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Study of Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of the Gram Panchayat Members of West Bengal: with special reference to Burdwan-I Development Block

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Abstract

There is no shortage of information in the time of this information explosion era. Due to information explosion the gram panchayat members are confused about the access to right information at the right time from different information sources. Thus, information seeking is most important thing and it is surely be influenced by different type factors. The study would also find the information sources, how to access and how to use these sources by the gram panchayat members of different gram panchayats under the Burdwan-I Development Block. Data has been collected from the gram panchayat members through structured questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed among the 162 gram panchayat members of the different gram panchayat of this blocks of burdwan sadar (north) subdivision. 117 filled questionnaires are returned back from the gram panchayat members and all are analysed. Most of the members said that Libraries, community information centres, etc. are not available in the villages, so their role is very limited but they want to establish this type of information sources in their village area. Gram panchayat members are getting information from print and non-print media and also from internet. Most of the GP members used social media and majority of them used both facebook & whatsapp to seek the information. Almost all the Gram Panchayat members get adequate information from all relevant sources including language problem, difficulties in operating technical devices and dealing with time constraints and also the pandemic of Covid-19.

Keyword: Information needs, Information seeking behaviour, Gram Panchayat Members, Information Sources.

Type: Research Paper

Introduction

A gram panchayat is a local self-government body at the village level in West Bengal as well as in India and has a Pradhan as its elected head. West Bengal is a pioneer in the

implementation of the panchayat system in the country, India. The Panchayat system has been fully operational in West Bengal since 1978. Panchayat system is a three-tier system consisting of Zilla Parishad (ZP) at Zilla level; Panchayat Samiti (PS) at Block level and Gram Panchayat (GP) at village level which is the lowest level and elected members of the village concerned.

There are 20 Zilla Parishads and 1 Mahakuma Parishad, 341 Panchayat Samitis and 3354 Gram Panchayats in the state of West Bengal. At present 23 Panchayat samities and 215 nos. of gram panchayat in the Purba Bardhaman Districts. Now try to find out the actual information requirements of gram panchayat members of Burdwan-I Development Block under the Burdwan Sadar (North) subdivision, Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal.

Gram Panchayat members are elected from gram panchayat constituencies by the villagers and they became the important part of Gram Panchayat. Gram Panchayat & Gram Panchayat members are the both side of a coin, without this coin rural development can't possible. These autonomous institutions and its members are now play an important role in the development, planning and implementation from village to district level. Despite some shortcomings, the panchayat system has changed the economic, social and political system of the village in the country general and Purba Bardhaman district as well as West Bengal as specific.

Panchayati Raj of India

During the British rule, the formal system of local administration was introduced in rural as well as urban areas. The purpose was not to give local governments the freedom to decide on their own development but to have better control over activities in the countryside in the interests of the empire. The first step in this direction was the introduction of the Bengal Chowkidary Act in 1870 for the Chowkidari Panchayat.

The District Magistrate can nominate the villagers to the panchayat to take charge of the collection of tax from the Chowkidary Chakran land for the payment of village policing chowkidars and involve the chowkidars for village level policing. In this year, the then Governor General of India Lord Mayo passed a resolution to introduce local administration in India. The Act provided for the formation of district boards at the district level, local boards at the subdivision level and union committees at the cluster level of villages. The Bengal Village Self-Government Act was passed in 1919 to establish a system of self-government at the village level. Under this Act, the district board was the same but the local board was abolished and the union committee and the chowkidary panchayat were merged to form the union board. The Union Board had various responsibilities and powers, some of which are similar to those of the present Gram Panchayats.

The State will take steps to organize the Gram Panchayats and give them such powers and Authorities may need to enable them to function as units of self-government. After independence, to form a panchayat, no state had taken any initiative. The importance was, however, Post-independence communal development, launched on October 2, 1952 and the Community Development Blocks were established. In the year 1957, Evaluate the effectiveness of community development programme a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. Balwant Rai Mehta. The committee recommended in its report that the program would not be successful without the involvement of the local people. On the recommendation of the committee Panchayats were formed in different states through appropriate state laws. The legislature, since local administration was a state affair. After the report is published Panchayat laws were passed in different states. The West Bengal Panchayat Act of 1957 Pass to establish panchayats in the state. The Act recommends a four-tier structure by divided the previous union board into gram panchayats and Anchal Parishad.

In 1963 The West Bengal Zilla Parishad Act was passed by the Zilla Parishad to replace the District Board and Anchal Parishad at the block level. In the year 1969, all representatives of 15 Zilla Parishad and 315 Anchal Parishad were removed and administrators were employed. All these local bodies were under the administrators till the election was held in 1978.

The second generation of panchayats was established by passing the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973. The Act provided for the establishment of three tier panchayats. Thus, Gram Panchayats (GPs) need to be formed for village panchayats; Panchayat Samiti (PS) at the block level and Zila Parishad (ZP) at the district level should be formed.

However, the three-tier panchayat elections were conducted only on the basis of the new Act in the year 1978 and regular elections are being held every five years. Many state government employees were given a dual role with the responsibility of working for the panchayat in their ex-officio capacity. The most important of which is to make DM the executive officer of ZP and BDO the executive officer of PS.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To identify the information needs of the Gram Panchayat Members.
2. To identify the sources of information which they want to seek.
3. To verify the information seeking behaviour of Gram Panchayat Members.
4. To identify information seeking.
5. To give effective advice for getting information to Gram Panchayat Members.

Review of the related literature

Dash, Satya Prakash (2002) in his article entitled "Decentralized Planning and Gram Panchayats - Problems and Prospects: A Case Study of Dadhibhamanpur Gram Panchayats" discusses and analyzes the role and effectiveness of panchayats implementing development programs through decentralized planning. It argues that political stability, public service performance, equity, macro-economic stability are some of the factors that affect the performance of these organizations. Adequate planning at the PRI, government agencies and local levels for public participation, coordination, and cooperation can help in administrative decentralization and empowerment at grass root level. Chatterjee, Biswajit and Ghosh, Dilip Kumar (2003) in their article titled "Globalization and Decentralized Governance - The Reflection of Panchayats in India". A complex process that indicates the growing integration of economies and societies around the world. This process affects individuals and organizations in the country. Domestic companies responsible for development, including the process of opening up and integrating with the outside world, need a lot of restructuring to address the challenges. India has moved towards planned economic development in the overall structure of the mixed economy where there is freedom to work side by side in both public and private sectors. Gireesan, K. (2005) conducted a study on human participation in rural administration. The major objectives of the survey are to analyze the level of human participation in rural governance and to advise measures to develop human participation in rural governance. Giri, Bishwanath and Jeevan, VK (2006) have conducted a study on eradicating unwanted opinions in rural society through scientific information support systems. The study pointed out that integrated information support system is very much needed for the rural society, which primitive barbaric practices not only remove, but also

create a science conscious society. The best way to provide information support to the rural population is to create an integrated rural information support system with the panchayat as the main focus of the system. Prinja et al (2007) conducted a study "Role of Panchayathi Raj Institutions in decentralised village health planning in North India." The survey found that ANM had not contacted panchayat members once in the last six months. Panchayat members are less aware of their responsibilities and the 73rd amendment to the constitution (33%). Lack of capacity to perform development work and illiteracy prove to be the reasons for not getting involved in their planning process. The study suggested increasing ANM's contact with regular panchayat members to increase information literacy in the health sector. In order to play a meaningful role in the provision of health services, the capacity of the panchayat members needs to be built with proper training. Bhattacharya, Rabindranath (2008) discusses in his article "E-Governance in Rural West Bengal (India): Impacts and Implications": "The article explores the impact of information technology (IT) as an effective force in tackling challenges to rural people in West Bengal, India. Speaking of the digital age, it is argued that the introduction of e-governance in Burdwan could lead to development by closely adapting the needs and capabilities of the panchayats. A modern way of giving should be changed." Shivalingppa, Anupama & Tadasad, P. G. (2009) in their article titled "Use of gram panchayat libraries in Gulbarga districts: a study" shed light on: The use of gram panchayat libraries in Gulbarga district has been tried to understand and evaluate the users and information Services to the users by the Gram Panchayat Library. The results call for building an effective and sound gram panchayat library and emphasizing on user education activities for the best utilization of gram panchayat libraries. Dutta, Lakhimi (2014) conducted a study on "Panchayat Raj-three tier System in India" that after the 73rd amendment to the constitution in 1992, states expected states to decentralize their authority to their self-governing bodies at the local level. The aim was to take democracy to the grassroots level so that the people could run their own affairs at that level. Only people know what is best for them and what needs to be done. The idea was not only to give people the power to make decisions, but also to give them the power and authority to govern. Kumari, Suman & Alam, Shahnawaz (2016) pointed out in their article entitled "The Role of Gram Panchayat in Rural Development: A Study in Mathura District, Uttar Pradesh". Especially after independence, gram panchayats are expected to play vital role for the development of rural village area in India. Both the Central and State Governments and various committees have emphasized the importance of these agencies in the planning document policy. Sustainable and inclusive growth in the overall rural development of the Panchayat Raj Institution. Strengthen rural people to participate in rural development programs to improve their quality of life

Chakraborty and Basu (1999) studied the behavioural aspect of the information needs and communication factors of the Totos, a sub-Himalayan tribal community living in a small hilly region called Totopara in the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. The analysis and interpretation of the data revealed that the highest percentage of the population needed information on various types of government and non-government financial grants. It was also found that respondents need information on edible herbs, vegetables, peppers, woodpeckers, honey and other forest resources. A well-planned enriched network of community information systems has been suggested by researchers to enrich the quality of life of Totos. Shekhar (2002) conducted a study on a training test for members of Gram Panchayat in Karnataka. The study found that the volunteers in the training of trainers were well equipped to carry out the scheduled work of training the Gram Panchayat members using the prepared materials. Most of the trainers felt that it was effective not only in training members of the Gram Panchayat but also in developing their own personality. It has been observed that after complete the training, their knowledge and awareness about Panchayat Raj setups has

upgraded. The women Panchayat members were more interested than the men to take part in the training. Most of the Gram Panchayat members felt that the training materials were very handy, useful and informative. Ghosh and Utpal Kumar Dey (2003) tried to describe his study the leadership quality of rural panchayat leaders in Tripura is such that they play an important role in the process of rural development. For this purpose, an indicator was prepared for the leadership of members in various panchayats. It may also be noted that the quality of development leadership has taken over their perception of local issues. These observations often depend on the level of education, business, and their meetings with the general public. It is further noted that current members should be educated and trained to be more involved in better understanding the issues and adopting appropriate policies. Singh and Singh (2005) highlighted the main features of their research paper "Capacity building program for representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions started in Punjab." The content and issues of the training program arising from training workshops from 1995 to 2005 are discussed in detail. The workshop was actively attended by more than 24,000 participants, including Panches, Sarpanches, Zilla Samiti members and Mahila Parishad members and women and scheduled caste members said that this type of workshop should be held at regular intervals to gain more information and respect. Issues have been raised and discussed in various workshops on deviations of power in panchayat raj institutions, especially social sector development, health sanitation, drinking water, education, agriculture, crop diversification and related activities. Female feticide and social welfare programs are discussed in the paper. The role of panchayats in these cases and the need for awareness of elected representatives is central to the study. Kaul and Sahni (2009) in their study "Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution", noted that Panchayati Raj Institutions have always been considered as a means to good governance and the 73rd amendment to the Constitution raised fears that such assurances provide political space for castes, Scheduled Tribes and women. They try to find out the extent of participation of women elected representatives in the panchayat and the problems they have. Surveys have shown that women are no longer sensitive to issues related to women in rural areas or their actual presence in the panchayat. Selected women are not always treated with due respect. Many selected women complained that their suggestions were not taken seriously or that they were not consulted when making decisions. Some think that their ideas were disregarded because they were the women members. Male-dominated panchayats were pressured by their husbands in their time to approve their decisions. Seal, Dipak Kumar (2011) focuses on his thesis entitled "Information Needs, Awareness and Information Seeking Habits of Elected Women Representatives of Local Government: A study with special reference to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in West Bengal". Information is an essential element of human life. An accurate information system can provide information to the intended users through the development of the necessary information products and services and information transmission process. The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India gives constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to act as a separate third tier of government and to ensure women's participation in the Panchayati Raj Institution. Women's participation brings a new strength and vision to the administration. Many studies have shown that women receive less information than men. Researcher tried to assess the information needs, awareness and information seeking practices of elected women representatives. Gomes, Lawrence & Manna, Samita (2014) describe that the "Status of Panchayat Members in West Bengal: A Micro Level Study" plan exercise was conducted at the central level which did not encourage greater public demand. Since independence the central plans have achieved unprecedented results in the macro economy of this country and yet not much has changed in terms of rural realities development. People are still living sub-people in rural and urban areas. In order to provide the basic facilities, to use the facilities for growth and to bring the

plan of economic activities, small scale exercises have to be done. This exercise was thought of many times in independent India, whether planning institutions could be set up at the block level or at the district level. Deshpande, A.R. and Soni, M.C. (2015) have focussed in their article entitled “Study on Personal, Socio-Economic and Communication Characteristics of gram panchayat members of Banaskantha District of Gujarat State” and pointed out that majority of the respondents were from middle age, having education up to middle school level, belonged to open caste category, agriculture as their main occupation with medium land holding, annual income, social participation, mass media exposure and training received. As regards to leadership background most of them had no leadership background and have medium level of leadership experience. Pushpa, K. S. (2016) described in his article on India entitled “Study on the Legal Knowledge of Elected representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Tumkur District Karnataka State – India.” This study was carried out to learn and how to improve the legal knowledge by the elected members (PRIs) of the PRIs in Tumkur District, Karnataka. The introduction of the Community Development Programme (CDP) in the First Five Year Plan has given a new dimension to people's participation in development as well as accelerated it. Development depends on an overall positive change in the physical quality of life. This positive change for improvement includes economic as well as social aspects. In other words development refers to growth with justice; this means improved quality of life through improved health, education, housing and welfare. Research has shown that the majority (73%) members of the Panchayat Raj Institution (PRI) did not have legal knowledge. The study found that the majority (46.66%) of the elected members had an educational level at the secondary school and high school level.

Mostar and Okola (2005) conducted a study about the information needs and information seeking behaviour of parliamentarians in South Africa. Originally and traditionally, parliamentary libraries are expected to deliver most of the information needed by legislators. The purpose of the study was to identify the sources of information, services and systems used by MPs in South Africa and to determine the role of parliamentary libraries in providing information. The survey found that they were not using parliamentary libraries regularly. Foloronsho and Ibrahim (2015) stated that half of the legislators needed information on legislative matters and 25% on the political affairs of the Kawra State House in the legislature. 62.5% of legislators sought information through unofficial sources and 37.5% said official sources. In the Indian capital, Sailendra Kumar & Hari Prakash (2008) also investigated social welfare information for all members of legislators, with about 97% of legislators needed information about electricity, education and water supply for members of the legislative assembly.

Scope of the Study

The present study is aimed to investigating the needs of Gram Panchayat members of Burdwan-I development block under Burdwan Sadar (North) subdivision in the context of local level planning and use of information patterns. There are 162 gram panchayat members in 9 gram panchayats in this block.

Methodology

The questionnaire method was used for this study. The universe of the present study consisted of 162 gram panchayat members of 9 gram panchayats in this Burdwan-I

block under Burdwan Sadar (North) Subdivision. Lists of elected gram panchayats members were collected from West Bengal State Panchayat Election Commission website. Data was collected from the gram panchayat members through structured questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed among the 162 gram panchayat members of the different gram panchayat of this blocks of burdwan sadar (north) subdivision. 117 filled questionnaires are returned back from the gram panchayat members and all are analysed.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis is very much needed after collection the data. When a large amount of data is collected, it becomes necessary for the researcher to somehow summarize and create the same logical sequence. This procedure is referred to as tabulation. In the broadest sense, tables are an orderly arrangement of data in columns and rows. The data collected through the questionnaires were organized and tabulated using statistical methods, a general percentage analysis was conducted, and the percentage refers to a certain proportion. Percentage data is used to compare two or more series of data to describe a relationship. After the percentages the data were broken down into tables. Tables were intensively analysed and interpreted one by one.

Data Analysis

Table 1. Designation wise distribution of the GP Members

Designation	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Prodhan	6	10	3	6	9	7
Upa-Prodhan	8	13	1	2	9	7
Upa-Samiti Sanchalak	21	34	15	27	36	31
General Member	27	43	36	65	63	55
Total	62	100	55	100	117	100

Table 1 shows that out of 117 GP members 9 (7%) were the Prodhan and also 9 (7%) were the Upa-Prodhan, 36 (31%) were Upa-Samiti's Sanchalak and 63 (55%) are the general members.

Table 2. Category wise distribution of the GP Members

Designation	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage

		(%)	r	e (%)		(%)
General	33	53	29	53	62	53
SC	23	37	16	29	39	33
ST	2	3	4	7	6	5
OBC	4	7	6	11	10	9
Total	62	100	55	100	117	100

Table 2 indicates that out of 117 GP members 53% (both 53% male & female) were the general, 33% (37% male & 29% female) are the SC, 5% (3% female & 7% female) were the ST and 9% (7% male & 11% female) were the OBC members.

Table 3. Marital Status wise distribution of the GP Members

Marital Status	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Married	44	71	37	67	81	69
Unmarried	18	29	12	22	30	26
Divorce	00	00	00	00	00	00
Widow	00	00	06	11	06	05
Total	62	100	55	100	117	100

Above Table 3 shows that 69% (71% male & 67% female) were the married members, 26% (29% male & 22% female) were the Unmarried and 5% were the widow. There is no GP members were the divorced.

Table 4. Age wise distribution of the GP Members

Age (Year)	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Below 25	04	6	02	4	06	05
25- 35	27	44	33	60	60	51
36-45	20	32	15	27	35	30
Above 45	11	18	05	09	16	14
Total	62	100	55	100	117	100

Table 4 shows that highest no. of GP members were the age group of 25-35 i.e. 51% (44% male and 60% female). While the age group of below 25 were the lowest no. of GP members 5% (6% male members and 4% female).

Table 5. Religion wise distribution of the GP Members

Religion	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Hindu	33	53	31	56	64	55
Muslim	27	44	23	42	50	43
Christian	02	03	01	02	03	02
Others	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	62	100	55	100	117	100

Table 5 shows that 55% (53% male & 56% female) were the Hindu GP members, 43% (44% male & 42% female) were the Muslim and 02% (3% male & female both) were the Christian members.

Table 6. Educational qualification wise distribution of the GP Members

Educational Qualification	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Literate	00	00	04	07	04	03
Primary (Class I-IV)	04	07	12	22	16	14
Upper primary (upto VIII)	11	18	14	25	25	21
Madhyamik (X)	24	39	13	24	37	32
Higher Secondary	17	27	10	18	27	25
Graduation	04	06	02	04	06	05
Post-Graduation	02	03	00	00	02	02
Professional Degree	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	62	100	55	100	117	100

Table 6 shows that 32% of GP members were madhyamik passed, 25% were Higher Secondary passed, 21% were upper primary, 14% were the Primary level, and also 5% & 2% were completed Graduation, Post-graduation respectively.

Table 7. Occupation wise distribution of the GP Members

Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	Numb	Percentag	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage

	er	e (%)		(%)		(%)
Teacher	10	16	06	11	16	14
Agriculture & House hold work	23	37	45	82	68	58
Mason	11	18	00	00	11	9
Business	15	24	2	3	17	15
Others	03	5	2	4	5	4
Total	62	100	55	100	117	100

Table 7 indicates that 58% (37% male & 82% female) of the GP members were engaged in their Agricultural and Household work whereas 15% were the Business man, 14% were the Teacher, 9% were the Mason and 4% engaged in other occupational work.

Table 8. Panchayat office attend by GP Members

Frequency	Response given by the GP Members	Percentage (%) of Responses given by GP Members
Daily	17	15
Twice in a week	21	18
Thrice in a week	15	13
Weekly	32	27
Fortnightly	20	17
Monthly	12	10
Quarterly	00	00

Table 8 shows that 27% of the GP members were attend in their GP office weekly, 18% twice in a week, 17% fortnightly, 15% daily, 13% thrice in a week and 10% monthly whereas none of them attend quarterly.

Table 9. Information sources used by the GP members

Information Sources	Frequently		Sometimes		Not at all	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Print media	78	67	29	25	10	8
Training/Work shop Booklet	45	39	61	52	11	9
TV	107	91	08	07	02	2
Radio	42	36	58	50	17	14
Mobile	98	84	14	12	05	4
Internet	62	53	37	32	18	15

Table 9 indicates that 91% of the GP members were frequently access the information from Television, whereas 7% sometimes and 2% can't use this television as an information resources. On the other hand, 84% GP members frequently access information through mobile phone, whereas 4% can't use this as an information resources.

Table 10. Do you think that there should be a community information centre or Library at your Gram Panchayat area to provide information?

Response Type	Should be at least one community information centre or
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	Library at your Gram Panchayat area	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	110	94
No	07	06
Total	117	100

Table 10 shows that 94% of the GP members were told one community information centre or library must be located in their Gram Panchayat area, whereas 6% said this type of information centre was not necessary.

Table 11. Human Resources used for the fulfilment of the demand of Information by the GP Members

Human Resources	GP Members Used these Human Resources	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Gram Panchayat Employee	67	57
Block official	10	9
Colleague	23	20
Political Party Leader	12	10
Friends & others	05	4
Total	117	100

Table 11 shows that 57% of the GP members were depends on the GP employee to seek the information. 20% GP members depends on their colleague i.e. other members, 10% depends on their respective political party leader, 9% depends on Block official and 4% depends on friends & others.

Table 12. Social Media used for the fulfilment of the demand of Information by the GP Members

Social Media	GP Members Used these Social Media	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Facebook	12	10
Whatsapp	10	9
Twitter	04	3
Instagram	02	2
Both Facebook & Whatsapp	89	76
Total	117	100

Table 12 shows that 76% of the GP members were depends on the both facebook & whatsapp to seek the information, whereas only 10% & 9% of the GP members depends on facebook, whatsapp respectively. 3% & 2% members uses twitter and instagram.

Table 13. Appropriate Method to provide information services for the GP Members

Method to provide information	Response given by the GP Members
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services	Number	Percentage (%)
Form a Network of PRIs	22	19
Strengthen the training programme	19	16
Continue the present System with modern tools & techniques	74	63
Others Method	02	2
Total	117	100

Table 13 indicates that 63% of the GP members were said “continue the present System with modern tools & techniques” method should be continued to access the information, whereas 19% GP members were said “form a network of PRIs” and 16% GP members were said “strengthen the training programme” method applied for this and also 2% said others method which had not applied earlier.

Table 14. Institutions (other than PRIs) you prefer to get digital information

Institutions provide digital information	Response given by the GP Members	
	Number	Percentage (%)
WBP&RD, Kolkata	16	14
ISGP, Kolkata	04	3
SIP&RD, Kalyani, Nadia	28	24
DP&RD Office	13	11
BDO Office	56	48
Total	117	100

Table 14 shows that 48% GP members were preferred BDO office to get the maximum digital information, 24% said SIP&RD, Kalyani, Nadia, whereas 14% said they access the website of WBP&RD, West Bengal, 11% preferred DP&RD office, Purba Bardhaman and 3% said ISGP, Kolkata for this.

Table 15. Barriers in information seeking to get information

Barrier of Information Communication	Response given by the GP Members	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Lack of language fluency	73	62
Hesitation or shy to speak with Higher officials, resource person, others etc.	33	28
Lack of formal education	03	03
Difficulties to operate technical devices	03	03
Lack of time	05	04
Total	117	100

Table 15 specify that 62% of the GP members were said their main problem was language problem to seek the information, whereas 28% members were hesitate or shy to speak with higher officials, resource person of training etc. to get the information. 3% members were facing difficulties to operate technical devices & lack of formal education and 4% were lack of time for getting information.

Table 16. Adequate information/knowledge regarding Prevention of Novel Corona virus (COVID-19)

Response Type	Information/knowledge regarding Prevention of Novel Corona virus (COVID-19)	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	110	94
No	07	06
Total	117	100

Table 16 indicates that 87% of the GP members were well known about the knowledge to prevent of Novel Corona virus, whereas 13% not aware about this virus.

Table 17. Source of Information regarding prevention of COVID-19

Source of Information	Response given by the GP Members	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Multimedia (Radio, T.V., News Paper etc.)	83	71
Health Organisations & Health Professionals	15	13
Family/friends	07	6
Internet	12	10
Total	117	100

Table 17 shows that 71% of the GP members were said they access the information regarding prevention of COVID-19 from multimedia i.e. radio, T.V., News Paper etc., 13% were said they seek this type of information from health organisation & health Professionals, whereas 10% said they access information from internet and 6% said they got information from their family and friends.

Finding:

From above tables we got the different types of findings, these are

- 1) From above table 1, we find that majority of the GP members were the female general members.
- 2) From above table 2, majority of the GP members were the general category members and few members were the ST members.
- 3) From above table 3, maximum no. of the GP members were the married.
- 4) Table 4 shows that more than 50% of GP members were the age group of 25-35. While few no. of GP members elected under the age group of 25 years.
- 5) From above table 5, majority of the members i.e. 55% of GP members were the Hindu members. While 2% were the Christian GP members.

- 6) Table 6 shows that most of the GP members were Madhyamik passed and Higher Secondary passed and very few number of the members were completed higher studies.
- 7) Table 7 indicates that majority of the GP members were engaged in their Agricultural and Household work whereas other members were engaged in other occupational work like business, teaching, and mason's work.
- 8) Table 8 shows that majority of the GP members were attend in their GP office weekly, whereas none of them attend quarterly.
- 9) Table 9 indicates that most of the GP members were frequently access the information from Television & Mobile Phone whereas least no. of members were used Radio as an information resources in this recent era.
- 10) Table 10 shows that almost every GP members were told one community information centre or library is very important for every people & it should be located in their Gram Panchayat area.
- 11) Table 11 shows that most of the GP members were depends on the GP employee as human resources to seek the information. Very few number of GP members depends on their colleague i.e. other members, political party leader, Block official and friends etc.
- 12) Table 12 shows that most of the GP members used social media and majority of them used both facebook & whatsapp to seek the information, whereas only whereas few members used 3% & 2% members were used twitter and instagram.
- 13) Table 13 indicates that maximum number of the GP members want "continue the present System with modern tools & techniques" method should be continued to access the information, whereas few GP members want "form a network of PRIs" and "strengthen the training programme" method applied for this and minimum no. of members said others method which had not applied earlier.
- 14) Table 14 shows that most of the GP members were collect the digital or online information from BDO office. Whereas, few members were collect from SIP&RD, Kalyani, Nadia, website of WBP&RD, DP&RD office and ISGP, Kolkata for this.
- 15) Table 15 specify that majority of the GP members were said their main problem was language problem to seek the information, whereas 28% members were hesitate or shy to speak with higher officials, resource person of training etc. to get the information. Very few members said the other problems like lack of time, lack of formal education, facing difficulties to operate technical devices to access information.
- 16) Table 16 indicates that almost every GP members were well known about the knowledge to prevent of Novel Corona virus, whereas few members were not aware about this virus.
- 17) Table 17 shows that majority of the GP members were said they access the information regarding prevention of COVID-19 from multimedia i.e. radio, T.V.,

News Paper etc., whereas few no. of members were said they seek this type of information from health organisation & health Professionals, internet, family and friends.

Suggestions

Information is considered as a strategic resource for the sustainable development and growth of individuals, groups, communities and countries. More compact information should be provided to the gram panchayat members and also Government must take initiative measure for providing different type information which will be more essential to the gram panchayat members for the rural development. At least one library should have in every gram panchayat area. Different type Training should be given to the members especially female members because they are hesitate to speak anything in the different meeting and for that reason they are can't move forward in their panchayat related matter.. E-culture is emerging deadly in society and it is time to think of new ways to identify the changing needs of users. In this era all gram panchayats are linked with each other by internet. So every gram panchayat member should have knowledge about computer and also internet, otherwise they can't access rich information and enriched yourself. If panchayats have to efficiently and effectively do all the mandatory tasks which are increasing day by day, then the widespread use of IT is the only way and the gram panchayat members should also be aware of IT. For this reason, there is a strong need to create a "digital inclusive society", where large sections of the rural population can benefit with new technologies; can freely access and share information and services; and can participate more effectively in the development process. The panchayat is an effective vehicle for developing a large-scale ICT culture at the grassroots level under the control and governance structure of rural citizens. The availability of information when it is needed, where it is needed and the form in which it is needed improves the skills of individuals and different organizations. In this context, Gram Panchayat members of Burdwan-1 development block needed current information and the problems to access these information there need to be examined. Serious efforts are required to increase the level of knowledge of the Gram Panchayat members to participate effectively & efficiently in making the annual action plan in their gram panchayat.

Conclusions

Based on the above outcomes, it can be concluded that the Gram Panchayat members of Burdwan-1 development block under Burdwan Sadar (North) subdivision need different types of information for rural development. Almost every Gram Panchayat members are conscious about the sources of information and they wanted to cater to the rural people whatever they required. Libraries, community information centres, etc. are not present in the villages, so their role is very limited but they want to establish this type of information sources in their village area. Gram panchayat members are getting big relevant information from print and non-print media including government employees, political party leader, newspapers, television, colleagues (other members), friends, training & workshop programs and also from internet. Online culture is rapidly increase in this growing society and due to this reason time has come to think in emerging and new ways to identify changing needs of the Gram Panchayat members. Most of the GP members used social media and majority of them used both facebook & whatsapp to seek the information. Almost all the Gram Panchayat members get adequate information from all relevant sources including language

problem, difficulties in operating technical devices and dealing with time constraints. In this 2020 year, they are facing a big problem i.e. Covid-19. Tremendous spread of Corona virus, they can't access required information smoothly but they are always aware and regularly spread awareness about this Corona virus in their rural areas. Thus, Gram Panchayat members are playing a big & vital role in their rural development.

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