides profile and status of Information Management / Library User programmes introduced in Indian agricultural universities and other
institutes engaged in educational activities. Additional information obtained on course title, curriculum, credit hours etc., based on the questionnaire has been presented. Chapter 5 is devoted for data analysis and interpretation to test the hypothesis. Chapter 6 deals with a model curriculum for graduate programmes, undergraduates and short duration training programmes. Chapter 7 gives findings, suggestions and highlights, future line of research and implications of this study. Select references has been presented at the end.
REFERENCES


7. Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi. Communication No. 4(3)/76/Lib. dated 18th May 1977 signed by Dr. S.K. Mukeiji, ADG (Edun).
