
**INFORMATION LITERACY AND READING HABITS: A
CASE STUDY OF SAMELANGSO, HOWRAGHAT AND LANGSOMEPI
DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS UNDER KARBI ANGLONG
AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL OF ASSAM, INDIA.**

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Abstract :

Information literacy is the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address an issue or a problem. We are living in an age of information explosion and thus the "Knowledge Generation Exchange and Utilization (KGEU)" has gained momentum. Information Literacy and reading habits are to be imbibed, practiced and spread among the masses.

This paper discusses in details the information literacy and reading habits among the educated people of the Samelangso, Howraghat and Langsomepi Development Blocks under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council of Assam.

KEYWORDS :

Information Literacy, Reading Habits, Educated people.

INTRODUCTION

The term Information Literacy was first coined by Zurkowski in 1970s and thereafter it was much talked about and has gained momentum throughout the world. Educated as well as uneducated, literate as well as illiterate should have some amount of information literacy skills in order to survive. In fact, Information Literacy is the prerequisite for a developed society and people must attain certain level of information literacy in order to face the challenges of Information Age. We are living in an age of information and knowledge explosion. Knowledge is generated, exchanged and utilized at a faster rate and much faster with development of communication technology. Citizens of the country that is skilled in information and knowledge generation, exchanging and utilizing them are socially, economically, politically and technologically in advantageous position. This in turn can contribute to Nation Building.

Karbi Anglong is a Tribal dominated district of the state of Assam, India. It is situated in the central part of Assam and is bounded by Golaghat district in the East, Morigaon district and Meghalaya state in the West, Nagaon and Golaghat districts in the north and NC Hills district and Nagaland State in the south. The district with thick tropical forest covered hills and flat plains are situated in 250 33' N to 26035' N Latitude and 92010' to 93050' E Longitude. The major tribal ethnic groups in the district are Karbis, Dimasas, Bodos, Kukis, Garos, Rengma Nagas, Tiwas, Man(Tai Speaking), Khasi-Pnar, Hmars. Besides, a large number of non-tribal also live together in this hill region.

As per 2011 Census the total literacy rate of Karbi Anglong is 73.52% out of which 82.12% is male and 64.62% is female.

DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF THE TERM "INFORMATION LITERACY":

Patrica S Breivik (1985), describes Information Literacy as an integrated set of skills and the knowledge of tools and resources. Information Literacy is developed through persistence, an attention to detail, and a critical, evaluative view of the material found. Breivik also views information literacy as a form of problem solving activity.

The American Library Association's (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy Final Report (1989), describes the information literate individual as someone who has the ability to recognize an information need, and can locate, and use information effectively

CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) Council (2004) defined Information Literacy as, "Information Literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner".

The Alexandria Proclamation of (2005), "Beacons of the Information Society", High Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning, Bibliotheca Alexandria, Egypt – recognizes information literacy as "a basic human right in the digital world" as it empowers individuals "in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals"

CONCEPT AND MEANING OF READING HABIT:

Reading Habit is a complex socio-cultural phenomenon. Reading culture started with the advent of Printing Press. Reading habit influences in the promotion of one's personal development in particular and social progress in general. Regular and systematic reading sharpens the intellect, refines the emotion, elevates the tastes, and provides perspectives for one's living; and thereby prepares a person for an effective participation in the social, religious, cultural and political life. General Readership or the public Reading Habit among the educated urban people in India witnessed an unprecedented growth in 19th & 20th Century. However, the growth in reading habit among the Indian population is uneven, diverse and slow.

Definition of "Reading" has undergone many changes through ages. In the past reading simply meant to extract visual information.

Smith and Robinson (1980) define "Reading" as "an active attempt on the part of reader to understand the writer's message". Devarajan (1989) defined reading as "the art of interpreting the printed and written words".

Irvin (1998) defined the reading process as "The interaction of what is in the head with what on the page with a particular context that causes students to comprehend what they read".

AIM OF STUDY:

This paper study the information literacy and reading habits of the people of three Development Blocks of Karbi Anglong District. The three Development Blocks of Karbi Anglong under study are:

- 1) Samelangso Development Block
- 2) Howraghat Development Block
- 3) Langsomepi Development Block

The aim is -

1. To study the information sources used by the people, i.e. Newspaper, Magazine, Radio, T.V. internet.
2. To assess the reading habit of the people of the study area.
3. To find out the reasons for accessing information by the people of the study area.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on survey and questionnaire. The three development blocks i.e. Samelangso, Howraghat and Langsomepi are first toured and first hand idea was created concerning the, educated area and uneducated area. Thereafter, random sampling of the study area was carried out. The prominent areas identified are – Howragaht, Borbil, Padumpukhri, Sil Dharampur, Bakalia, Desobai, Tarabasa, Phuloni, Dengaon. Parokhowa, Dokmoka, Dhentaghat, Samelangso. Questionnaires are asked to fill up by the educated people only. Finally, data collected and evaluated.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Analysis of data is the major step of any research study. It is the link between the raw data and results for conclusions. Proper analysis of data is very important as it can affect the findings of results. Analysis of data has to be result oriented. Utmost care and deliberate study of the data has to be undertaken in order to extract the best of the best reply from the data collected and make proper conclusion from the data.

Population study:

Table-1: Sex wise distribution of Respondents.

Population	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	138	69
Female	62	31
Total	200	100

Figure-1: Sex wise distribution of Respondents.

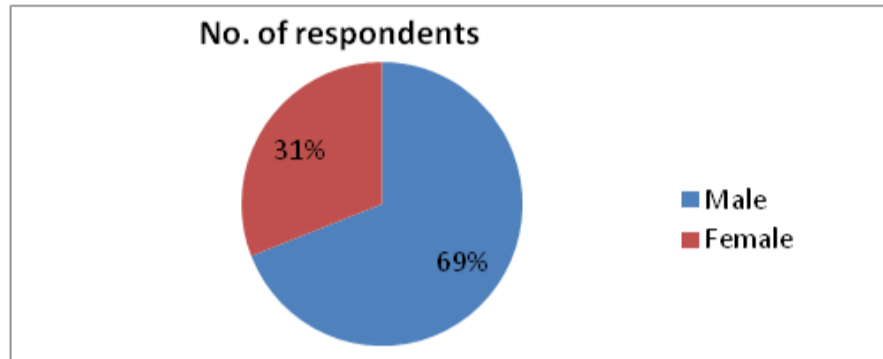
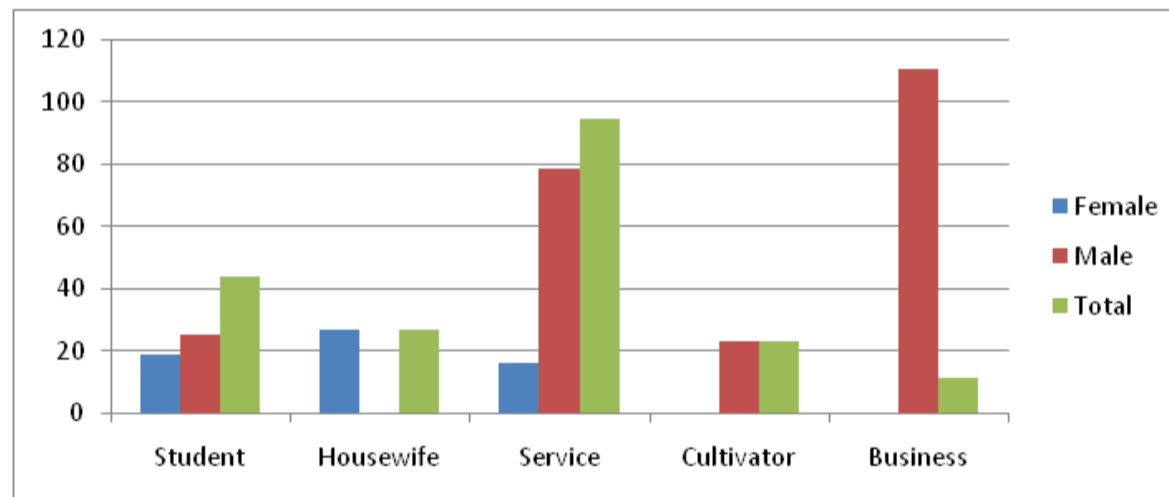


Table-1 and figure-1 above shows the distribution of the respondents. The number of male respondents is higher than the female respondents. The female respondents is 31% where as male respondents is 69%.

Table-2: Profession/Occupation of Respondents.

Profession	Female (F)	%	Male (M)	%	Total (T) T=F+M	%
Student	19	30.6	25	18.1	44	22
Housewife	27	43.5	0	0	27	13.5
Service	16	25.8	79	57.2	95	47.5
Cultivator	0	0	23	16.6	23	11.5
Business	0	0	11	7.9	11	5.5
Total	62	100	138	100	200	100

Figure-2: Profession / Occupation of respondents



The analysis of the table-2 and figure-2 indicates that highest respondents combining male and female are service holders (47.5%), followed by students (22%), housewife (13.5%), cultivator (11.5%) and the lowest is cultivator (5.5%). Among the female respondents the highest is housewife (43.5%), followed by student 30.6%, service holder (25.8%), and cultivator and business person is (0%). Among the male respondents Service holders (57.2%), students (18.1%), cultivator (16.6%), business (7.9%). The result is that male service holders are the highest respondents and the business category people are the least.

Table-3: Educational Qualifications of Respondents.

Educational Qualification of Respondents	Female	Percentage	Male	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Below/Passed Class 10	21	10.5	34	17.0	55	27.5
Higher Secondary	19	9.5	41	20.5	60	30.0
Diploma	1	0.5	3	1.5	4	2.0
Graduation (Arts)	16	8.5	47	23.5	63	31.5
Graduation (Science/Tech)	0	0	5	2.5	5	2.5
Post Graduation (Arts)	5	2.5	6	3.0	11	5.5
Post Graduate (Science/Tech)	0	0	2	1.0	2	1.0
Total	62		138		200	

Figure-3: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

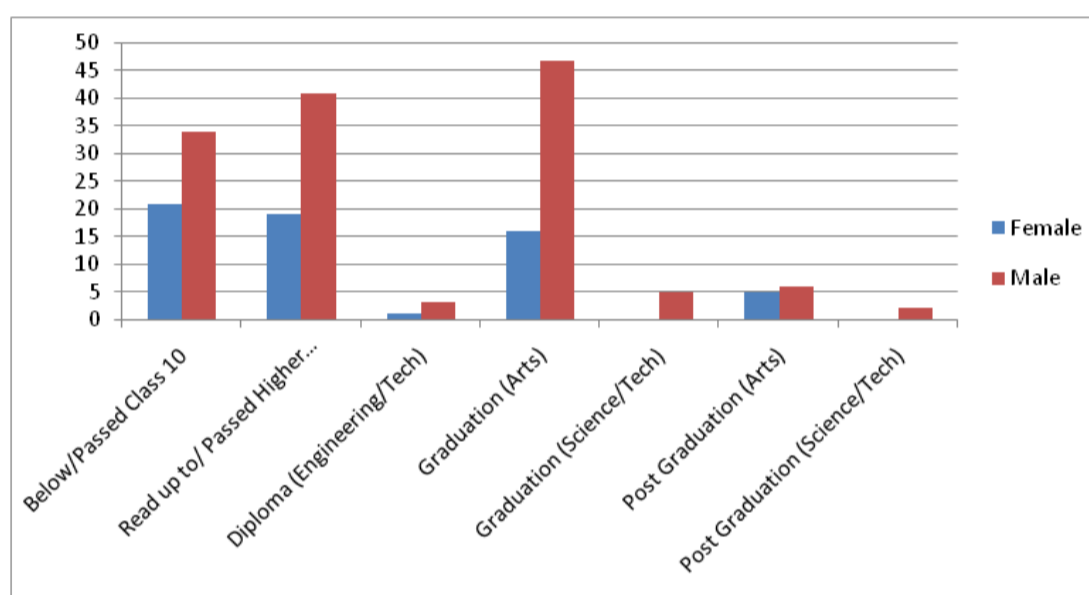


Table-3 and figure-3 indicates the educational qualifications of the respondents of the study area. The highest total respondents including male and female is Graduation Arts (31.5%), followed by Higher Secondary (30%), Class 10 (27.5%), Post Graduate Arts (5.5%), Graduation Science/Tech (2.5%), Diploma (2%) and the lowest is Post Graduate Science/Tech (1%). Among the female the highest respondents is Class 10 (10.5%) and followed by Higher Secondary (9.5%), Graduation Arts (8.5%), Post Graduate Arts (2.5%) and (0%) in both Graduate and Post Graduate Science/ Tech. Among the male the highest respondents is Graduation Arts (23.5%), followed by Higher Secondary (20.5%), Class 10 (17%), Post Graduate Arts (3%), Graduation Science/Tech (2.5%), Diploma (1.5%) and the least is Post Graduate Science/Tech (1%).

Table-4: Source of acquiring/accessing different print reading materials.

Source	Female (F)	Percentage	Male (M)	Percentage	Total (T) T=F+M	Percentage	
Newspaper	Self purchase	48	24	113	56.5	161	80.5
	College Library	10	5	17	8.5	27	13.5
	Other means	21	10.5	39	19.5	60	30
Magazine/ Journal	Self purchase	18	9	72	36	90	45
	College Library	9	4.5	14	7	23	11.5
	Other means	15	7.5	43	21.5	58	29
Books	Self purchase	38	19	58	29	96	48
	College Library	19	9.5	23	11.5	42	21
	Other means	27	13.5	41	20.5	68	34

The educated people read mostly newspaper, magazine, locally published journal and general books like novel and other leisure books. The table-4 above indicates the source or mode of acquiring the print reading materials. Newspaper is the most popular reading material among the educated people of the study area. Table-4 indicates that (80.5%) of the respondents including male and female reads newspaper by self purchasing, followed by books (48%) and Magazine (45%). The table-4 also indicates that among males reading newspaper by self purchasing is (56.5%) followed by and Magazine (36%) books (29%). On the other hand, among females reading newspaper by self purchasing is (24%) followed by books (19%) and magazine (9%). Acquiring or accessing newspaper, magazine, and books from library and other means by both male and female are meager and not significant.

Table-5: Purpose for reading.

Purpose for Reading	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
Pleasure/Recreation.	19	51	70	35.00
Acquiring Knowledge	14	48	62	31.00
Professional Need	5	29	34	17.00
Hobby	8	37	45	22.5
Pastime	0	19	19	09.50

When respondents were asked to indicate the purpose for reading it is observed from the table-5 above that reading for pleasure/recreation is (35%) followed by acquiring knowledge (31%), hobby (22.5%), Professional need (17%) and Pastime (9.5%). Reading for pleasure/recreation is more than the other reasons.

Table-6: Other sources of information used by respondents.

Other sources of information	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
Radio	11	37	48	24
Television	67	83	150	75
Online Sources	19	25	44	22

The table-6 above indicates the other sources of information being accessed and used by the respondents. It is clear from the table that online sources are the least used by the respondents; television is the most used while the use of the radio is also less. Percentage wise use stands at, television (75%), radio (24%) and online sources (22%).

Table-7: Purpose of listening radio apart from listening songs.

Radio Programme	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
News	2	27	29	14.5
Agricultural news/report	0	18	18	09.5
Health news/report	4	21	25	12.5
Educational talk/report	2	15	17	08.5
Sports Commentary	0	31	31	15.5

From the table-7 above, it is clear that respondents listen radio mostly for news (14%), followed by Sports commentary (15.5%), health news/report (12.5%), agriculture news/report (9.5%) and educational talk/report (8.5%).

Table-8: Purpose of watching Television.

Television Programme	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
News	22	69	91	45.5
Agricultural Programme	0	28	28	14.0
Health Programme	18	27	45	22.5
Educational Programme	35	19	54	27.5
Sports	2	57	59	29.5
Serials/others	41	52	93	46.5

Table-8 above shows the purpose of use of television among the respondents. The purpose of watching television in percentage wise decreasing order is – Serials/others (46.5), news (45.5%), Sports (29.5%), educational programme (27.5%), health programme (22.5%) and agricultural programme (14%). Serials/other programmes are most preferred by the respondents while the educational programme is less preferred.

Table-9: Knowledge of computer of the respondents.

Knowledge of computer	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
E-mail handling	14	22	36	18
Internet surfing	19	25	44	22
Search Engines	14	24	38	19
DTP	17	15	32	16

Figure-4: Knowledge of computer of the respondents.

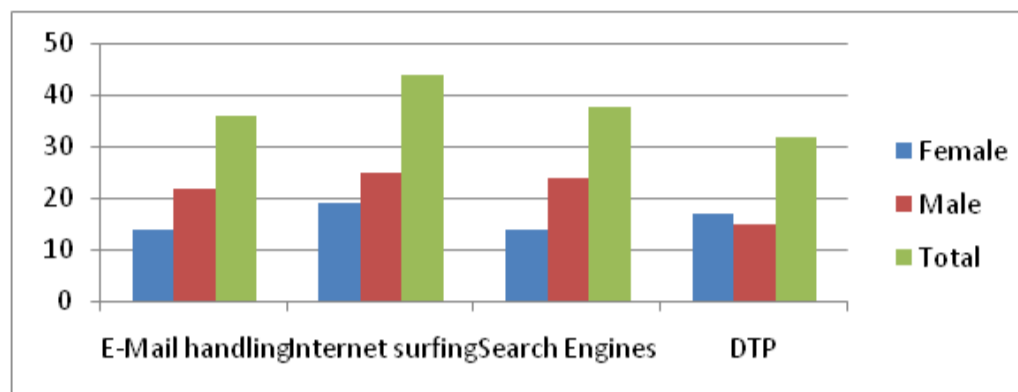


Table-9 and figure-4 explains the computer use capabilities of the respondents. Respondents were also asked to indicate their knowledge of computer. From the table-9 above we can understand that very less educated people can use and handle computer. Percentage wise capability of the respondents in e-mail handling is (18%), internet surfing (22%), knowledge of search engines (19%) and DTP (16%).

Table-10: Use of online sources by respondents:

Respondents	Yes	Percentage
Female	19	9.5
Male	25	12.5

Total =44

Total % =22

From the table-10 it can be understood that only 9.5% female and 12.5% male have the knowledge of online resources. Out of 200 respondents only 44 have responded having knowledge of online sources which is only 22% of the total respondents.

Table-11: Satisfaction level of the online information searching by the respondents.

Satisfaction Level	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
Low	3	5	8	04.0
Moderate	16	18	34	17
High	0	2	2	01.0

The above table-11 is the satisfaction level of the 44 respondents with knowledge of online sources. The level of satisfaction with the online sources with respect to total respondents including male and female and with or without computer knowledge is – low satisfaction (4%), Moderate (17%) and High (1%).

CONCLUSION:

The reading habit among the educated people of Samelangso, Howraghat and Langsomepi Development Block is not up to the mark. Apart from newspaper reading, there is no other significant reading in other areas like reading for hobbies, career enhancement and recreation and pleasure. Reading habit among the students is meager. They have no habit of listening to radio and watch television programe related to information and education. Though people heard the internet and online resources, they are hesitant to use it. Infrastructure has to be built up and awareness among the students and learned people has to be spread. Government and educational institutions has to link the curriculum with information literacy skills.

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