CHAPTER - III

METHODOLOGY
3.0 Introduction

The methodology adopted for the study include the following considerations:

3.1 Objectives:

The objectives of the study were:

(i) To identify the sources and channels of information flow and access in the villages.

(ii) To undertake a comparative analysis of the information flow and access patterns in Meghalaya and Nagaland.

(iii) To propose suggestions and recommendations for effective information services in the rural areas.

3.2 Hypotheses:

The study was carried out with consideration to the following hypotheses:

(i) The interpersonal communication among members of a social system serves as an important source and channel of information flow and access.
(ii) Use of information sources and channels vary across socio-economic variables.

(iii) Information flow and access vary across geographical variations.

3.3 Research sites and sampling

Personal familiarity and accessibility of the research sites were considered essential in selecting the research areas. Accordingly, two North Eastern states of Meghalaya and Nagaland were selected. Further, one district from each state, located at a distance of not less than 150 kilometers from the state capital were selected. Following this, two villages from each district were selected with one village located within the radius of 5 kilometers and another located at a distance of not less than 60 kilometers from the district headquarters. The total number of households was also considered in selecting the villages. Only the villages having between 100 to 400 households were considered for the purpose of the present study. Finally, 20 percent of the total households from each selected village were taken as the sample population and the heads of the families or anyone from the family who can provide necessary information were chosen as the respondents. All together, 155 observations have been made taken from the four selected villages.
3.4 Data collection

A pilot survey was carried out using structured-interview and observation methods to assess the relevance of the study. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study and on the basis of the information gathered through the pilot survey, the final schedules were constructed and the data were collected personally. This was supplemented by personal observations and discussions with the villagers.

3.5 Data analysis

Data were tabulated, analysed and consolidated using SPSS Ver. 7.5. Testing of hypotheses has been made using appropriate statistical tools such as Chi Square and t-Test.

3.6 Definition of the terms used

Sources and channels: These two terms are used synonymously to indicate intermediaries of information flow and access.

Interpersonal communication: It refers to two-way interactive information communication. In this study, teachers, educated persons,
relatives and friends, co-farmers and co-traders who permanently stay in the village are considered as interpersonal (IP) sources and channels of information. Availability and accessibility are the two main attributes of these sources and channels considered in this grouping.

Non-interpersonal communication: This refers to one-way information communication, in which information flows in a unidirectional manner and may not necessarily involve reciprocity. The following sources and channels have been identified and grouped as non-interpersonal (NIP) sources and channels. These include, mass media, church, Non-governmental organisations, health workers, Agricultural extension officers, village level extension workers, Veterinary doctors, field assistants, banks and co-operatives.

The above grouping of various information sources and channels is based on the findings of the pilot survey and personal observation.