

Barriers to Accessing Community Information by Agriculturists in Mysore Region: A Study

Siddaramu P

Research Scholar, Department of PG Studies and Research in Library and Information Science
Kuvempu University Jnanasahyadri Shankaraghatta-577451
Shivamogga District, and Librarian Govt. First Grade College, Nagamangala, Mandya District-571432
Karnataka, India, E-mail: siddupj1@gmail.com;
Tel: +91 9986307558

Dr. S. Padmamma

Professor, Department of PG Studies and Research in Library and Information Science
Kuvempu University Jnanasahyadri Shankaraghatta-577451,
Shivamogga District, Karnataka, India,
E-mail: spadmamma2010@gmail.com

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***Abstract-**Community information services are initiated by the public libraries to facilitate the people with relevant information for day-to-day life. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the barriers in accessing community information by the agriculturists in Mysuru District. A simple random method was used to select the respondents of agriculturists from Mysuru District. The SPSS and Microsoft Excel Spread Sheet were used for analyzing the collected data. The paper explains the background of agriculturists in the Mysuru District. It highlights the lack of library facilities, agricultural information resources, non-availability of simple reading materials, lack of awareness, language, lack of library staff and their attitude towards the users', library timings and the ICT facilities are the obstacles. It is observed that various barriers in access to CI are led to socio, economic and cultural developments. This paper gives various strategies to reduce the barriers to accessing community information by agriculturists.*

Keywords: Agriculturists, Community Information, Barriers, Accessing.

Introduction

The information which helps to solve the day-to-day problems of the community is called community information (CI). In this regard, the public library plays a vital role in providing community information services to agriculturists. CI supports the survival of life and enhances the productivity, profitability, stability, and sustainability of the major cultivating systems. The public library is the only center that can act as a community information center for society as well as agriculturists to accomplish the community information needs. The agriculturists must be able to get community information served to them at the right time for the implementation of modern technology in agricultural practices. UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994 provides new guidelines for public libraries as community information center. While proclaiming UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, the Manifesto, asserts that the public library is the local center of information, ensuring access of citizens to all sorts of community information.

According to Allan Bunch, who first attempted systemization of CISs, the CI can broadly divide into two groups is Survival information such as health, housing, income, legal protection, economic opportunities, political rights, civil rights etc. Citizen action information, needed for effective participation as individuals or as members of a group in the social, political, legal, and economic process. It includes basically public policy information such as information about the government, and its operation, programmes, plans, schemes, activities, agencies etc. This information at the local level and trans-local level will help community development.

Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the study which aim:

1. To know about the background of agriculturists in Mysuru District.
2. To find out the barriers in accessing community information by agriculturists.
3. To find out the strategies to reduce the barriers in accessing community information to the agriculturists.

Literature Review

Peter O. Siyao (2012) carried out a study to find out various barriers in accessing agricultural information by Sugar Cane Growers. The survey had investigated respondents' educational level, household assets by sex and various obstacles in accessing agricultural information. The study observed that agriculturists were very much interested in accessing agricultural information in their localities for their agricultural practices. It is recommended that providing free access for relevant and accurate agricultural information in time through proper channels will help the farmers to make the right decisions for the development of agriculture in all stages.

Bachhav, Nitin Bhagachand (2012) Conducted a survey to examine the information needs of rural farmers in Maharashtra. It reveals that the majority of farmers need information for their regular agriculture work. There is lot of information sources available for the farmers, but the first preferred sources of information are colleagues or fellow farmers followed by daily newspapers and Government office.

Ugah, Akobundu Dike (2007) this paper discusses the obstacles to information access and use in developing countries. It is mentioned that information explosion, lack of awareness, inaccessibility, bibliographic obstacles, poor infrastructure, environment, declining budgets, crime, rising costs and staff attitude towards the users are the obstacles to access Information. It is suggested that there are no specific solutions for the library to remove these obstacles. The library staff must examine the barriers related to information access and overcome such barriers by providing required information.

Anwarul Islam, Dr. Muhammad Mezbah-ul-Islam (2010) Concentrates on the importance of public library in providing community information services in Bangladesh. The study reveals that the majority of the people who live in rural areas are still suffering from poverty, literacy and health problems. The study suggested that the government of Bangladesh to emphasize community information services for the rural people to improve the living standards and abolish illiteracy. The public library has to play a major role to initiate community information services to overcome all these problems.

Gupta, Sangita; Kaur, Kulwinder (2013) Community Information Centers (CICs) are established to create awareness of Information Technology (IT) among people of Jammu division at the grass-root level. The author discusses the major responsibilities of CICs in providing the required information to the users in different blocks. The paper emphasizes the aim of users' visits to CICs and their level of satisfaction towards the services. The authors have suggested various steps for the effective implementation of CIC and to bridge the digital divide among the people of different blocks in Jammu.

Methodology

The study is based on the survey method the questionnaires were prepared to collect primary data in the study. The questionnaires were administered among the agriculturists. To get more data face-to-face interviews and group discussions were also conducted. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel Spread Sheet.

Scope and limitation of the study

Karnataka State has four Regions, Mysuru, Bangalore, Gulbarga and Belgaum. Mysore Region comprises eight districts of Mysuru, Mandya, Kodagu, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Chikmagalur, Dakshina Kannada, and Udupi. The study focused only on the agriculturist community of Mysuru District, not the entire population of the whole region.

Analysis and interpretation of data

The data collected from the agriculturists were analyzed and presented in the following components;

The age distribution of the agriculturists who have been involved in this study is presented in Table 1. The highest percentage 38 (42.22%) of the agriculturists were the age group of between 31-45 years followed by the age groups of 46-55 years 26(28.89%), the age group of 18-30 years are 21(23.33) and age group of from 56 years and above are only 5 (5.56%).

Table 1: Age Group of the Agriculturists

Age	No	%
18-30	21	23.33
31-45	38	42.22
46-55	26	28.89
56-above	05	5.56
Total	90	100

Table 2 reveals the educational level of the agriculturists; the respondents are categorized into four main groups based on their educational level. The majority of respondents 43 (47.78%) are attained above to the high school, followed by 24 (26.67% are pass out up to high school, while 15 (16.67%) are graduate and above and only 8 (8.88%) of the agriculturists are found illiterate in the study. In order to get the background information about the agriculturists, questions were asked regarding their age, education level, language is known and the size of the land holding.

Table 2: Educational Level of Agriculturists

Group	Response	Percentage
Illiterate	8	8.88
Up to high school	24	26.67
Above high school	43	47.78
Graduate and above	15	16.67
Total	90	100

In Table 3 all the agriculturists know the Kannada language which is the mother tongue of the agriculturalists. English is understood by 21 (23.33%) whereas 13(14.44%), responded they understood Hindi also.

Table 3: Language Known to Agriculturists

Language	No	%
Kannada	90	100

English	21	23.33
Hindi	13	14.44
Others	00	100

Table 4 and Figure 1 reveals that 29 (32.22%) of agriculturists do have 2-5 acres of land followed by 24 (26.67%) having the land holding size of 1-2 acres, 19 (21.11%) having less than 1 acre, 12 (13.33%) having 5 to 10 acres and only 06 (6.67%) of the agriculturists are holding 10 acres and more. It is found that the land holding size of the agriculturists is very less.

Table 4: Land Holding Size of the Agriculturists

Size of land holding	No.	%
Less than 1 acre	19	21.11
1-2 acres	24	26.67
2-5 acres	29	32.22
5-10 acres	12	13.33
10 acres and more	06	6.67
Total	90	100

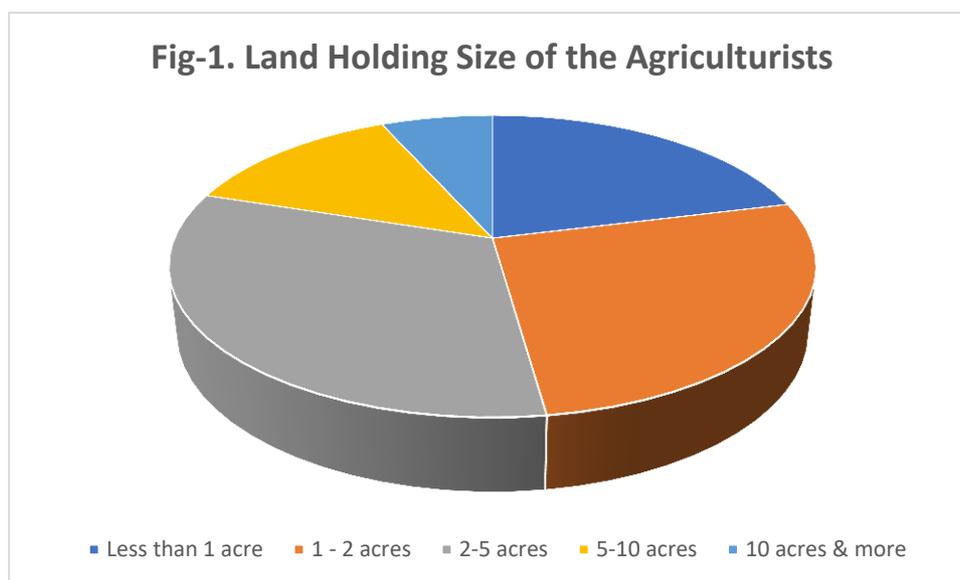


Fig-1: Land Holding Size of the Agriculturists

Table 5 shows that 61(54.90%) of the agriculturists expressed their opinion that library facilities are available in their locality and 29(26.10%) of agriculturists say that library facilities are not available in their villages.

Table 5: Availability of Public Library Facilities in their Locality

Replay	Response	Percentage
Yes	61	54.90
No	29	26.10
Total	90	100

Table 6 and Figure 2 reveals that 63% of agriculturists strongly agree that lack of simple

reading materials is the barrier to accessing Community Information(CI), whereas 57% are says lack of ICT facilities, 54% of agriculturists are strongly agreed that lack of awareness of CI, 52% are lacking with agricultural information resources, 48% are facing barriers with the language, 45% lacking with the library staff and their attitude, 36% lacking with library timings, 26% of agriculturists expressed that lack of Library facilities are the barriers to access CI.

Table 6: Barriers to access Community Information

Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Percentage
Lack of library facilities	26%	16%	26%	32%	100
Lack of agricultural information resources	52%	23%	15%	10%	100
Lack of simple reading materials	63%	12%	10%	15%	100
Lack of awareness	54%	21%	13%	12%	100
Language barrier	48%	17%	12%	23%	100
Lack of library staff and their attitude	45%	28%	15%	12%	100
Library timings	36%	27%	22%	15%	100
Lack of ICT facilities	57%	33%	10%	0%	100

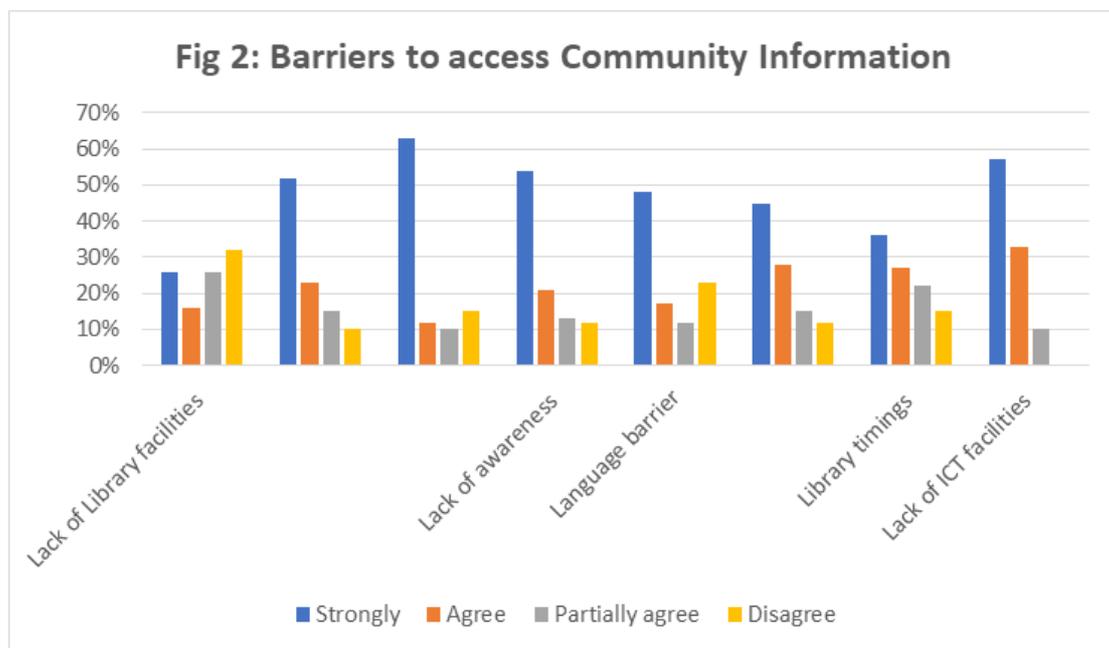


Fig-2: Barriers to Access Community Information

Results and Discussion

Education

It is found that 8.88% of the agriculturists are illiterate in the study. The public library needs to play a major role to educate illiterate agriculturists because the level of education impacts on reducing the barriers to access community information.

Lack of library facilities

The study reveals that 26.10% of agriculturists are not having library facilities in their locality. The Government/Public library needs to take the necessary steps to establish more rural libraries.

Agriculturists do believe having a Library in their localities may help them to solve their day-to-day problems.

Lack of agricultural information resources

The agriculturists are reported that less availability of agricultural information in the library impacts access to community information, Public library needs to concentrate on the collection development of agricultural information resources to reduce the barriers.

Lack of simple reading materials

It is found that 63% of agriculturists strongly agree that the lack of simple reading materials is the barrier to accessing community information. The public library needs to collect community information resources in simple reading form and it should be prepared such as pamphlets, brochures, and distributed freely to agriculturists at an affordable price.

Language barriers

It is found that 48% of the respondents strongly agree that language is one of the barriers to access CI. The public library has to play a major role to develop more collections in the Kannada language because 100% of the agriculturists know Kannada which is the mother tongue of the agriculturists in Mysuru District.

Lack of awareness

The study reveals that 54% of respondents strongly agree that lack of awareness about the community information is the barrier to access. Thus, the public library is required to initiate awareness programs about the availability of community information in their library by conducting exhibitions of agricultural resources, arranging talks, the celebration of farmer's day, training programs, seminars and workshops.

Lack of library staff

It's found that 45% of respondents strongly expressed their opinion that lack of Library staff and their attitude is the barrier to access community information. The public library needs to provide additional qualified and dedicated staff at the rural library to reduce the barriers to access.

Library timings

The study found that most of the rural libraries keep open only from morning 8 am to 12 pm and evening 4 pm to 8 pm. The agriculturists responded that opening timings of the library are also barriers to access community information. It is recommended that rural libraries should be kept open from morning 8 am to 8 pm to use library facilities effectively in their leisure time.

Lack of ICT facilities

Today, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought remarkable enhancements in the agricultural sector. It helps agriculturists to implement modern technology in agricultural practices. In this study, agriculturists reported that lack of ICT facilities is one of the barriers to accessing CI. The public library needs to provide ICT facilities to access community information and e-governance initiatives in the agriculture sector to reduce the barriers.

Conclusion

Community information is the basic need for the overall development of agriculturists. It can be rightly said that more access and use of CI impact social, economic and cultural development in the community. The public library has to play a vital role to remove the barriers of accessing CI

by creating awareness programs and establishing more community information centers with the required agricultural resources and services.

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