

## **A Study on Information Needs and Information Seeking Pattern of Public Library Users of Barak Valley, South Assam**

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### **Abstract:**

**Purposes of Study:** *Information needs and information seeking pattern of rural public library users are varied on account of their different requirements which might be due to the various demographic, social, cultural and economic factors. Identifying information needs is the first step towards satisfying the needs of library users. An information seeking process involves a number of further steps, including: identifying information sources, consulting the sources and accessing information. Information needs and information seeking behavior is a kind of communication behavior, which surely be influenced by many factors.*

**Objectives and Samples of the Study:** *This study has been carried out on public library users in order to know the basic information needs and status of information seeking pattern of public library users of Barak Valley, South Assam which comprises of varieties of public library users viz. students, teachers, farmers, business class people, women and elderly people etc. The respondents of the present study are mainly drawn from the rural areas of three districts of Barak Valley where the majority of the people are comparatively having lower level of educational background and they are generally less educated.*

**Methodology and Research Design:** *For that purpose, survey method has been adopted by the investigators using mainly schedule which is supplemented by observation and interviews in some cases. The self-designed schedule comprising of 22 questions has been distributed amongst the randomly selected samples. The schedules were distributed amongst the 300 samples, out of which 215 respondents have responded. During data analysis, it has been found that only 139 users are valid respondents and participated mainly in the survey. So the major part of study reveals result of 139 respondents. The filled up schedules were collected from the respondents for data analysis and interpretations. On the basis of filled up schedule the data has been analysed and tabulated using MS-Excel Software. For data analysis percentage technique has been adopted.*

**Important Findings and Discussion:** *The survey finding reveals that majority of the respondents (47.0 %) belongs to the age group of 16-25 years. The study shows that the awareness about the rural/public library was more among the respondents and the highest numbers (34.53%) of the respondents visit public library once a week. It also highlights that most of the respondents (40.29%) prefer to spend at least one hour in the rural public library. The study also reveals the fact that the maximum demand for information from the respondents (88.44 %) were from employment related information. The Television channels (100.0 %) and Newspapers (98.56 %) are two important sources from where the majority of public library users (67.44%) get their desired information needs. Majority of the respondents (86.33 %) say that the information given by various sources are moderate. The study reveals that the majority of the respondents (82.73%) are very much satisfied with the information which are provided by the rural / public libraries available in their locality; and a substantial number of respondents (64.74 %) do not face any difficulties to access right information whereas very few respondents (32.25 %) are getting problems to access right information.*

**Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations:** *The present study has clearly indicated that, regarding the improvement of information services in rural environment it is necessary to make rural public library in every rural villages and make the rural people aware about the need and importance of the rural public library. Now a day's libraries play an important role in teaching-learning, making people informed citizens and make people aware about the various developmental schemes being run by the States and Central Governments. The library gives more information to rural community and help in development of rural areas. So, the Assam Government should take steps for the proper growth and development of Rural Public Libraries located in*

*under developed areas of Barak Valley, South Assam in particular and rest of Assam in general for the overall development of the state. It would not be out of place to mention that, Library Legislation has not been enacted in Assam. Therefore an effort should be taken from the Govt. of Assam for the overall development of public libraries in Assam state especially in underdeveloped areas for creating more jobs and extending more library services to the society.*

**Reliability and Validity:** *This was the first attempt to study the status of rural public libraries and to assess the information needs and information seeking patterns of the respondents. The validity and reliability of data depend on the responses received from the respondents. As far as the present study is concerned, it is original and carried out on the basis of random sampling method for determining the sample and before going for actual study, pilot study was conducted to see the validity and reliability of tools employed for data collection.*

**Keywords:** *Information Needs, Information Seeking Pattern, Public Library, Rural Library, Barak Valley, South Assam, North East India*

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## I. Introduction

Information is the basic material for the decision making process. People need information, right from the organizational level to the personal level, from the highly educated and experience person to school children, from a very famous person to an ordinary person, for taking the right decision in every step of life. In this information age there is so much of information being generated that we are confronted with growth of information which leads to information explosion, exponential information pollution. Due to information explosion or information pollution, the people are confused about the information need, information access and information sources. Again information access varies from person to person according to their needs. Thus, information seeking is a kind of communication behavior, which surely be influenced by many factors. It also involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kind of information which sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is sought.

The survey reports on the general lack of awareness of rural villagers, information needs and their inability to articulate these needs. Rural villagers are aware of their information needs, and their ability to express these needs will be assessed and evaluated. The survey also will identify the nature of information sources and information providers used by rural villagers in their pursuit for information, as well as their level of satisfaction with the information sources and information providers used.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Information needs and information seeking pattern / behavior is a kind of communication behavior, which surely be influenced by many factors. Rural people are aware of their information needs. As a developing country, the features that characterized the rural population in India include illiteracy, poverty, hunger, disease, and general absence of basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, electricity, etc. These coupled with peculiar problems of rural population such as early marriages, lack of income, withdrawal of students from school has created indolence towards any form of developmental efforts. A recent UNESCO report revealed that the level of poverty in the country is increasing at an alarming rate and the situation is worst in the Northern part, particularly the North East where Barak Valley is situated.

The present study reports on an investigation of information needs and information seeking patterns of Indian citizen living in selected remote villages or rural areas in the Barak Valley. Rural people are aware of their information needs, and their ability to express these needs have assessed and evaluated in this survey. The survey also have identified the nature of information sources and information providers used by rural people in their pursuit for information, as well as their level of satisfaction with the information sources and information providers used. Information seeking is a kind of communication behavior, which surely be influenced by many factors. It also involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kind of information which sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is sought. The survey also reports on the nature of information needs identified amongst respondents and their information-seeking behavior call for the adoption of an appropriate model to cater for the unique needs of rural villagers. It is against this backdrop that current models of rural information provision are critically reviewed. In this present survey, the barriers to information-seeking and information provision in rural areas such as language, are also has identified. In the present study emphasis has been given to provide adequate library services to the rural communities of Barak Valley and proposes to develop and strengthen rural public libraries in villages and make the rural people aware about the need and importance of the rural public libraries.

Finally, the survey makes recommendations regarding the improvement of rural information provision and acceleration of the establishment of Community Information Centres and Krishi Bigyan Kendra in villages located in Barak Valley. Govt. of India has already introduced CIC in North East India and Jammu & Kashmir, but it is perhaps not effectively working which needs proper organisation and management for providing information services and fulfilling the information needs of the rural communities for diverse needs especially for agriculture and horticulture, tea and rubber cultivation in the study areas.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Information access varies from person to person according to their needs. A study on information needs and information seeking pattern / behavior is perhaps one of the most effective methods of understanding user information requirements. It had been observed that the library user from different rural areas not often visit public/rural libraries and they are not aware of sources of information and also services provided by library also varies from library to library. Problems mostly encountered in tracking down the respondents who are busy most of the time either at farm, or doing other agricultural works and their ignorance towards the study itself. The problems were however contained to the barest minimum in order that's why it has not affected the outcome of the survey, as attested to by the high response rate recorded.

## **1.3 Barriers to Information Needs**

The barriers to information needs of rural population are identified as follows:

- High rate of illiteracy;
- Inability to access formal channels of information due to poverty;
- Lack of adequate and efficient information delivery mechanism;
- Ignorance of governments responsibilities to its citizens living in rural areas;
- Aware of making Public/rural libraries by the governments in rural areas; and
- Inaccessibility of the rural areas by different NGO's.

## **1.4 Objectives and Scope of the Study**

The scope of the present study has been designed for Rural Public Library users mainly comprising of illiterate persons, farmers, undergraduate students, businessmen, teachers which are drawn from various village areas of Barak Valley. The data pertaining to the study were collected through the schedule, interview method and personnel observation. The reliability of the facts depends on the honesty of the respondents. By acknowledging the kind of services undertaken by Rural Public Libraries, following objectives have been formulated for the study:

- To examine the awareness level of rural population for the collection and services of Rural Public Library in Barak Valley;
- To know about the library use pattern of rural people visiting the Rural Public Libraries ;
- To find out the kinds of materials available in the Rural Public Libraries ;
- To ascertain the type of information needs of Rural Public Library Users ;
- To examine the information seeking pattern / behavior of Rural Public Library Users;
- To identify their preference of sources of information to get right information;
- To examine the difficulties encountered by rural population while visiting Rural Public Libraries to access desired information ;
- To Suggest and recommend ways and means or measures for the improvement of Rural Public Library services by conducting various lecture programs, awareness of AIDS programs, workshop programs etc.

## **II. Review of Literature**

The survey of literature done by the researcher is in the pursuit of the present research problem that can facilitate the research problems and its objectives. A large amount of literature review are available in the form of library and information science journal articles and completed research works reported in the library literature are also scanned. Already carried out studies on Information needs and information seeking behavior of rural population and their awareness about the public libraries in the different villages of Barak Valley, are favorably considered. A number of works have been carried out with regard to the role of public libraries in the rural areas. UNESCO has done significant work for the developments of public libraries especially in developing

countries, which has also worked out as standards for public libraries.

## **2.1 Review of Previous Study**

Review of literature is an essential requirement for any field of research as it is necessary for a researcher to know well in advance the quantum of literature unfolded on a particular subject in length and breadth. This helps the researcher to be aware of the ground already covered, so that researcher may be proceeding further in the right direction. Thus, review of literature is very essential in a new research topic. The investigators reviewed only those studies, which are relevant to the present study, although many other studies have been conducted in academic library environment by **Sinha, Bhattacharjee and Bhattacharjee (2012)**; information searching pattern of college library users (**Bhattacharjee, Bhattacharjee and Sinha, 2014**).

### **2.1.1 Information Seeking Behaviour**

**Sasikala (1994)** examined the information seeking behavior of managers working in twenty different industrial organizations of Andhra Pradesh. It was found that senior and middle managers used information more than the junior managers. The survey shows that the managers occasionally visit libraries; they try to satisfy their information needs from other sources.

**Kanungo (1997)** made an attempt to investigate the methods of seeking information by the women researchers in the disciplines of history and political science in the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University. The study attempts to make a comparative analysis of the methods adopted by these researchers in finding, accessing and acquiring information. Being empirical in nature, the study has been conducted in the form of a 'user survey' using questionnaire and interview methods.

**Chakrabarti (2001)** investigated the information-seeking behavior of the Totos, a tribal community in Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, India. To understand the information needs of the Toto community, data were collected through observations, questionnaires, and unstructured interviews; census reports and government documents were also consulted, and the advice of community experts such as teachers, political leaders, and local priests was sought. The study found that the Totos mainly get information from non-traditional sources; they depend on the headman of the community, the priest or religious leader, mythological stories passed down from elders, gossip in community meeting places, and the marketplace. He concluded that the main obstacles rural dwellers are facing problems in accessing to information which might be on account of their illiteracy and ignorance.

**Laloo (2002)** explain the term information, information needs, information seeking and described why information is essential for users. She also explained that what type of information is needed by what type of users and for what purposes. The books also explained the impact of information in the user's life and also explain the study on technology transfer. She has carried out case studies on several categories of library users like doctors, engineers, scientists, social scientists, academicians etc and briefly explained various models of information seeking behavior and suggested new way of seeking information and fulfilling the users demand.

**Sinha, Bhattacharjee and Bhattacharjee, (2012)** in their article "*Information Seeking Behaviour of College Library Users of South Assam: A Survey*", emphasized the status of information Seeking Behaviour of college's library users of South Assam where the penetration of Computers and Internet is very low and teachers, research scholars and students are not very much comfortable using computers.

This review of literature examined the information needs and information seeking behavior/ pattern of the rural people of several villages of India and abroad mainly from rural public libraries. By evaluating the information-seeking behavior / patterns of users of different lifestyles and backgrounds, it was found that education plays the largest role in the information needs and behavior of citizens. By learning about the similarities in information needs between different geographical areas that are globally the most in need, steps can be taken to bring aid to those who need it in a way that is more cost-productive and efficient.

The studies reviewed also show that mainly they are focused on public library in different rural areas of India and abroad, library services, and public library use and user study. Another fact to be noted that even though many studies on public library services to the rural people have been conducted in other parts of India, very few studies have been carried out in Barak Valley (**Sinha, 2007; Lahkar, 2007**). Therefore, in present

study, an attempt has been taken to study the information seeking behavior and information searching pattern of village people attending public/ rural libraries of Barak Valley to bring out the ground reality before the authority for the overall up-liftment of Rural Public Libraries located in Barak Valley of Assam.

### III. Methodology & Research Design

The present study was conducted using survey method. The analysis of information needs and information searching pattern lends itself to the use of various data gathering tools whose effectiveness and reliability vary from one tool to the other. Since the population to be surveyed is scattered over a very large geographical area, in which households are largely unsystematically organised, the use of data-collection tools which would make it easier to secure a high response rate was essential. Primarily, the schedule has been used as a data collection tool along with observations and informal interviews in some cases. For the purpose of this study, other secondary sources of information have been also consulted.

#### 3.1 Designing The Schedule

Keeping in the view of set objectives a schedule has been designed in structural form. The schedule comprised twenty three questions covering different facets of the problem such as: the personal background of users, need of information, source of getting the information by the respondents, usefulness of information, awareness about public/rural library by rural population, and comments/suggestions from the users etc. To facilitate quantification and analysis, mainly close-ended questions were used along with rating scales to capture a response and have fewer missing responses. Few open ended questions were also included so that users can express their views freely. The filled up schedules have been collected from the respondents for the data analysis and interpretations. On the basis of filled up schedule, the data has been analysed and tabulated using MS Excel application software. For data analysis only frequency/ percentage technique, has been adopted.

#### 3.2 Sampling

The researcher has used the random sampling technique for the present study. The population has been divided into various categories, such as: Farmer; Businessmen; House wife; Students; Teachers; and Others. The present study includes 300 rural people from three (3) districts (Cachar District, Karimganj District and Hailakandi District) of Barak Valley.

**Table- 1:** Gender Wise Sample Design for Each District (N=300)

Name of the District	Distributed	Male	Female
Cachar	100	63	37
Karimganj	100	56	44
Hailakandi	100	61	39
Total	300	180	120

**Table 2 :** Category Wise Sample Design and Responses Received from Three Districts (N=215)

Name of the District	Students	Teachers	Farmer	House Wife	Business Personal	Other	District Wise Total
Cachar	29	7	22	17	10	3	88
Karimganj	22	5	20	11	9	5	72
Hailakandi	17	4	15	9	6	4	55
Total	68	16	57	37	25	12	215

#### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher visited the various villages of Barak Valley to collect necessary data. As most of the rural people are less educated so the researcher has used Schedule method for collecting the required data. Schedules were distributed to the Farmers, teachers, students, and businessmen with a request to answer the question. Besides, the researcher conducts personal interviews with the farmers, students and teachers to get the information about their need and their source of collecting the information. In this survey the researcher also wants to know the awareness about the public/rural library by rural population.

#### 3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

On the basis of filled up schedule the data has been analysed and tabulated. All the results have been presented in the form of tables and/or graphs. For the data analysis percentage technique has been adopted and for creating the graphs Microsoft Excel (application software) has been used.

#### IV. Data Analysis and Interpretations

Analysis of data is one of the most important mechanisms to find out the result of any research work. To wind up research problems, researcher has to organize and collect various data from various sources, which can lead to logical findings and conclusion. Data collection can be done by various methods depending upon the research problem. Analysis of data should be scientific in nature and easily understandable in presentation, so that there will be no fallacious or inappropriateness in the research result. This part of paper presents the analysis of data collected from various sources of information that could match with the research problems and objectives so as to derive reasonable findings.

The present study on “*Information Needs and Information Seeking Pattern of Public Library Users of Barak Valley*” intends to reveals the ground reality of public library services being provided to the rural population of Barak Valley and the information needs and searching patterns among the rural public library users. In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, a survey has been conducted through a schedule circulated randomly among 300 respondents including Students, Teachers, Farmers, House Wives, Businessmen and others belonging to the three districts (Cachar district, Karimganj district and Hailakandi district) of Barak Valley. The data collected by the above mentioned methods. On the basis of filled up schedule the data has been analysed and inferences were made based on standard statistical techniques. All the results have been presented in the form of tables and graphs and the present results has been shown in percentage (%). The software Microsoft Excel 2010 has been used for calculate percentage and creating graphs.

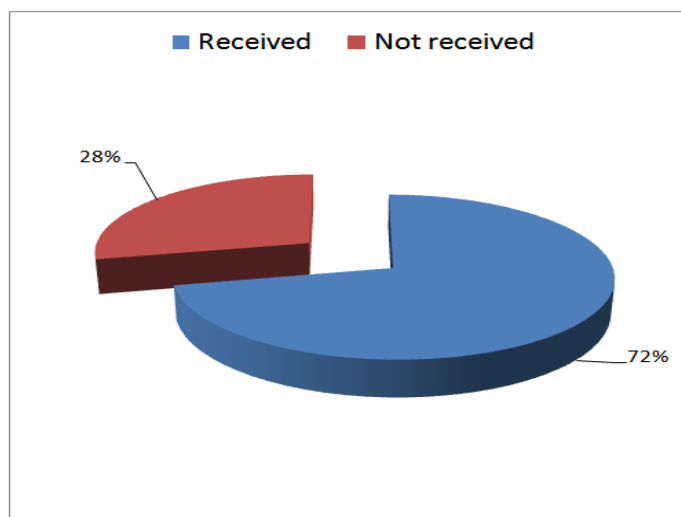
#### 4.A General Characteristics / Demographic Profile of Respondents

##### 4.A.1 Responses Received From the Respondent

A total of 300 schedules were distributed to the respondents, out of which 215 schedules duly filled in by the respondents were received back. The overall response rate is 72 %.( Fig. -1, Table- 3)

**Table- 3:** Responses Received from the Respondents (N=300)

Distribution of Schedule and Responses Received	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Received	215	72
Not Received	85	28
Total Distributed	300	100



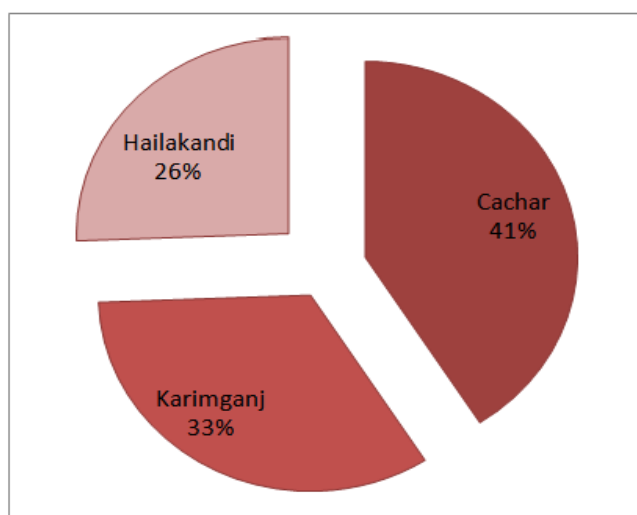
**Figure 1:** Responses Received from the Respondents

#### 4.A.2 District Wise Distribution of Respondents

**Table- 4** shows that the researcher has equally distributed the schedule i.e. **100** schedule in each of the **3** (three) selected districts under the personal study. From the Cachar District the highest percentage (**88.00 %**) responses were received which was followed by **72.00 %** responses from the Karimganj District whereas the lowest percentage of responses (**55.00 %**) were received from the Hailakandi District. (Fig.- 2)

**Table- 4:** District Wise Distribution of Schedules and Responses Received (N=100 per District & N= 300 for whole and Responses received from 215)

Name of the District	Distributed	Received	Percentage (%)	Overall Percentage (N=215)
Cachar	100	88	88	41.00
Karimganj	100	72	72	33.00
Hailakandi	100	55	55	26.00
Total	<b>300</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.00</b>



**Figure-2:** District Wise Distribution of Schedules and Responses Received

#### 4.A.3 Gender Wise Distribution Of Respondents

**Table -5** reveals that out of **215** respondents about **127 (59.07%)** responses were received from the male respondents, whereas **88 (40.93%)** responses were received from the female respondents. It shows that male responses are more than female responses. (Fig.-3)

**Table 5:** Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents (N=215)

Gender	Responses Received	Percentage (%)
Male	127	59.07
Female	88	40.93
Total	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>

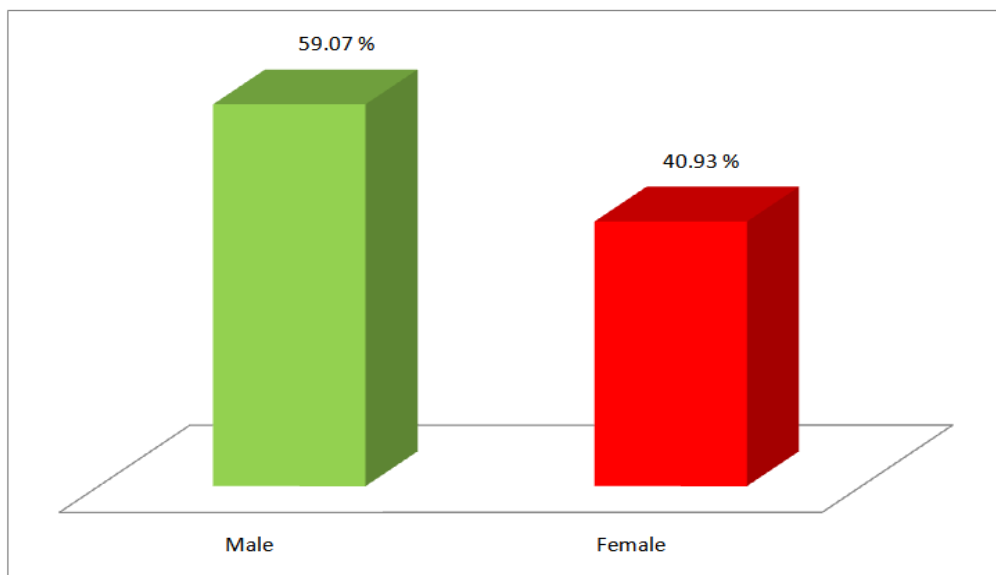


Figure- 3: Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

#### 4.A.4 Age Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table -6 shows that majority of the respondents **101 (47.00 %)** were in the age group 16 -25; **55 (25.00 %)** respondents were in the age group 26 – 35; **37(17.00%)** respondents were in the age group 36–45; whereas only **12 (6.00 %)** respondents were in the age group 46– 55 and **10 (5.00 %)** respondents were in the age group of above 55 which indicates that most of the respondents belongs to younger generation who are attending the Rural Public Libraries regularly for seeking their desired information. (Fig.-4)

Table -6: Age Wise Distribution of Respondents (N=215)

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>16-25</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>47.00</b>
26-35	55	25.00
36-45	37	17.00
46-55	12	6.00
Above 55	10	5.00
Total	215	100.00

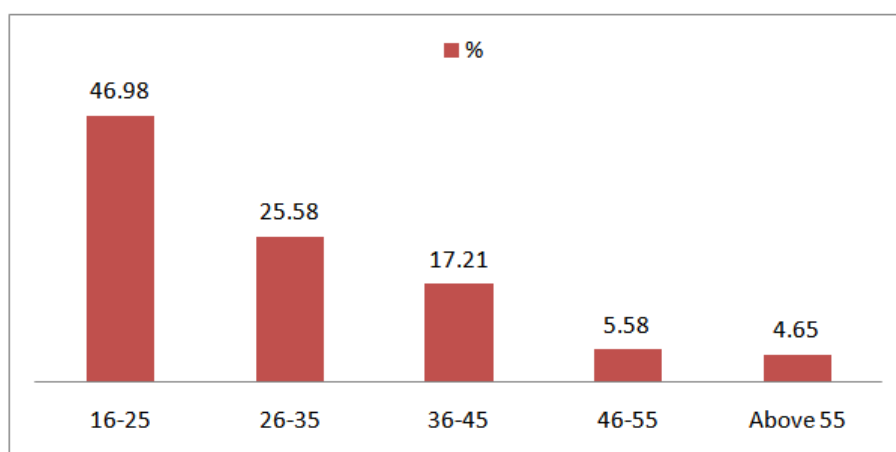


Figure -4: Age - Wise Distribution of Respondents.

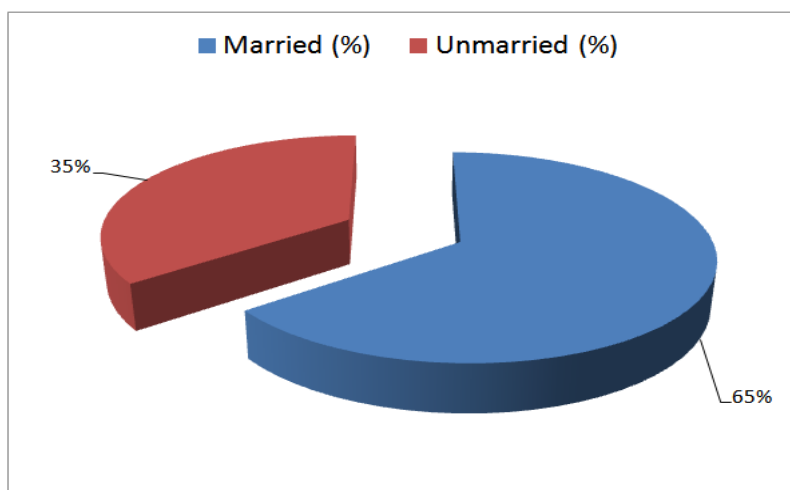
#### 4.A.5 Marital Status Of The Respondents



**Table- 7** reveals that out of **215** respondents **139 (64.65%)** were married, whereas **76 (35.35%)** respondents were unmarried. (Fig.-5). It is good sign that elderly people are attending rural / public libraries for the fulfillment of their diverse needs.

**Table 7:** Marital Status of the Respondents (N=215)

Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage(%)
<b>Married</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>64.65</b>
Unmarried	76	35.35
Total	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>



**Figure- 5:** Marital Status of the Respondents

#### 4.A.6 Category Wise Distribution Of Respondents

These respondents were divided into six categories i.e. Student, Teacher, Farmers , House wife, Businessmen and Others. The percentages of responses received from them were **31.63%**, **7.44%**, **26.51%**, **17.21%** **11.63%** and **5.58%** respectively. The highest percentages of responses (i.e. **31.63%**) were received from the Students and the lowest percentages of responses (**5.58%**) were received from the others. (Fig.-6)

**Table 8:** Category wise Distribution of Respondents (N=215)

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Rank
<b>Student</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>31.63</b>	<b>I</b>
Teacher	16	7.44	V
Farmer	57	26.51	II
House Wife	37	17.21	III
Businessmen	25	11.63	IV
Others	12	5.58	VI
Total	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>	

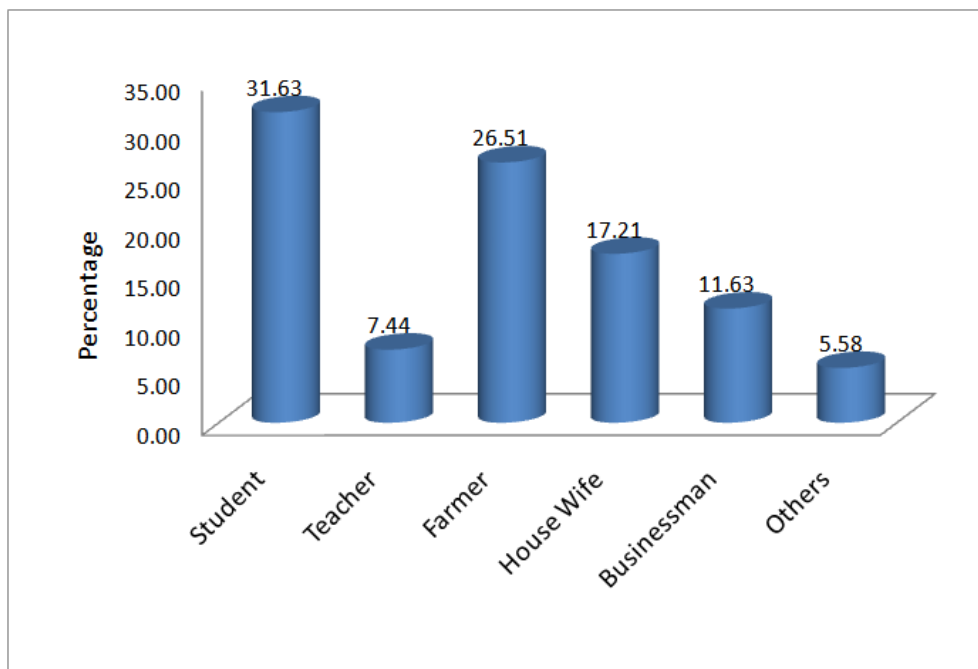


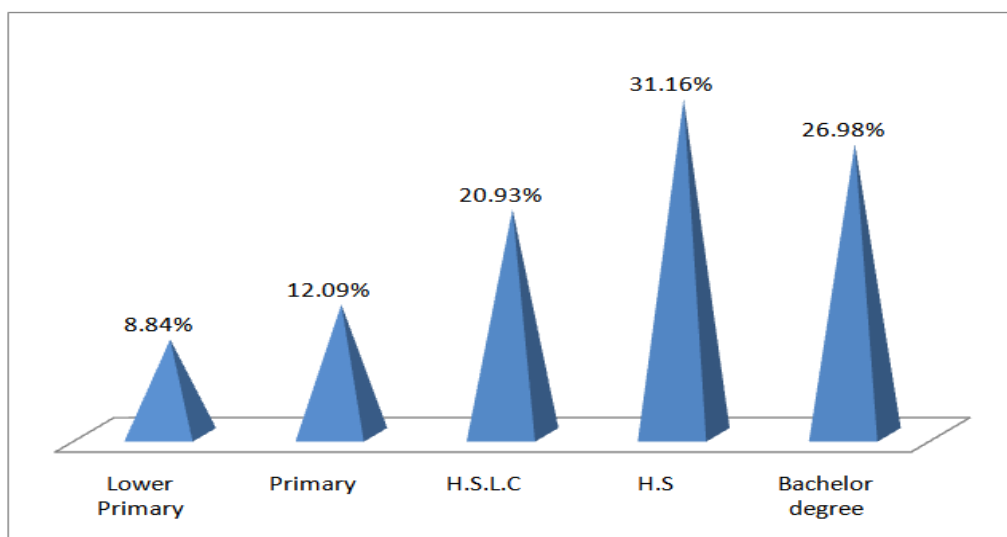
Figure -6: Category wise Distribution of Respondents

#### 4.A.7 Qualification Wise Distribution Of Respondents

The qualification of respondents were divided into five(5) categories i.e. Lower primary, Primary, H.S.L.C, H.S. and Bachelor Degree. The percentages of responses received from them were **8.84%**, **12.09%**, **20.93%**, **31.16%** and **26.98%** respectively. The highest percentage of qualification of respondents (31.16%) was H.S. passed and the lowest percentage of qualification of respondents (8.84%) was Lower Primary passed. (Fig-7)

Table- 9: Qualification Wise Distribution of Respondents (N=215)

Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Rank
Lower Primary	19	8.84	V
Primary	26	12.09	IV
H.S.L.C.	45	20.93	III
<b>H.S.</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>31.16</b>	<b>I</b>
Bachelor Degree	58	26.98	II
Total	215	100	



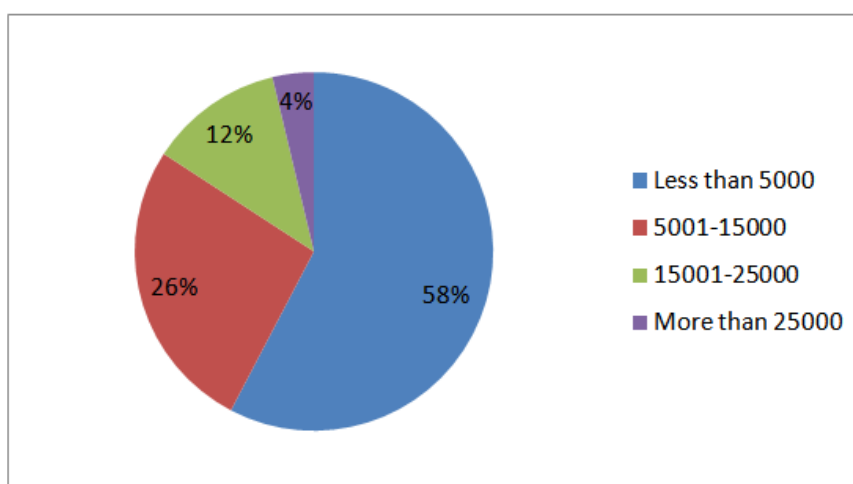
**Figure 7:** Qualification wise distribution of respondents

**4.A.8 Income Wise Distribution Of Respondents**

According to their per month income, The respondents were divided into Four(4) categories i.e. Less than Rs. 5000, Rs. 5001 to Rs. 15000 , Rs. 15001 to Rs. 25000 and more than Rs. 25000 . The highest percentage of responses of respondents (57.67%) were from income of Less than Rs. 5000 and the lowest percentage of responses of respondents (3.73%) were from income of More than Rs. 25000. (Fig.-8)

**Table -10:** Income wise Distribution of Respondents (N=215)

Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Less than 5000</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>57.67</b>
5001-15000	57	26.51
15001-25000	26	12.09
More than 25000	08	03.73
Total	215	100.00



**Figure - 8:** Income wise Distribution of Respondents

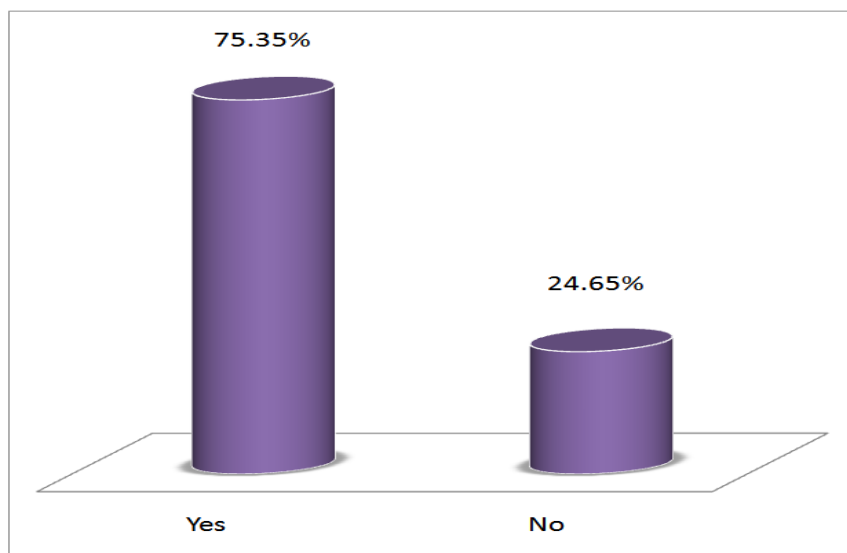
**4. B. Public Library Visit Pattern**

**4.B.1 Awareness about the Public Library**

The Table- 11 reveals that out of 215 respondents, about 162 (75.35%) respondents are aware about the public library, whereas 53(24.65%) respondents are still not aware about the public library. Therefore, the findings of this survey reveals that the majority of the rural people of Barak Valley are aware of the existence of public libraries in their locality and they want to use the services provided by these public/ rural libraries. (Fig.-9 )

**Table 11 :** Awareness about the Public Library (N=215)

Response	Nos.	Percentage(%)
Yes	162	75.35
No	53	24.65
Total	215	100



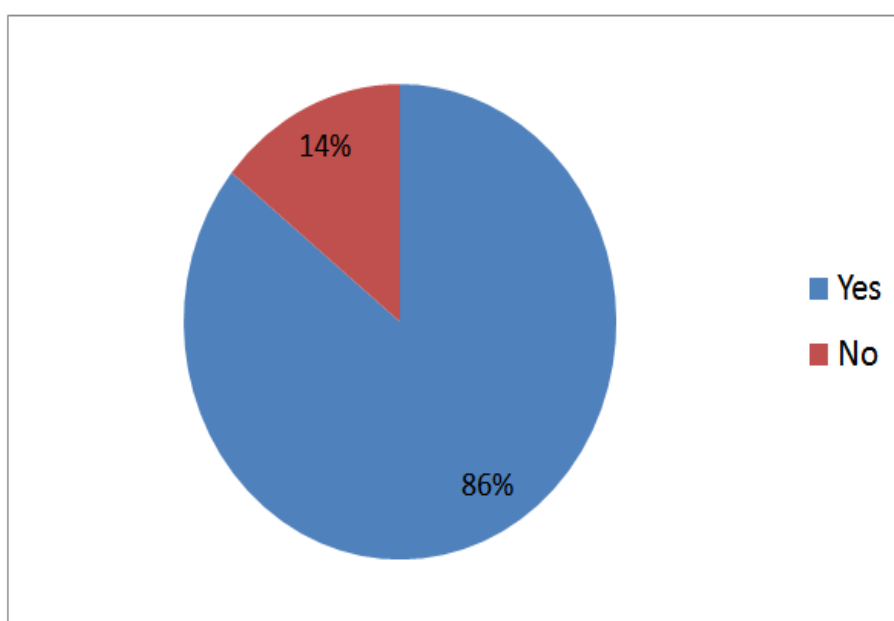
**Figure -9:** Awareness about the Public Library

#### 4.B.2 Responses Of Respondents Towards Visiting The Public Library

The Table -12 reveals the fact that out of 162 respondents who are concern about the public library, 139 (85.80%) respondents have visited the public library whereas rest of them i.e.23 (14.20%) still has not visited the public library. Remaining have not responded . Therefore from this section onward , the number of valid respondents would be 139 only (Fig.-10).

**Table 12: Visit of the Public Library (N=162)**

Response	Nos. (N=162)	Percentage (%)
Yes	139	85.80
No	23	14.20
Total	<b>162</b>	<b>100</b>



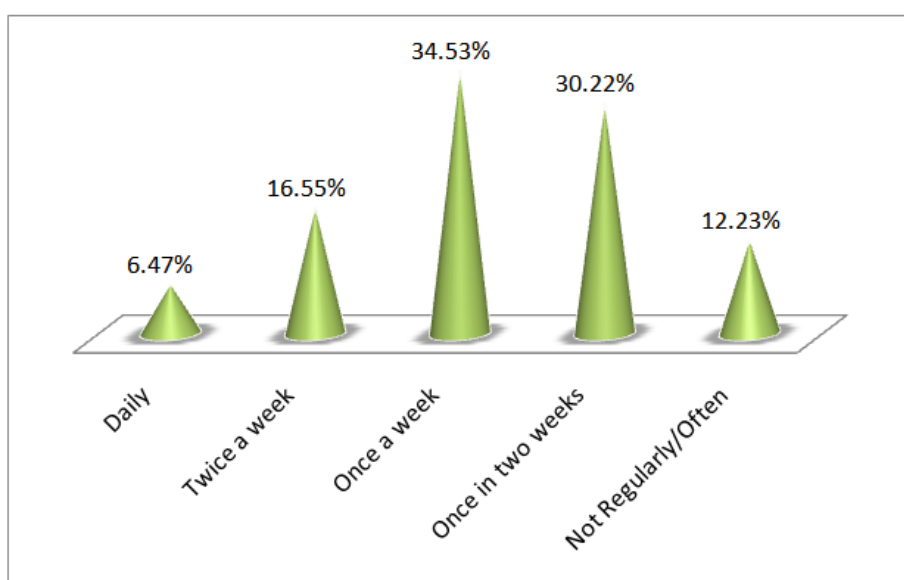
**Figure 10:** Visiting Public Library

#### 4.B.3 Frequency to Visit Public Library

The survey findings shown in Table -13 shows that out of 139 respondents, most of the respondents (34.53%) visit public library once a week which is followed by 30.22 % respondents who visit the public library once in two weeks whereas very few respondents ( 6.47 % ) visit the public library on daily basis. So it is needed to make people aware about the facilities and services of public/ rural libraries for the effective utilisation of public library resources and services (Fig.-11).

**Table 13:** Frequency to Visit Public Library (N=139)

Frequency	No. of Respondents(N=139)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Daily	9	6.47	V
Twice a week	23	16.55	III
<b>Once a week</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>34.53</b>	<b>I</b>
Once in two weeks	42	30.22	II
Not Regularly/Often	17	12.23	IV
Total	<b>139</b>	<b>100</b>	



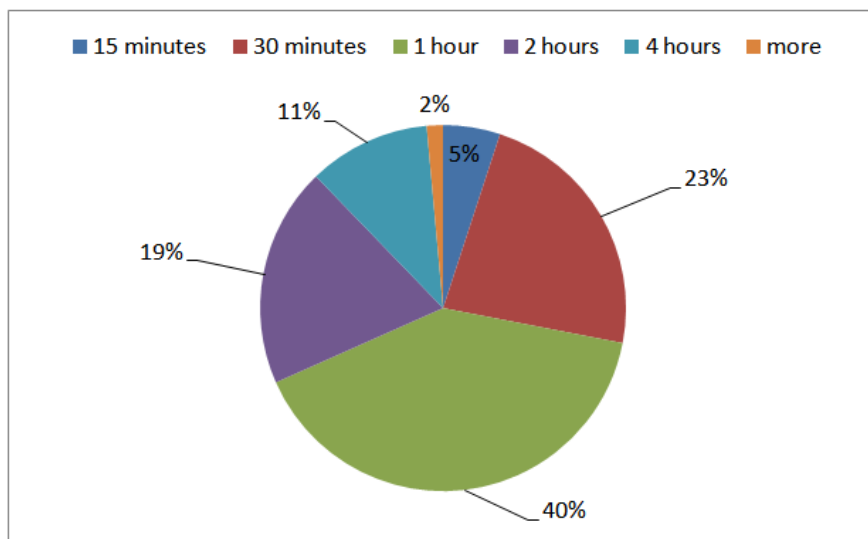
**Figure -11:** Frequency of Visiting the Public Library

#### 4.B.4 Duration of Visiting the Rural Public Library

An attempt has been made to know the duration of visiting the public library by the respondents and the result has been highlighted in the Table-14. The table reveals that most of the respondents 56 (40.29%) prefer to spent at least one hour in the public/rural library which is followed by 32 ( 23.02 %) respondents visiting public libraries for half an hour , 27 ( 19.42 %) respondents for 2 hours , 15 ( 10.79 %) respondents for 4 hours whereas only 2 respondents (1.44%) prefer to spend more than 4 hours in the rural/public library which indicates that there is a good trend for visiting public/ rural libraries in Barak Valley. In order to enhance the utilisation of public/ rural libraries and attract more number of users, libraries should reach the users with new and innovative facilities and services. (Fig.-17)

**Table 14:** Duration of Visiting Rural Public Library (N=139)

Duration	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
15 minutes	07	5.04
30 minutes	32	23.02
<b>1 hour</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>40.29</b>
2 hours	27	19.42
4 hours	15	10.79
More	02	1.44
Total	<b>139</b>	<b>100.00</b>



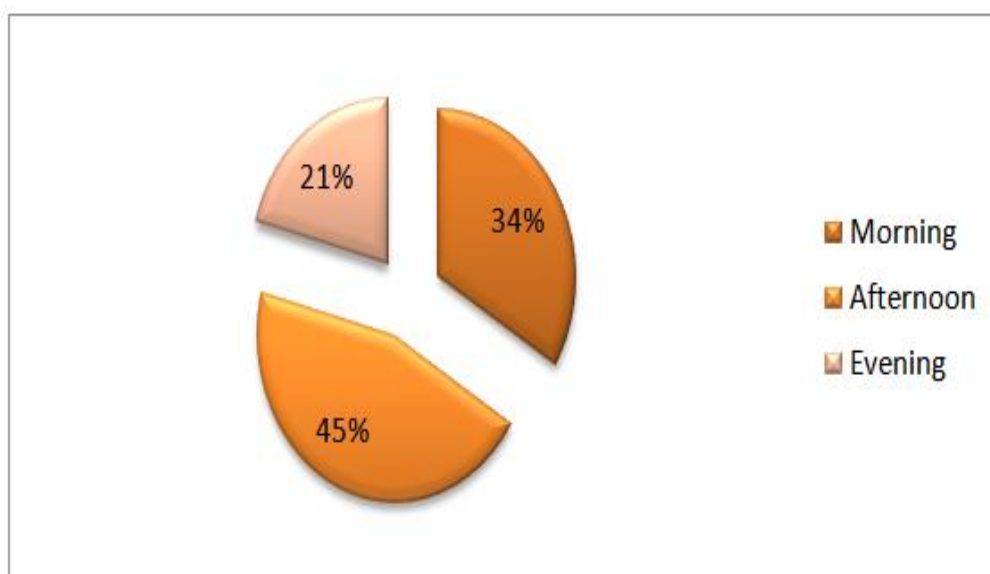
**Figure 12:** Duration of visiting the Rural/Public Library

#### 4.B.5 Preferred Time Of Visiting The Public Library

An attempt has been made to identify the preferred time of visiting the public library by the respondents and the result has been highlighted in the Table- 15 which reveals the fact that most of the respondents 63(45.33%) prefer to visit the public library in the afternoon which is followed by 47(33.81%) respondents who prefer to visit the library in the morning time and 29(20.86 %) respondents prefer to visit the rural/public library in the evening time. (Fig.-13). Therefore, afternoon is most preferred and suitable time for the visit of the library.

**Table 15:** Preferred Time of Visiting the Public Library (N=139)

Time	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Morning	47	33.81
Afternoon	63	45.33
Evening	29	20.86
Total	139	100.00



**Figure- 13:** Preferred Time of Visiting the Public Library

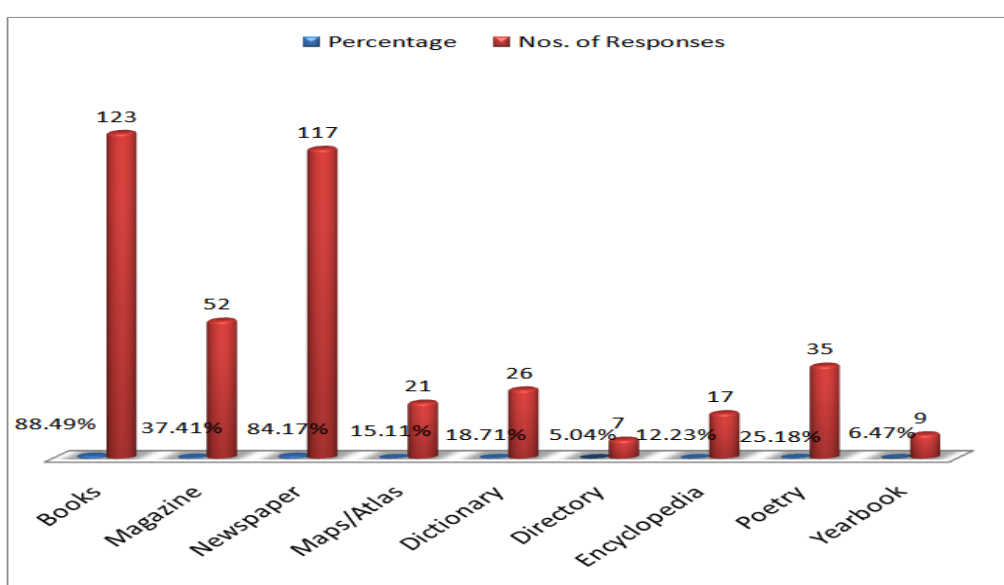
#### 4.B.6 Types Of Documents Available in the Public Library

Various kinds of documents are available in the public library. All these documents were not used by the respondents regularly. So, an attempt has been made in Table- 16 to know about the availability of various kinds of documents in the public library. In this following survey multiple responses of the respondents has been taken into consideration. (Fig.-14)

**Table 16:** Types of Documents available in the Public Library (N=139 Each )

Types of Documents	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
<b>Books</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>88.49</b>
Magazines	52	37.41
<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>84.17</b>
Maps/Atlas	21	15.11
Dictionaries	26	18.71
Directory	07	5.04
Encyclopedia	17	12.23
Poetry	35	25.18
Yearbook	09	6.47

(Multiple Responses Permitted )



**Figure 14:** Types of Documents available in the Public Library

#### 4.B.7 Opinion Of The Respondents About Different Types Of Programs And Events Organized In Rural/Public Library Situated In Rural Areas Of Barak Valley

Different types of programs or events organized in public library as per the demands of the respondents. So, an attempt has been made in Table-17 to know about the opinion of the visitors about conducting of various kinds of programs or events in the public library.

**Table-17:** Opinion of the Visitors about Programs or Events Organised in Rural Public Libraries Situated in Rural Areas of Barak Valley (N=139 Each)

Sl. No.	Programs/Events	Responses (N=139)				Total (%)
		Yes		No		
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Does Rural/Public Library arrange lecture program?	112	80.58	27	19.42	139 (100.0)
2	Does Rural/Public Library conduct Film show?	63	45.32	76	54.68	139 (100.0)
3	Does Rural/Public Library conduct child care/Health program?	71	51.08	68	48.92	139 (100.0)
4	Do Rural/Public Library conduct Awareness of AIDS program?	56	40.29	83	59.71	139 (100.0)
5	Does Rural/Public Library arrange social events like Bihu, New year's party, General knowledge Quiz Contest etc.?	37	26.62	102	73.38	139 (100.0)

6	Does Public/Rural Library conduct sports events?	19	13.67	<b>120</b>	<b>86.33</b>	139 (100.0)
7	Does Public/Rural Library arrange quiz contests?	<b>75</b>	<b>53.96</b>	64	46.04	139 (100.0)
8	Does Public/Rural Library conduct seminar/workshop programs?	<b>92</b>	<b>66.19</b>	47	33.81	139 (100.0)
9	Does Rural/Public Library arrange classes for illiterate under National literacy mission?	63	45.32	<b>76</b>	<b>54.68</b>	139 (100.0)

(Multiple Responses Allowed)

#### 4.B.8 Opinion Of The Respondents About The Satisfaction With The Services Given By Library Staffs In The Rural Public Libraries Situated In Rural Areas Of Barak Valley

Table -18 reveals the satisfaction level of the respondents with the services given by library staffs in the rural/public library. The findings can be seen in the Table-18 which are self explanatory.

**Table -18 :** Satisfaction Level of the Respondents with the Services given by Library Staffs in the Rural/Public Library (N=139 Each )

Sl. No.	Library Services	Responses								Total (%)
		Always		Mostly		Sometimes		Never		
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Library staff treats you fairly and without discrimination.	27	19.43	<b>97</b>	<b>69.78</b>	15	10.79	0	0	139 (100.0)
2	Library staff is friendly.	22	15.83	98	70.50	19	13.67	0	0	139 (100.0)
3	Library staff takes an interest in your needs.	37	26.62	<b>73</b>	<b>52.52</b>	25	17.98	4	2.88	139 (100.0)
4	Library staff gives your enquiries appropriate time and attention.	7	5.04	51	36.69	<b>63</b>	<b>45.32</b>	18	12.95	139 (100.0)
5	Library staff provides accurate answers.	12	8.63	29	20.86	<b>93</b>	<b>66.91</b>	5	3.60	139 (100.0)
6	Library staff provides quality services.	9	6.48	<b>77</b>	<b>55.40</b>	51	36.69	2	1.43	139 (100.0)
7	Library staff responds clearly and accurately to enquiries.	26	18.71	<b>89</b>	<b>64.02</b>	19	13.67	5	3.60	139 (100.0)
8	Library staff are difficult to approach.	6	4.32	13	9.35	49	35.25	<b>71</b>	<b>51.08</b>	139 (100.0)

(Multiple Responses Allowed)

#### 4. C. Information Needs and Information Seeking Pattern

##### 4.C.1 Types Of Information Needed By The Respondents

Table-19 shows that the researcher wanted to know what type of information is needed by the rural people in their day by day life. As it was a question where multiple responses were permitted, so the respondents were free to give more than one choice making the total much more than 100%. The highest demand recorded from the respondents (123= 88.48) was for employment related information which is followed by demand for information on educational (84= 60.43 %) and Agricultural employment related aspects (71 =51.07%) . (Fig.-15)

**Table-19:** Types of Information Needed by the Respondents (N=139 for Each)

Types of Information	Responses	Percentage (%)
Agricultural	71	51.07
Educational	84	60.43
<b>Employment</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>88.48</b>
Others	12	8.63

(Multiple Responses are permitted)



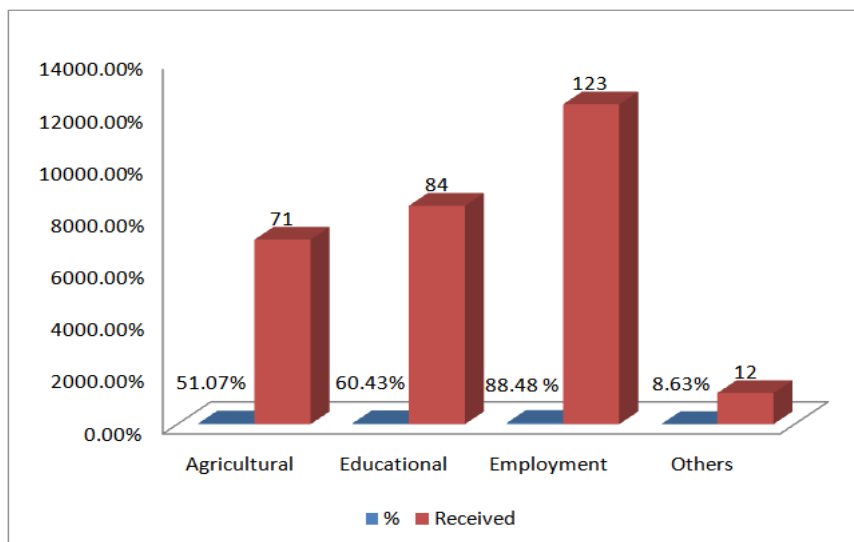


Figure-15: Types of Information Needed by the Respondents

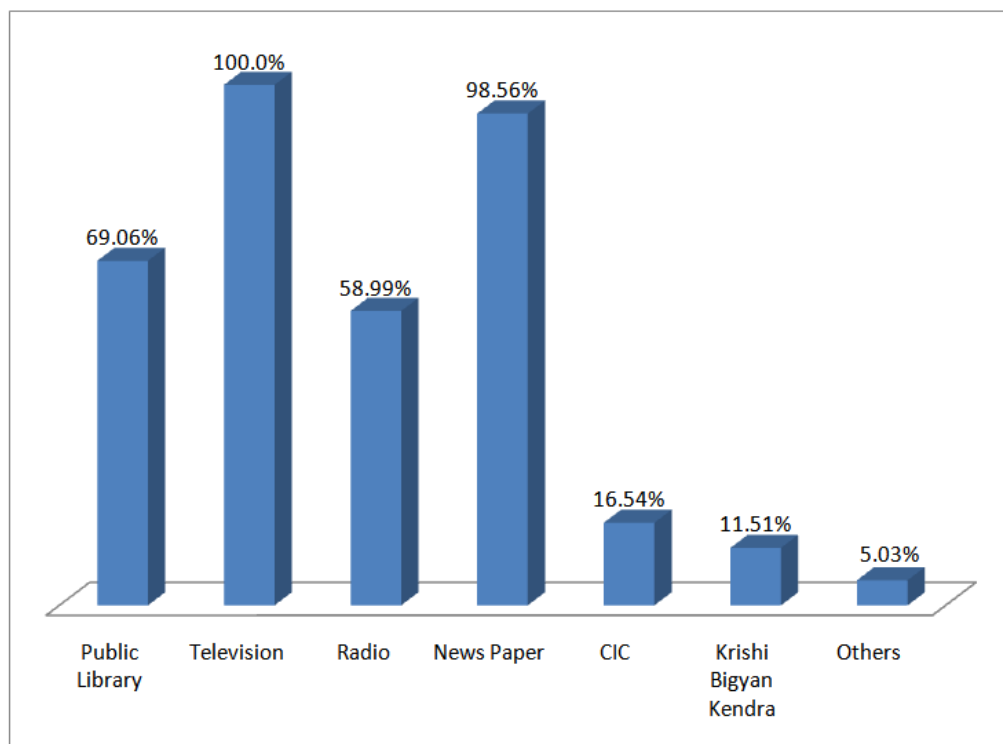
#### 4.C.2 Sources Of Information Needed By The Respondents

Table -20 reveals that the rural people of Barak Valley can get their needed information from various sources. As it was a question where multiple responses were permitted, so the respondents were free to give more than one choice making the total much more than 100%. The highest demand recorded where from the majority of rural people were get their sufficient information is from Television (139= 100.0%) which is followed by Newspaper (137= 98.56%) Public Libraries ( 96= 69.06 %) and Radio ( 82= 58.99 %) whereas CIC (23= 16.54%) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (16= 11.51 %) are the less important sources as compared to Television and Newspapers which are Rank I and II Sources. (Fig.-16)

Table -20: Sources of Information Needed by the Respondents (N=139 for each)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE(%)	RANKS
PUBLIC LIBRARY	96	69.06	III
<b>TELEVISION</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>I</b>
RADIO	82	58.99	IV
<b>NEWSPAPER</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>98.56</b>	<b>II</b>
CIC	23	16.54	V
KRISHIBIGYAN KENDRA	16	11.51	VI
OTHERS	7	5.03	VII

( Multiple Response Permitted)



**Figure 16:** Sources of Information Needed by the Respondents (N= 139 Each)  
(Multiple Response Permitted)

#### 4.C.3 Usefulness of Information

The following Table -21 represents data on the rate of satisfaction of the respondents by using the information given by various sources like Television, Newspaper, Radio, Community information centre, Krishi Bigyan Kendra and other sources. Out of 139 respondents, 120 (86.33%) respondents says that the information given by various sources are moderate which is followed by , 10 (7.19%) respondents are saying that information provided by the rural/ public libraries are extremely good whereas 9 respondents (6.47 %) says that the information are not useful. (Fig.-17)

**Table -21:** Usefulness of Information (N=215)

Usefulness of Information	Number of Respondents	Percentage(%)
Extremely Good	10	7.19
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>86.33</b>
Not So Much Useful	09	6.47
Total	<b>139</b>	<b>100.0</b>

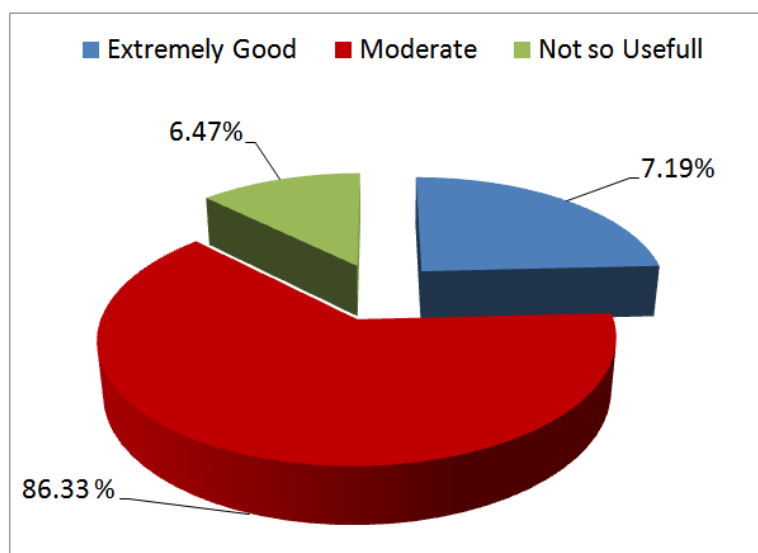


Figure- 17: Usefulness of Information

#### 4.C.4 Usage Of Information In Solving The Purpose Of The Respondents

The following Table-22 represents data on the frequency of information in serving the purpose of the respondents. Out of 215 respondents, the majority of the respondents i.e. 115(82.73%) respondents were very much satisfied with the information as their purpose were fully solved by these sources of information whereas only 24 (17.26 %) respondents reported that their problems have not been solved by the information provided by the rural public libraries . (Fig -18)

Table 22: Usage of Information for Problem Solving (N=139)

RESPONSE	NOS.	PERCENTAGE(%)
YES	115	82.73
NO	24	17.26
TOTAL	139	100

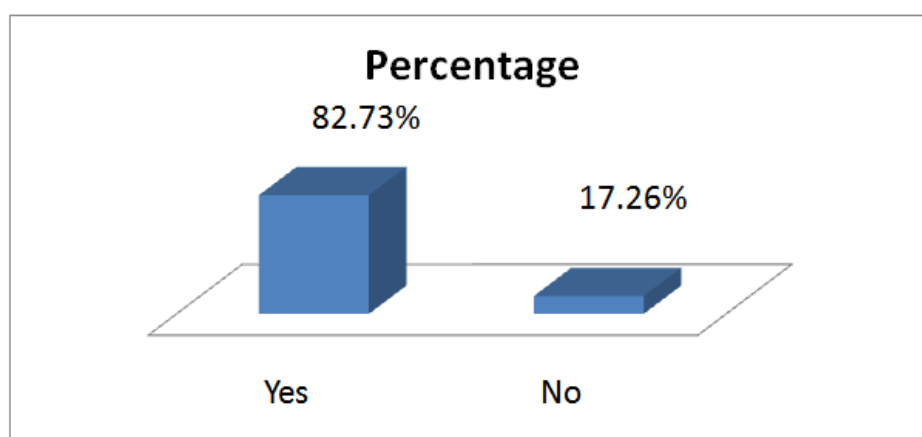


Figure 18: Usage of Information in Problem Solving Purpose

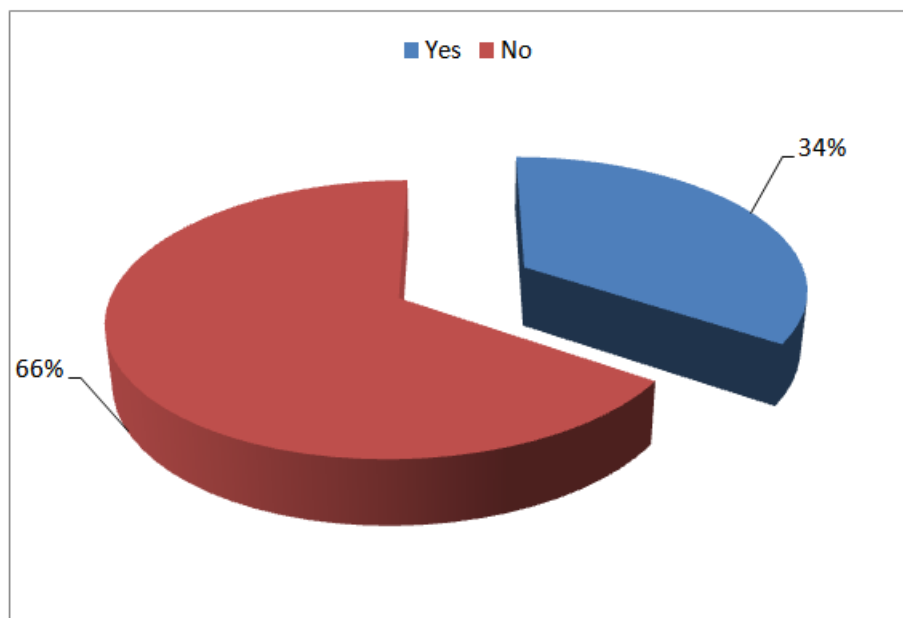
#### 4.C.5 Difficulties Faced By the Respondents to Access Right Information

The following Table- 23 represents the ratio of difficulties faced by the respondents in accessing their required information. Out of 215 respondents, 74 respondents were facing some difficulties in accessing the information and Rest of them 90 (64.74%) respondents were accessing their required information very smoothly from different sources without any difficulties or discrimination whereas 49 (35.25 %) respondents face problems in accessing the right information. Therefore, there is a need to give proper orientation to the rural

public library users to access right information at right time (Fig.-19).

**Table 23:** Difficulties Faced by the Respondents (N=139)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	49	35.25
No	90	64.74
Total	139	100



**Figure -19:** Difficulties Faced by the Respondents

## V. Important Findings

The response rate is good as out of 300 respondents, 215 (72.0 %) respondents have responded;

### 5.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

- The study shows that male respondents (59.07%) are more than (40.93%) female respondents ;
- The study reveals that majority of the respondents i.e. 101 (47.0 %) are from the age group of 16-25;
- The study shows that respondents were divided into six categories i.e. Students, Teachers, Farmers, House wives, Businessmen and Others. The highest percentages of responses (31.63%) were received from the Students which was followed by the farmers (26.51 %) , housewives (17.21 %) and businessmen (11.23 %) whereas teachers (7.44 %) and others (5.58 %) shows the lowest percentages of responses. **There is good trend that farmers housewives and businessmen are using Rural Public Libraries.**
- Most of the respondents in this survey are married (64.65 %) whereas 35.35 % respondents are unmarried who might belong to the students/ younger generation category ;
- The survey finding reveals that the number Higher Secondary School passed respondents (31.16%) is placed at 1<sup>st</sup> rank which is followed by Bachelor Degree holders ( 26.98 %) at 2<sup>nd</sup> Rank and High School passed ( 20.93 %) at 3<sup>rd</sup> Rank whereas Primary (12.09 %) and Lower Primary (8.84%) respondents are comparatively lesser in number and placed at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> rank respectively ;
- The majority of respondents (57.67%) belong to the income group of **Less than Rs. 5000** per month whereas very few respondents (3.73%) belong to the income group of **More than Rs. 25000**. So the socio-economic condition of rural inhabitants is not good and they are mainly dependents on agricultural means of occupation. But is encouraging to note that despite the poor family background, the rural population are qualified and attending rural public libraries for their information needs;

### 5.2 Library Visit and Usage Pattern of Rural Public Library Users

- Majority of respondents (162 = 75.35%) respondents are aware about the rural public libraries, whereas 53 (24.65%) respondents are still not aware about the rural public libraries. So there is need to make them aware about the library services of rural public libraries;
- A majority of the respondents i.e. **45.33%** prefer to visit the public library in the afternoon
- Majority of the respondents (**34.53%**) visit rural public library once a week which is followed by **30.22 %** respondents who visit the public library **once in two weeks** whereas very few respondents ( **6.47 %** ) visit the public library **on daily basis**. So it is needed to make people aware about the facilities and services of public/ rural libraries for the effective utilisation of public library resources and services;
- Most of the respondents (**40.29%**) prefer to spent at **least one hour** in the rural public library which is followed by **23.02 %** respondents visiting public libraries **for half an hour** , **19.42 %** respondents **for 2 hours** , **10.79 % respondents for 4 hours** whereas only few respondents (1.44%) prefer to spend more than 4 hours in the rural/public library which indicates that there is a good trend for visiting public/ rural libraries in Barak Valley. In order to enhance the utilisation of public/ rural libraries and attract more number of users, libraries should reach the users with new and innovative facilities and services;
- Majority of the respondents (**45.33%**) prefer to visit the rural public library in the afternoon which is followed by **33.81%** respondents who prefer to visit the library in the morning time and **20.86 %** respondents prefer to visit the rural public library in the evening time. Therefore, afternoon is most preferred and suitable time for the visit of the library;
- Books are mainly used by the rural public library users which is followed by Newspapers and Magazines;

### **5.3 Information Needs and Information Seeking Patterns of the Rural Public Library Users**

- Majority of respondents (**88.44 %**) seek information pertaining to employment and job opportunities ;
- The rural people of Barak Valley can get their needed information from various sources. The highest demand recorded where from the majority of rural people were get their sufficient information is from Television (139= 100.0%) which is followed by Newspaper (137= 98.56%) Public Libraries ( 96= 69.06 %) and Radio ( 82= 58.99 %) whereas CIC (23= 16.54%) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (16= 11.51 %) are the less important sources as compared to Television and Newspapers which are Rank I and II Sources. ;
- Majority of the respondents (**86.33 %**) says that the information given by various sources are moderate ;
- The study reveals that the majority of the respondents (**82.73%**) are very much satisfied with the information which are provided by the rural / public libraries available in their locality ; and
- A substantial number of respondents (**64.74 %**) do not face any difficulties to access right information whereas very few respondents (**32.25 %**) are getting problems to access right information.

## **VI. Suggestions And Recommendations**

Suggestion is the major part in a research work. In the present research work the suggestion part is divided into two parts viz. suggestion by the respondents and suggestion by the researcher. From the analysis and findings of the study the following suggestions are forwarded for the improvement of information services in rural public library environment, it is necessary to make rural public library in every villages of Barak Valley and make the rural people aware about the need and importance of the rural public libraries and its services which are open to all the sections of the society irrespective of caste, creed , race and gender.

On the basis of the responses and opinion given by the respondents following suggestions have been made, which would help the rural public library users or rural masses in fulfillment of their information needs and information seeking patterns for solving the various purposes of the rural population of Barak Valley in particular and rest of Assam and North east India in general :

- There is a need to evaluate various information sources to get their needed information by the rural people easily and without any discrimination;
- The rate of satisfaction of the respondents by using the information given by various sources like Television, Newspaper, Radio, Community information centre, Krishi Bigyan Kendra are moderate. So, there is need to improve the usefulness of information to a certain level;
- There is need to improve the ratio of accessing the information from various sources by evaluating the number of difficulties faced by the respondents;
- There should be more awareness about the public library services in the rural areas of Barak Valley;
- The rate of visiting the rural public library by the respondents should be increased to a certain level;
- The duration of visiting the rural public libraries is very poor among the respondents, so the respondents should be encouraged to spent more and more time in the library premises;

- Library extension services such as Lecture Programs, Seminar/ Workshop programs should be organized regularly by the rural public libraries with proper emphasis to promote library services and its importance to the local community.
- Rural Public Libraries should arrange classes for illiterate people under National Literacy Mission.
- Rural Public Libraries should conduct social events like Bihu, New Year's party, General knowledge quiz contest etc.
- Rural Public Library should organised periodic Orientation Programme for library users to make them aware about the collection and services available in the rural public libraries;
- Library Professionals working in rural public libraries should be qualified and should attend computer training programme to implement the computerisation of library housekeeping activities and services ;
- Library professionals should come forward and play a proactive role to provide extension services to farmers, businessmen, women folks and unemployed youth and help them in getting right information at right time for searching of jobs, employment and counseling services to rural youth so that they may get job in time and also take benefits of many Government Development Schemes etc.
- The rural public libraries should integrated with Community Information Centre for effectively running the schemes;
- The State Govt. should enact Library Legislation in Assam as many states and UT have already enacted the Library Legislation to support the public library system, creation of more LIS jobs in schools, colleges, and rural/ urban public libraries;
- More number of vacancies for different grade of LIS post should be sanctioned by the State Govt. and recruits qualified LIS professionals to run the public libraries smoothly; and
- The fund revived from Raja Rammuhan Roy Library Foundation, Ministry of culture, Govt. of India should be enhanced in view of inflation, and the library infrastructure, ICT infrastructure should be strengthen so that the condition of sick rural public libraries in particular and other public libraries in general should be improved and work properly.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The present study reveals that the improvement of information services in rural environment it is necessary to make rural public libraries in every villages and make the rural people aware about the need and importance of the rural public libraries . The library gives more information to rural community and its help to development of rural area. So the government should take steps to growth of library in undeveloped area. The rapid developments in Rural Public library have helped different sectors of the community by providing right information to the right reader at the right time. For example, it will help children to create reading habit, unemployed youths to get better jobs and farmers to improve agricultural production. Libraries of all countries are functioning for social development by extending these activities and services, sharing books, extension lectures on various topics such as child labour, epidemic diseases, reading habits and environmental protection.

The schedule received back from the respondents was not completely filled up. There were many missing responses in various questions. So the researcher had faced many problems during the analysis of data. The data collected through the structured schedule and personal observation by the researcher have been analysed from various perspective.

The above data analysis among the three districts (i.e. Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi) of Barak Valley reveals the fact that in the majority of the rural public library users , the maximum demand for information is on educational and employment related aspects. Certain conclusions can be drawn from a careful analysis of the findings of this study. The finding shows that most of the rural people of Barak Valley lack basic knowledge on how to use the information resources and services for solving their various purposes. The study equally discovered lack of awareness about the rural public libraries by the rural people of Barak Valley. Although Public library, Television, Radio, Newspaper, Community information centre, Krishi Bigyan Kendra were identified as the major sources used by respondents for acquiring information; Television and Newspaper were recorded as the most employed and the most effective source. Lack of awareness about the extension services like seminar / workshop programs, lecture programs and arrange classes for illiterate under national literacy mission among the Rural Public Library professionals have been identified as one of the major constraint to address the information needs of the rural public library users properly.

Therefore from this survey it is clear that, the majority of the rural public library users of Barak Valley are aware or concerned about the rural public libraries. It is hoped that the findings and observations of this survey would have significant impact on the rural public library users of Barak Valley about their information needs, sources of information and also about the library services of rural public libraries.

In view of the above interesting findings pertaining to the Information needs and information seeking pattern of rural public library users of Barak Valley, it is concluded that Information need and information seeking patterns is a broad term, which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, and finally uses this information to satisfy his/her information needs. Information is essential for survival, progress and it is a basic need of life. Information need occurs whenever people find themselves in situations that required some form of knowledge for resolution. Rapid changes in information seeking pattern / behaviour and use of Internet for online access of E-resources have affected the way the library users search their right information at right time and at right place to fulfill their diverse information needs.

### Acknowledgement

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### Authors Profile

**Dr. Manoj Kumar Sinha** did Graduation, Post –Graduation and Ph.D. Degree in Zoology, Library and Information Science from T.M. Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur. Besides this, he has acquired B. Ed. Degree from Annamalai University in 1995 and also did Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education from IGNOU, New Delhi in 2002. At present he has been working as Associate Professor in Department of Library and Information Science, Assam University, Silchar and he has been appointed as the Head of the Department w. e. f December 11, 2009. Prior to this he served the Assam University, Silchar as Assistant University Librarian from January 30, 1997 to January 30, 2003 and Assistant University Librarian (Sr. Scale) from January 31, 2003 to November 18, 2009; and as Reader in the Department of Library and Information Science, Assam University, Silchar. Before joining Assam University, Silchar, he served as Librarian in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Gorakhpur (Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, Lucknow Region, Dept of Education, and Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India) from February 15, 1993 to January 28, 1997. Before coming to library profession, he worked as JRF and SRF in Life Sciences under the CSIR Sponsored Research Project entitled “**Ecology and Phytochemistry of Biocidal Plants of Santhal Parganas, Bihar**” at University Department of Botany, T.M. Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur.



He has published about 186 research papers and articles in the areas of Botany, Zoology, Environmental Sciences, and Library & Information Sciences. He has keen interest in learning new skills in Information & Communication Technology. His areas of interest are Traditional Librarianship, Academic Library System, Public Library System, HRD issues, Users Study and Users Education, User Empowerment through ICT, Quality Management, Knowledge Management, Library Automation and Networking, Digital Library, e-learning, etc. He is life member of ILA, IASLIC, UPLA, SIS, MANLIBNET, JILA, AGLIS, Assam Library Association, FBAL, and actively associated with research and academic work. He is Member of Board of Post-Graduate Studies in Library and Information Science, Member, School Board of School of Information Sciences; Member, Swami Vivekananda School of Library Sciences (Feb 2011); Member of Academic Council; Assam University Court since December 2009. His biography has been included in many Biographical Directory of National and International importance. He has been associated with few journals as a Member of Editorial Board.

He has guided four M. Phil. Students and few Masters of Library and Information Science students and also nominated as a Subject Expert in sister departments of Assam University. He has wide experience in organizing events like Book Fair and Exhibition and also organised PLANNER-2005, Seminar on Digital Library Management (2008), Librarians Day and Organising Orientation Programme for Fresher' regularly since 1997 on behalf of Assam University Library. Recently he has successfully organised National Seminar on Collection Development (NSCD-2011) in collaboration with Central Reference Library, Kolkata (Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India). He has been actively participating contributing and presenting Invited / Contributed Research Papers in National and International Seminar/ Conferences, attended several Training Programmes and Workshops pertaining to ICT Application in Library and Information Services. Besides this he has honour of Chairing Technical Sessions in many Seminars and also acted as Rapporteurs, Rapporteur General in Seminars and Conferences. He may be contacted on : [manoj.kumar.sinha@aus.ac.in](mailto:manoj.kumar.sinha@aus.ac.in), [hod\\_lis@aus.ac.in](mailto:hod_lis@aus.ac.in), [mksinha1965@gmail.com](mailto:mksinha1965@gmail.com), [dr\\_mk\\_sinha@yahoo.com](mailto:dr_mk_sinha@yahoo.com)