

Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Female workers in Lakhipur Tea Garden

Sangita Yadav

Librarian (Part Time), Nehru College, Pailapool, Cachar (Assam)
Email:-sangitayadav644@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Information is power. It is a vital source for human beings for living a prosperous life on the earth. Information is all around and is utilized in all walks of life. Thus the information helps against social imbalance. It is the supreme asset than all other movable and immovable asset that the people hold on earth. In the contemporary world people are valued as rich and poor not because of their assets; but they are valued as information rich and information poor. Similarly, information plays a very important role in rural people especially for that people who are belonging from Tea Estates. Because tea garden labor are considered as remarkable labor force in Assam. But they are one of the most backward and exploited community in Assam due to decades of continuous exploitation by Tea garden managements and neglects in part of Government. If the worker of Tea Garden get the proper information, it helps to improve the way of living and it solves many problems relation to health. The main aim of this study to focused at exploring the information needs and information seeking behavior of the female workers in Lakhipur Tea Garden. For the present study survey method was adopted using Questionnaire and Interview schedule as tools of data collection. On the basis of responses received, data was tabulated and analyzed using SPSS and Ms-Excel. The important survey findings in respect of demographic profiles of female worker and their information needs and information seeking behavior.

Keyword:- Information need, Information Seeking Behavior, Tea garden Worker.

Date of Submission: 30-11-2017

Date of acceptance: 09-12-2017

I. INTRODUCTION

Information is power. It is a vital source for human beings for living a prosperous life on the earth. Information is all around and is utilized in all walks of life right from purchasing a pin to writing a research article by the human beings irrespective of caste, creed, and gender, rich, poor, educated and uneducated. Thus the information helps against social imbalance. It is the supreme asset than all other movable and immovable asset that the people hold on earth. In the contemporary world people are valued as rich and poor not because of their assets; but they are valued as information rich and information poor. The information rich people are those who are highly skilled in identifying their information needs and apply seeking behaviors so as to access the information from both online and traditional resources successfully and satisfying their information needs. The information poor people are lacking in their skills in getting their information needs be satisfied. Information needs emphasize the requirement of the identification of the right need. Information need affects the information seeking behavior and the entire information seeking process depends on the rightly determined information need. Lack in determining the right information need will create a perplexed state which will lead to ineffectiveness in getting the need to be satisfied.

• Background of the Study

According to the sources Barak Valley is the second largest tea producing industry after Brahmaputra Valley. These Tea industries perform very major role as industry since long by which several lakhs of labour are surviving with the help of these industry and cultivation. The tea Plantation of Lakhipur was started during the British Rule. Total population of lakhipur Tea Garden is above one thousand. Most of the labours of in Lakhipur Tea Garden is Mirdha, Bowri, Sawutal Dumka origin. Their main Festival is Tusu Puja, Karam Puja, Gabardhan Puja. Their main occupation is Tea plantation. Both male and female workers takes part in tea plantation. Information plays a very important role in tea garden Workers, especially female workers. With the Proper use of Information they will improve, their living condition. Various problem will be solved with the proper use of information either it will be education, or health related. Most of the female workers are illiterate, they even don't know the various policies and schemes of the governments. The main aim of this study to know the

information need and also the source of information and how they use information in their lives and the barriers to access the Information.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To identify the information needs of Female Workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden;
- To identify the sources of information the Female Workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden are familiar with ;
- To know how Female Workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden use information ;
- To identify factors that poses barrier to the access of information by Female Workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden.

• Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to the female Workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden .In this study only Female workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden have been taken into consideration for the purpose of the present study.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

- The study has been further delimited to the Female workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden;
- The data pertaining to the study were collected through the Questionnaires, Interview-Schedule and Personal Observation;
- The reliability of the facts depends on the honesty of the respondents.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ukachi (2007) in his study on the information needs, sources and Information seeking behaviour of rural women in Badagry, Lagos, Nigeria. Similarly, Nwagwu and Ajama (2011) carried out a study on Women's health information needs and information sources in a rural oil palm business community in South- Western Nigeria.

Mooko (2005) in his study information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural, uneducated women and their families in three villages in Botswana highlights the most information needs are health-related, such as information regarding certain diseases, how they are contacted, and treated. Hossain & Islam (2012) studied information needs of rural women in three villages of Bangladesh. His Study shows that the Rural women of Bangladesh need information on agriculture, food and nutrition, livestock, health, family planning, child education, etc. Women in that rural areas of Bangladesh are highly dependent on their friends and neighbors to get the information they need in their daily lives.

Ahmad (2011) carried out a study on the Information Seeking Behaviors of Rural Women in Malaysia. His study reveals that the women in Malaysia are concerned with information needs related to food and child education.

Dasgupta (2004) conducted a study on users and non-users of information in rural areas in India. His Study tries to examine the information needs of the rural communities. The needs identified included income generation, community leadership, environmental issues like pollution, climatic change, disasters, etc., community health, literacy support, educational opportunities, employment, bank loans, government policies, transportation, communication and sanitation.

Zhang and Yu (2009) discussed the major research studies conducted on rural information needs and acquisition in China. They concluded that rural dwellers in China have an extensive range of information needs, with agricultural technology, market information, income generation and policy information being the most needed types; they further reported that rural dwellers in China rely on interpersonal relationships for acquiring both general information and information for agriculture production.

Iqbal, Yousuf and Soroya (2013) carried out a study of the information need and seeking behaviour of rural women in Soon Valley, Pakistan, which shows that the factors that poses barrier to the accessibility of information by rural women includes; less resource as there is no single public library in that area and lack of time among other.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Source of Data

In the present study, the Survey method of research has been adopted using structured Questionnaire as a tool for collection of data. The questionnaire was designed keeping in view of the stated objectives and the structured questionnaire comprises mainly of closed ended-questions. The questionnaire was supplemented by interview of female worker of Lakhipur Tea Garden.

3.2 Tools for Data Collection

The tools of data collection translate the research objectives into specific questions/item, the response to which will provide the data required to achieve the research objectives. The following tools were used for collection of data pertaining to the present study.

- **Questionnaire**

Questionnaire is widely used tool for data collection in research. It is a systematic compilation of questions logically related to problem under study. It has been assured that the information given by them would be used for the research purpose only would be kept be confidential.

- **Personal Interview**

The researcher also adopt personal interview for the collection of more reliable data. Personal interview were arranged with the female worker giving prior intimation to the respondents. The interviews were conducted according to an interview schedule.

- **Description of Questionnaire**

The designed questionnaire consists of two main parts. First part consists of “*Personal details*”, second part consists of “*information Needs and seeking behaviour of Female worker of Lakhipur Tea Garden.*”

3.3 Data Analysis

On the basis of collected data the questionnaire/interview data is coded tabulated analysed to come on the findings and conclusion. All the results have been presented in the form of tables and/or graphs. SPSS/MS-Excel (Software’s) was used for data analysis and interpretation.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA FEMALE WORKERS IN LAKHIPUR TEA GARDEN.

A. Personal Background of the Respondents / Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

4.1 Distribution of Questionnaire to Respondent and Responses Received

To know the response rate altogether 80 questionnaire were distributed among the Female worker of Lakhipur Tea Garden out of which, 69 (86.25%) respondents have responded. Thus the response rate is 86.25%.

Table 1: Responses Received from the Respondents (N=80)

Questionnaire	Nos.	Percentage (%)
Received	69	86.25
Not received	11	13.75
Total	80	100.00

Figure 1: Responses Received from the Respondents

4.3 Age group of Respondents

The age of the respondents is divided into four groups and the data received from respondents are shown in Table -2 which indicates that out of 69 respondents, maximum number of respondents 24(34.78%) of belong to the age group of “21-30 years ” which is followed by 19 (27.53%) respondents who are at the age group between “11-40 years ” and 15 (21.73%) of respondents are at the age of “41-50” whereas only 11 (15.94%) of respondents are “51 years and Above”.

Table 2: Age group of Respondents (N=69)

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
21-30	24	34.78
31-40	19	27.53
41-50	15	21.73
51 and Above	11	15.94
Total	69	100.00

Figure 2:-Age group of Respondents

- **Level of Education of respondents**

To know the level of education of the female workers of Lakhipur Tea Garden questions are distributed to the respondents and the response received that 42.02% respondents are illiterate, 30.43% respondents are Primary School qualified and 17.39% respondents are Middle School qualified where only 10.14% respondents are Matriculate.

Table 4: Level of Education of respondents (N=69)

Level of Education	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	29	42.02
Primary Level	21	30.43
Middle School	12	17.39
HSLC	7	10.14
Total	69	100

Figure 3: Level of Education of respondents

4.4. Information needs of the Female Worker of Lakhipur Tea Garden

Table 4 Shows that the information needs of female Worker in Lakhipur Tea Garden in the top rank is occupational related with 44.92% of respondents, child care and family relationship with 57.97% of respondents, health related information needs with 55.07% of respondents, information on procedures of performing tasks with 46.37% of respondents, information on housekeeping and household maintenance with 40.58% of respondent, information on education and schooling with 36.23% of respondents and information on government policies and schemes with 42.02% of respondents.

Table 4: Information needs of the Female Worker of Lakhipur Tea Garden (N=69)

Information Needs	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Occupation (Farming, Sewing, Trading etc)	31	44.92
Child care & family relationships	40	57.97
Health Related	38	55.07
Procedures for performing tasks	32	46.37
Housekeeping and household maintenance	28	40.58
About education & schooling	25	36.23
Government Policies and Schemes	29	42.02

Figure 4: Information needs of the Female Worker of Lakhipur Tea Garden

• **Sources of Information of Respondents**

Table 5 clearly shows that the major source of information for the respondents is friends and family members with 81.15% of the respondents, 62.31% of the respondents indicated age groups as their source of information, 50.72% of the respondents specified health workers as their information source, 43.47% of the respondents indicated that television and radio as their information source, whereas only 2.89% of respondents indicated library as their information source.

Table 5: Sources of Information of Respondents (N=69)

Sources of Information	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Friends and Family Members	56	81.15
Age Group	43	62.31
Health Workers	35	50.72
Media(TV/Radio/Newspaper)	30	43.47
Library	2	2.89

Figure 5: Sources of Information of Respondents

4.6 Information use of Respondents

Table 6 shows that the major use of information by respondents was to improve their Occupation with 75.36% of the respondents, to care for children and run the family with 57.97% of respondents, to improve health care with 55.07% of respondents, to maintain household with 43.47% of respondents, to improve procedures of performing task with 40.58% of respondents, to improve education with 36.23% of respondents, to know new government policies and understand government schemes with 31.88% of respondents.

Table: 6 Information use of Respondents (N=69)

Information use of Respondents	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
To improve my Occupation	52	75.36
To care for my children and run the family	40	57.97
To improve my health care	38	55.07
To maintain my household better	30	43.47
To improve my procedures of performing tasks	28	40.58
To improve my education	25	36.23
To know new government policies and understand government Schemes	22	31.88

Figure 6: Information use of Respondents

• **Barriers to the access to Information by Respondents**

To know the barriers in seeking information it is clear that illiteracy is the major barrier to the access of information by respondents with 42.02%, which is followed by language barrier that is 31.88% of respondents and lack of time is also the barrier of seeking information with 23.18% where No Library Resource is the barrier among 14.49% of the female workers.

Table: 7 Barriers to the access to Information by Respondent (N=69)

Barriers in seeking information	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Illiteracy	29	42.02
Language barrier	22	31.88
Lack of Time	16	23.18
No Library Resource	10	14.49

Figure 7: Barriers to the access to Information by Respondent

V. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Libraries should collaborate with local media houses and other Government Information Agencies in order to package and disseminate the right information that meet the needs of the Female worker in Tea Garden;
- Community outreach programmes should equally be organized in the Tea Garden and used to disseminate various information that would aid the socio-economic, political and general enlightenment of the female worker;
- Family members, friends and relatives who are the major source of information to the Tea Garden women must always strive to disseminate the right information to the female worker;
- The local government should equally organize adult education programme, Health Programme, for the Tea Garden women which will enhance the information utilization capacity of the female workers.

VI. CONCLUSION

As the small study above shows, the health and education problems of the female tea garden labourers have a clear connection with the lack of information. This is an age of information and technology, but barriers like Illiteracy, linguistic differences, over burden of work and lack of library resource are crippling the female population of Lakhipur tea garden from being a part of the ongoing information revolution. But without access of proper information it is impossible for them to assert their rights and avail the facilities which the govt. as well as different NGOs are extending. So to solve their health and educational needs a threefold channelization of information is necessary where the government, the Tea Garden authority and different NGOs would join hands to bring the fruits of information to the cottages of poor tea garden labourers.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Ahmad, B. A. B. (2011). Information Seeking Behaviours of Rural Women in Malaysia. Library Philosophy and Practice (journal). Paper 461;
- [2]. Dasgupta, K. (2000). Rural Libraries in the changing environment in India: Important factors for discussion. Retrieved from: <http://www.ifla.org/VII/dg/srdg/srdg6.pdf>;
- [3]. Igbal, S., Yousaf, A., and Soroya, S. (2013). Information need and Seeking Behavior of Rural Women: A Survey of Soon Valley. International Journal of Information Management Science, 2(1), 53-65;

- [4]. Mooko, N. P. (2005). The information behaviors of rural women in Botswana. *Library & Information Science Research*, 27(1), 115-127;
- [5]. Patrick, Ijiekhuamhen Osaze and Ferdinand, Omosekejimi Ademola, "Rural Women and their Information Seeking Behavior" (2016). *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). 1396. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1396>
- [6]. Ukachi, Ngozi B. (2007) "Information Needs; Sources and Information Seeking Behaviour of Rural Women in Badagry, Lagos, Nigeria". *Information Trends*, 4 & 5, 1-19.
- [7]. Zhang, Y., and Yu, L. (2009). Information for social and economic participation: A review of related research on the information needs and acquisition of rural Chinese. *International Information and Library Review* 41(2), 63–70;

IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 5070, Journal no. 49323.

Sangita Yadav "Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Female workers in Lakhipur Tea Garden." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. vol. 22 no. 12, 2017, pp. 37-42.