

# ICT ENABLED PAPERLESS SURVEY ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AMONG NATIVES OF SEA VIEW WARD, ALAPPUZHA

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## Abstract

A quarter century has completed since the inception of Panchayati Raj Nagarapalika Bill which meant to be the paradigm shift in local self governance. The bill envisaged the three - tier Panchayath system including Grama-Block-District Panchayaths and Urban Administrative System including Municipalities and Municipal Corporations considered to be role models of Local Self Governance System in the country as well as in the world. We got this achievement through democratic decentralization of power, which transformed the local bodies into independent Local Self Government Institutions. Grama Sabha in Rural Local Bodies and Ward Sabha in Urban Local Bodies are the democratic platforms where common people have the controlling power. Institutions and its officials were transferred to local bodies and put under its control. Local Self Government Institutions are inevitable part of the daily life of the people. Major role of a ward/grama sabha is that to involve in the planning for the formulation of the budget of the local body. Here we have enquired into how effective our power decentralization and peoples participation in the process of planning. Prior to the voter's involvement in planning known as participatory budgeting we have a world renowned model of the Local Body of Porte Alegre, A city in Brazil. PB is a process through which citizens present their demands and priorities for civic improvement and plays influence through discussion and negotiation of the budget allocation made by their municipalities. Porto Alegre was the first city in the world which introduced PB in 1982. There was only 4% participation whereas we could ensure almost 40% peoples participation which was satisfactory. A paperless survey on participation and awareness on participatory democracy of natives at sea view ward was conducted by NSS unit 38A/B of St Joseph's College for Women, Alappuzha related to developmental activities in Sea View Ward in association with Alappuzha Municipality and Centre for Social Studies, Alappuzha. A total of 363 households were covered by 34 NSS volunteers. Paperless survey was carried out using smart phone with the aid of Google forms which involved direct participation of people (participatory budgeting-PB). Google forms was found to be effective since instant data interpretation was possible. People participated enthusiastically and shared their concerns and opinions.

**Keywords:** Participatory democracy, ICT, sea view ward, Alappuzha, Sustainable Developmental Goals, Participatory Budgeting, Nava Kerala Missions

## Introduction

Decentralization of power is ensured through various processes. The ward sabha has prime role to play in the formation of a local body budget. In 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Planning Kerala has formulated several processes to involve people's participation in planning, implementation and the monitoring of the budget of the local bodies. Decentralization involves the shifting of fiscal, political and administrative responsibilities from higher to lower levels of government. Participatory democracy, as a subset of governance theory, emphasizes democratic

practices. Throughout the centuries, thinkers in many different cultures contributed to the development of democratic government. Democratic decentralization is also promoting inclusive growth through effective provision of public services. The growing use of information and communication technology (ICT) is catalyzing the formation of knowledge societies, and thus providing greater avenues to people to participate in development process.

Representative democracy is widely accepted form of governance in the world now. Today more than 50% of the people live under democratic elected governments. At the same time it has to be analysed whether democratic governance have delivered the goods to the public and maintained peace and harmony among the society. The analysis of 50 years of democratic governance has rendered substantial achievements, delivery of goods and services to the privileged, the ruling elites, the middle class and the poor to the same extent. But for mitigating poverty, maintaining law and order, meeting the basic expectation of poor, making them participating in the decision making, the government institutions do not have the adequate capacity (Palanithurai, 2007). Participatory Democracy also called pure or direct democracy, where everyone actively participates in every decision. Participatory democracy is a process of collective decision making that combines elements from both direct and representative democracy: Citizens have the power to decide on policy proposals and politicians assume the role of policy implementation. Its seeks to develop practices that are founded on a more equal distribution of political power, a fairer distribution of resources, the decentralization of decision-making processes, the development of a transparent exchange of information, the establishment of collaborative partnerships, an emphasis on inter-institutional dialogue, and greater accountability. Information is necessary for citizens to participate in governance, especially at local levels. Today there is a strong movement for every citizen to be given “the enforceable right to question, examine, audit, review and assess government acts and decisions, to ensure that these are consistent with the principles of public interest. It would promote openness, transparency and accountability in administration by making government more open to continuing public scrutiny (Mishra, 2013).

### **What is Grama Sabha/ Ward Sabha ?**

Grama Sabhas/Ward Sabhas are people’s assemblies envisaged by the Constitution of India. Kerala Panchayati Raj Act and Kerala Municipality Act mandates many powers and rights to Grama Sabhas and Ward Sabhas. Every electoral constituency of a Grama Panchayat is considered as a Ward. All the Voters in the electoral roll of the Ward are members of the Grama Sabha/Ward Sabha. (Grama Sabha in the case of Grama Panchayat and Ward Sabha in the case of Municipality or Corporation). Every Municipality with a population more than one lakh must form a Ward Committee in addition to its Ward Sabha. Ward committees have all the powers of Ward Sabha, except the power to suggest development plans. Section 42 A of Kerala Municipality Act describes about Ward

Sabhas and Section 43 about Ward Committees (Committee which has to be formed in Municipalities with a population more than one lakh).

## **Powers and Responsibilities of Grama / Ward Sabhas**

### **i. Project planning, implementation, evaluation related**

- Right to suggest developmental activities and their priorities.
- Right to inspect, evaluate, and to ensure effectiveness of the implementation of developmental, service, and welfare activities.

### **ii. Public facilities related**

- Right to suggest the locations for the installation of street lights, public taps, public wells/ponds, public sanitation units, public irrigation facilities, other public facilities, etc.

### **iii. Public works related**

- Right to know the details regarding the estimate, quantity of materials, and the details of expenditure of the works that have been or to be implemented in the Ward.

### **iv. Examine the eligibility criteria and selection of the beneficiaries**

- The Grama Sabha/Ward Sabha has the right to select the beneficiaries of different developmental and welfare schemes, after considering their eligibility and priority.
- Right to know the details regarding the families selected as BPL, beneficiaries of Ashraya, those who receive special benefits from the public distribution system, and those who are selected as beneficiaries of various development schemes.

### **v. Assessing the performance of the institutions and staff**

- Right to examine and assess the performance of the institutions and staff and give suggestions for improvement.

### **vi. Income and Expenditure related**

- Right to know the budget details, fund utilisation details, income/expenditure details, project expenditure details, administrative costs, etc.
- Right to ask for the audit reports. Audit reports shall be presented and discussed in the Grama Sabha/Ward Sabha.

### **vii. Social Audit related**

- Right to conduct social audit on the activities of the Local Government Institution. Grama Sabha/ Ward Sabha can appoint a social audit team for conducting social audit on behalf of Grama Sabha/ Ward Sabha.

### viii. Grama Sabha/Ward Sabha decisions related

□ Right to know the actions taken by the LSGI with regard to each and every decisions taken by Grama Sabha / Ward Sahba. And also have the right to know the reason behind non implementation of decisions taken by the GramaSabha / Ward Sahba.

### Methodology

The area selected for the study was Sea view ward, Alappuzha. Sea view ward consists of population of mixed culture and no studies have been carried out since on participatory democracy hence the area was selected. A total of 363 households were covered by 34 NSS volunteers and using google forms the awareness on participatory democracy was studied.

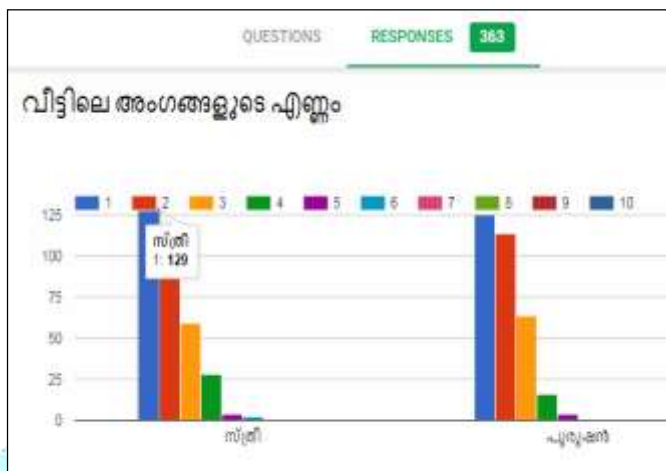
<b>Age wise distribution of the voters of Sea-View Ward</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Below 19	13	14	27
20-29	277	289	566
30-39	348	356	704
40-49	286	392	678
50-59	272	330	602
60-69	209	231	440
70-79	101	125	226
80-89	21	43	64
90-99	2	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1529</b>	<b>1784</b>	<b>3313</b>

Total population of the ward – 4362

Below 6 years old 348

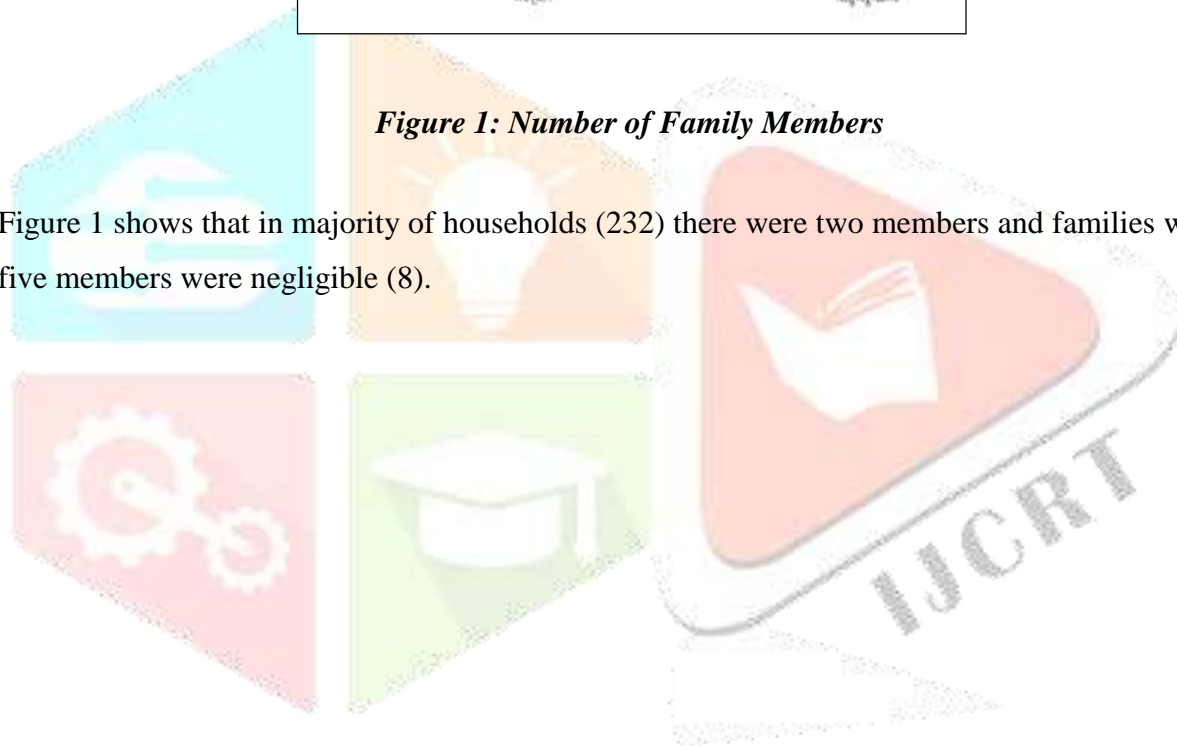
Total number of houses 1067

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

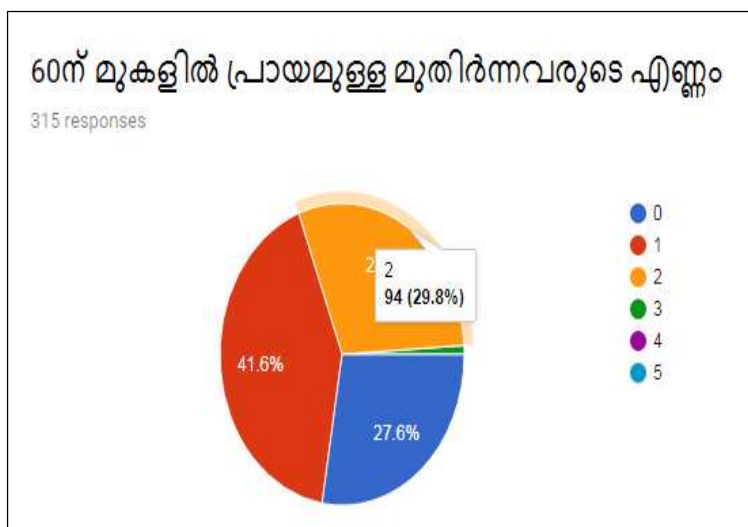


**Figure 1: Number of Family Members**

Figure 1 shows that in majority of households (232) there were two members and families with three and five members were negligible (8).

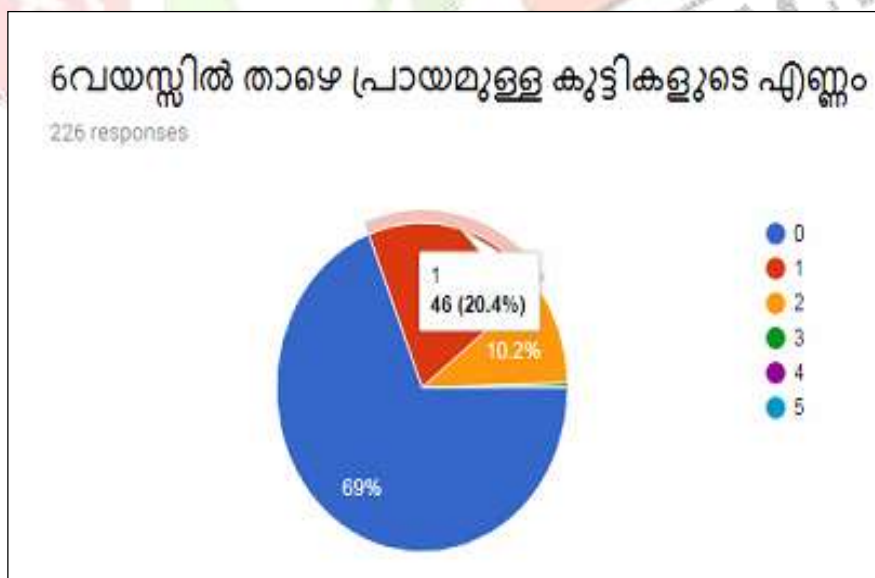






**Figure 2: Number of Senior Citizens in the ward**

Among the sea view ward 41.6% elderly were living alone. In 27.6% houses there were no elders and in 29.80% houses there were two elders as shown in Figure No 2. 71.4% elders were present in the ward.



**Figure 3: Number of Children below 6 years in the ward**

Among 69% households there were no children under 6 years. 20.4% houses there were one child and 10.2% there were two children below 6 years as shown in Figure No 3. In the ward 30.6% constituted children below 6 years.

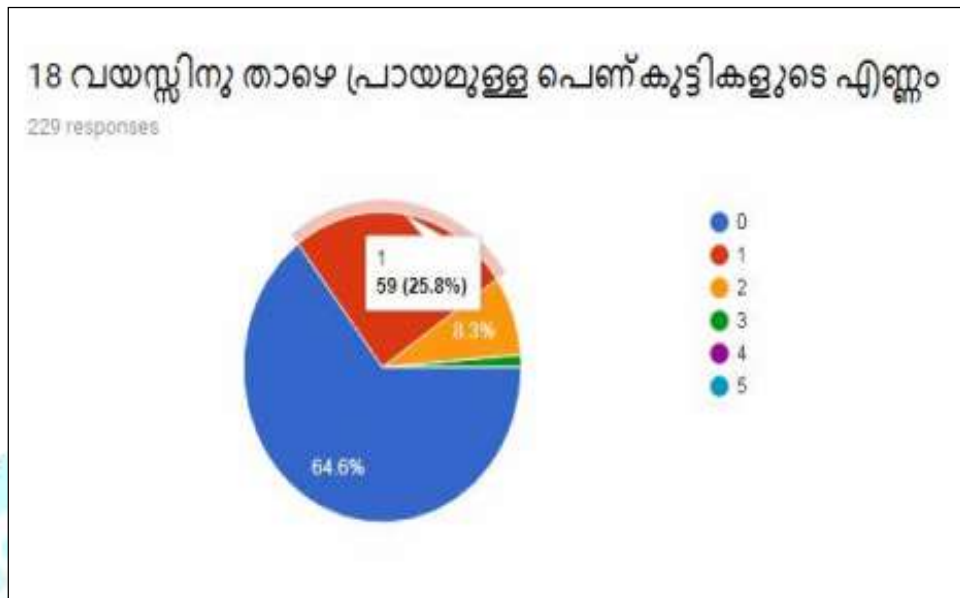


Figure 4: Number of Adolescent Girls in the ward

Figure No 4 shows that 64.6% houses there were no girls under 18 years of age, in 25.8% there were one girl under 18 years of age and in 8.3% there were two girls under 18 years of age. In the ward 34.1% were adolescent girls below 18 years of age.

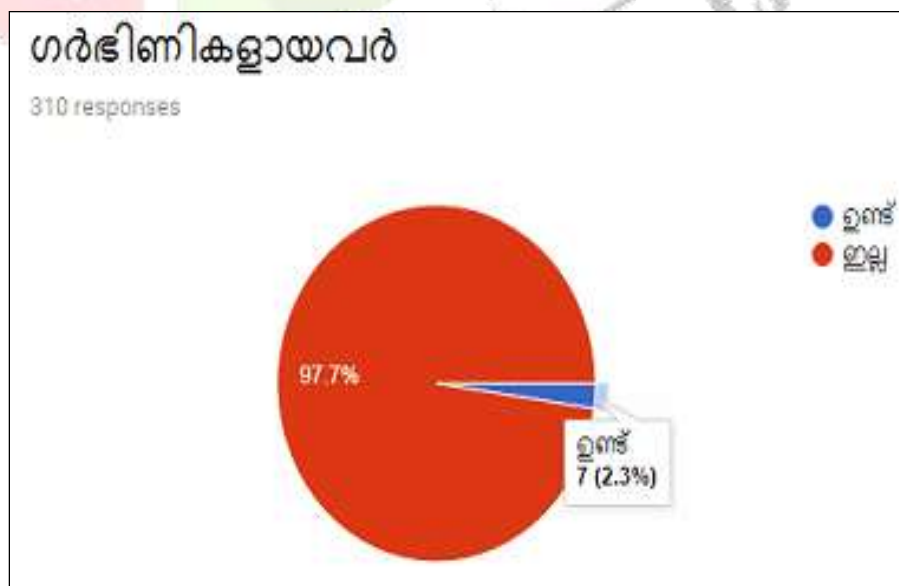
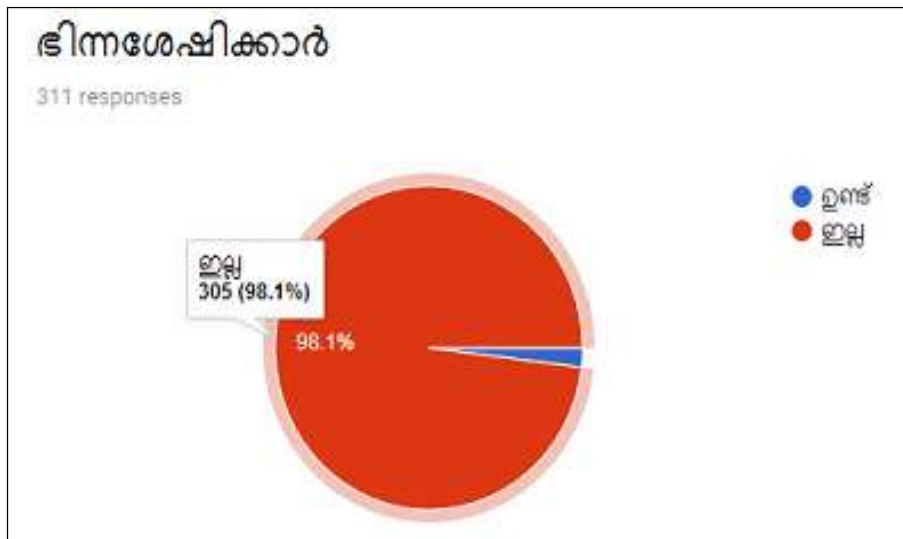


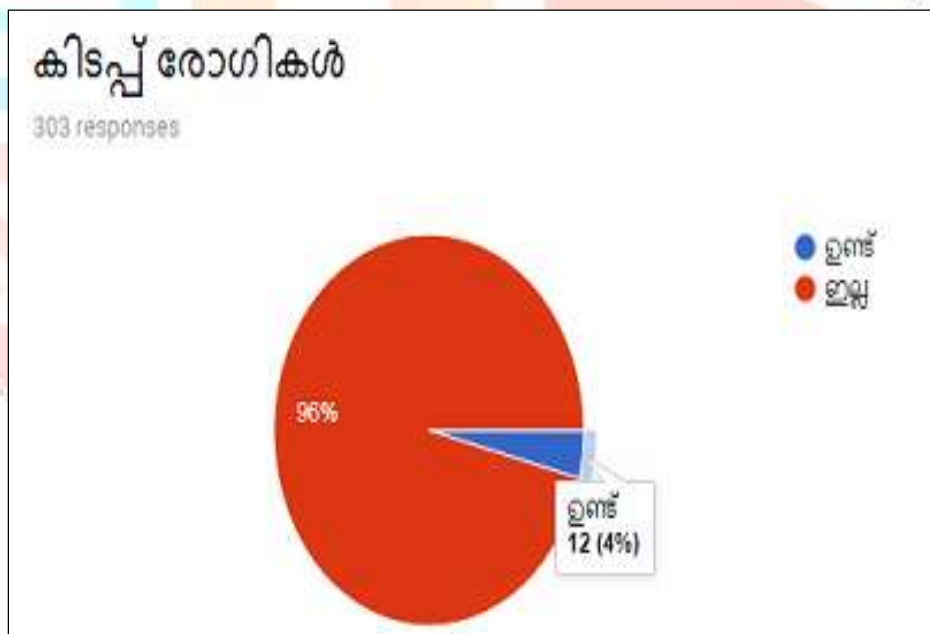
Figure 5: Number of Pregnant women in the ward

Figure no 5 depicts that there were only 2.3% pregnant women in the ward.



**Figure 6: Number of Differently abled in the ward**

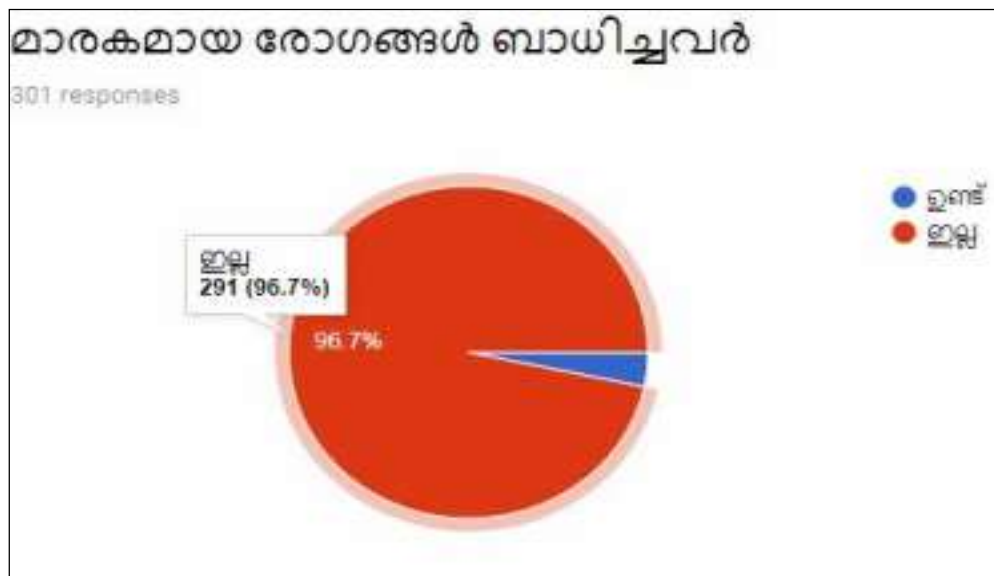
Figure No 6 shows that only 1.9% differently abled were present in the ward.



**Figure 7: Number of Bed ridden Persons in the Ward**

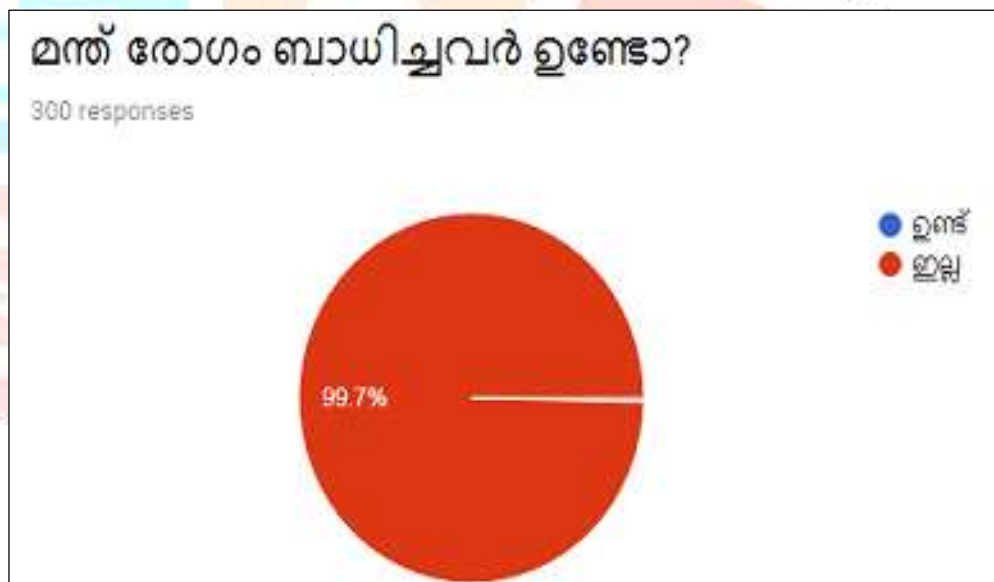
Figure No 7 shows that 3.3% were having dreadful diseases in the ward.





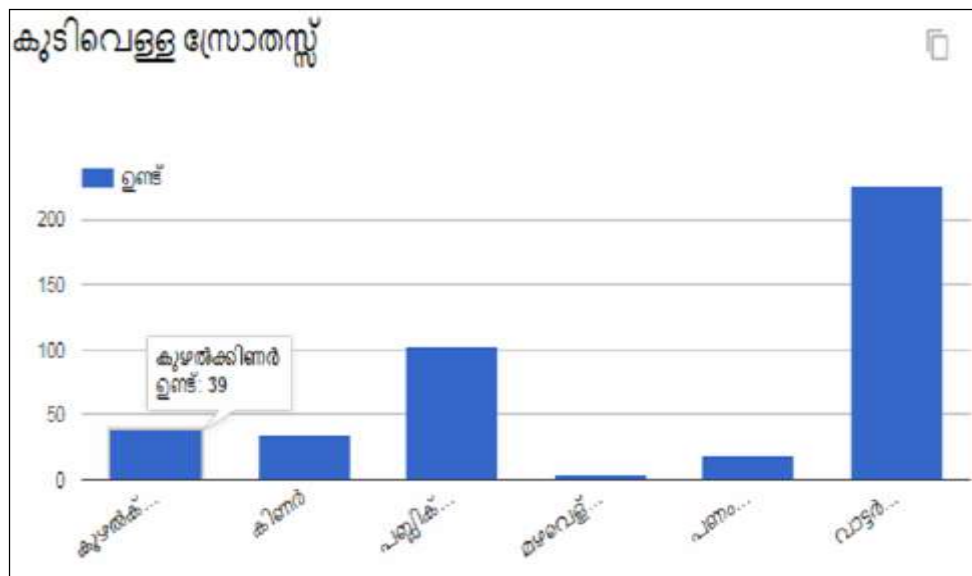
**Figure 8: Number of Persons with Degenerative Diseases**

Figure 8 depicts that 3.3% persons in the ward were suffering from degenerative diseases.



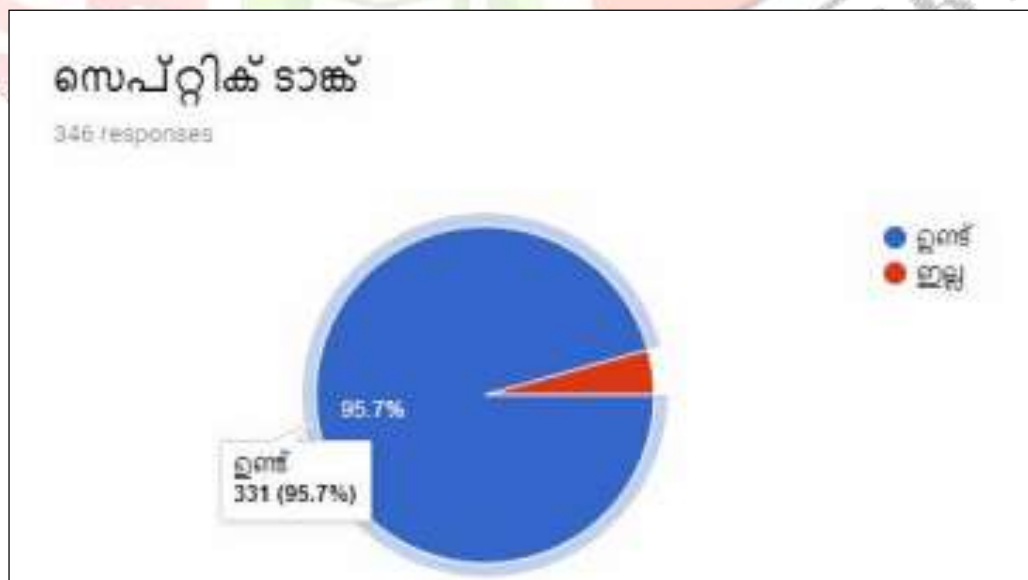
**Figure 9: Number of Persons with Filariasis**

Figure 9 depicts that 0.3% were suffering from filariasis. 99.7% were free from filariasis.



**Figure 10: Sources of Drinking Water in the Ward**

Figure No 10 shows that in sea view ward most of the household (33.88%) were having public tap as source of water, 12.95% borewell, 11.3% well, 6.31% from private agencies and only 1.32% from rain water pit. From water authority 34.245 were having drinking water.



**Figure 11: Information on use of Septic Tanks in the Ward**

In the ward 95.7% were having septic tanks and only 4.3% were not having septic tanks as shown in Figure No 11.



Figure 12: Waste Management Practices in the Ward

Among the waste management practices 42 were having pit composting, 22 followed biogas plant, 17 pipe composting, 3 had verimicomposting, 2 had pot composting and 170 were following others mainly burning and throwing(Figure No 12).

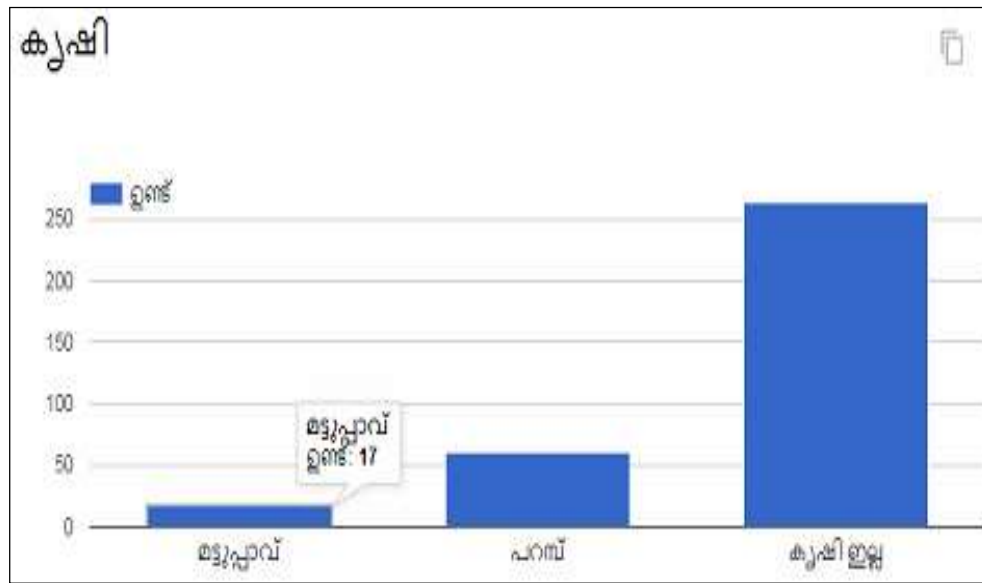


Figure 13: Information on Farming

Regarding farming 61 used land, 17 roof garden and 263 were not having farming as shown in Figure No 13.

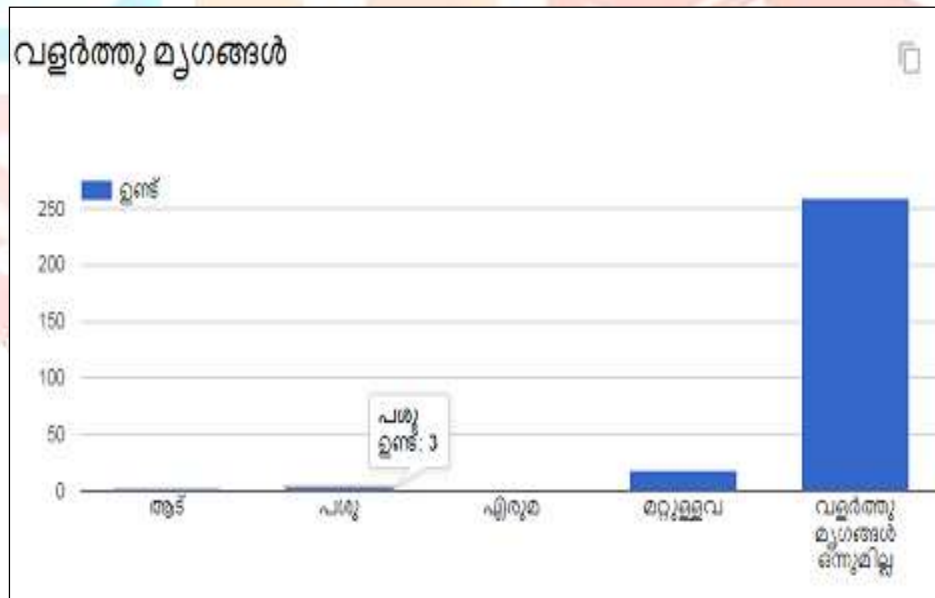
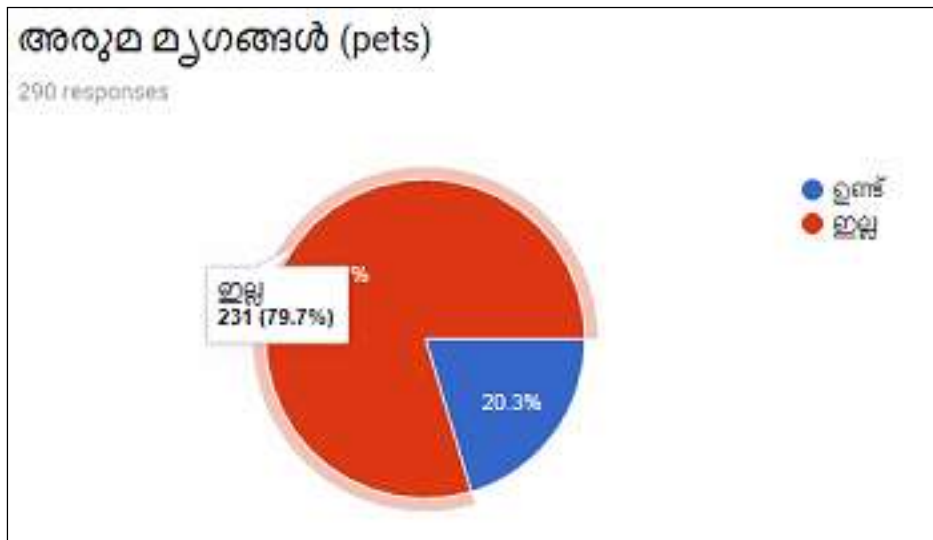


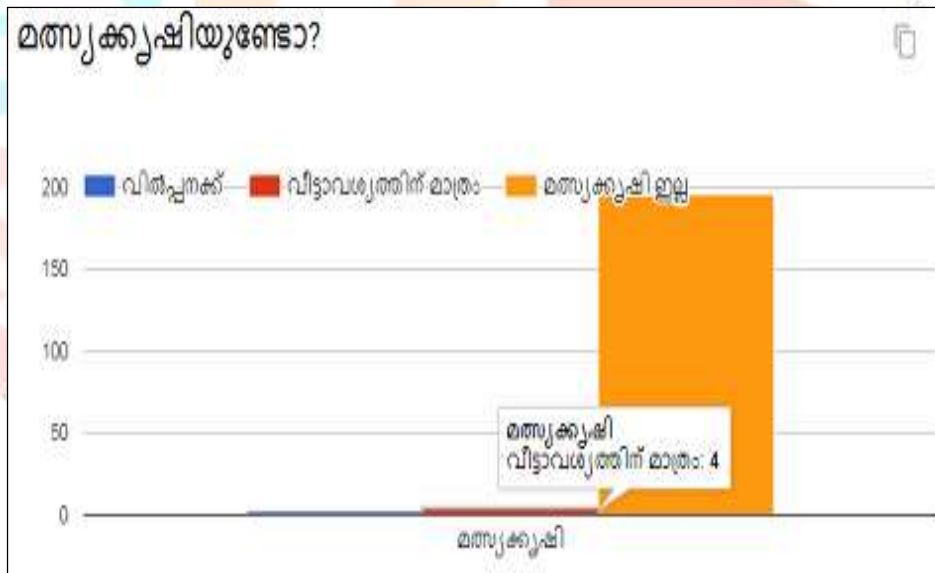
Figure 14: Information on Animals

Figure No 14 points that 259 households were not having animals. Only 3 had cows and 19 had other animals.



**Figure 15: Information on Pet Animals**

In the ward 79.7% were not having any pet animals and only 20.3% were having pet animals as shown in Figure No 15.



**Figure 16: Information on Fish culture**

Information on fish culture in Figure No 16 shows that 195 household were not having fish culture and only 4 had fish culture for household use.



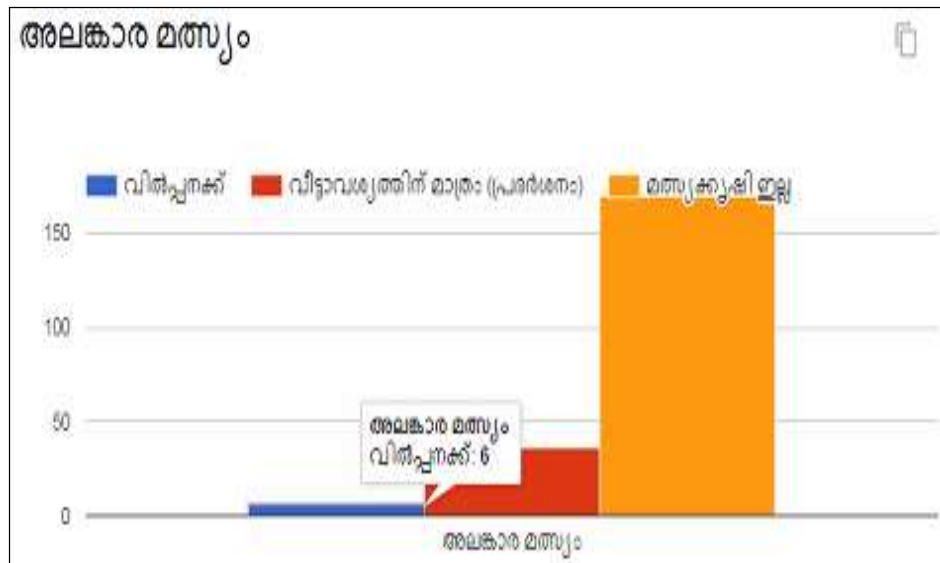


Figure 17: Information on Ornamental Fishes

Ornamental fishes were not reared by 170 households, 36 reared for house hold exhibition and 6 for selling as shown in Figure No 17.

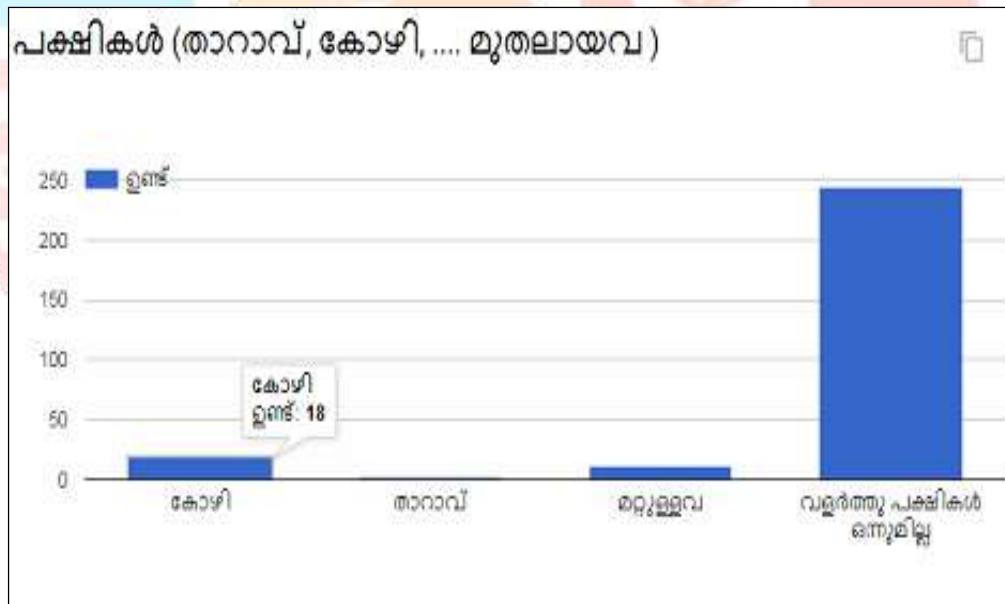


Figure 18: Information on Yield Giving Birds

Figure No 18 shows that majority were not having yield giving birds. Hen was reared by 18.

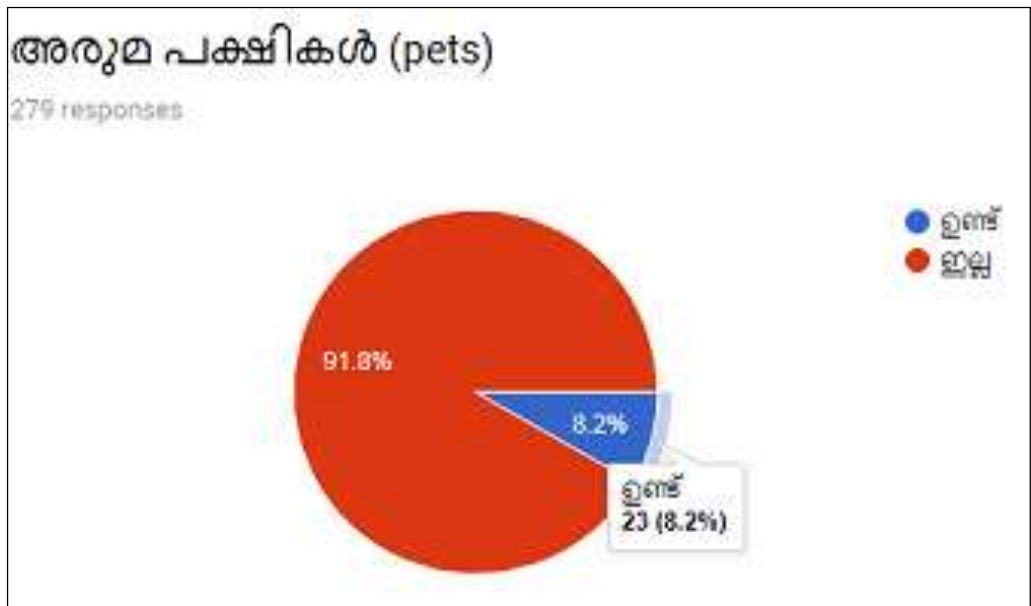


Figure 19: Information on Pet Birds

Figure No 19 shows that 91.8% were not having pet birds and only 8.2% were having pet birds in their home.

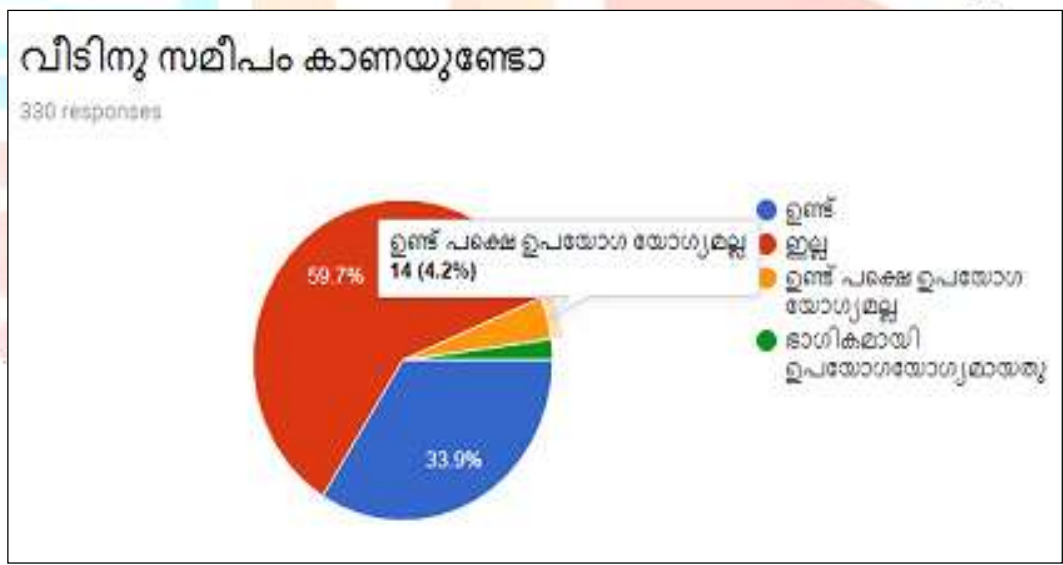


Figure 20: Information on Canals in near by house

- From 59.7% houses the response was there were no canals, 4.2% reported useless canals and 33.9% answered there are nearby canals as shown in Figure No 20.

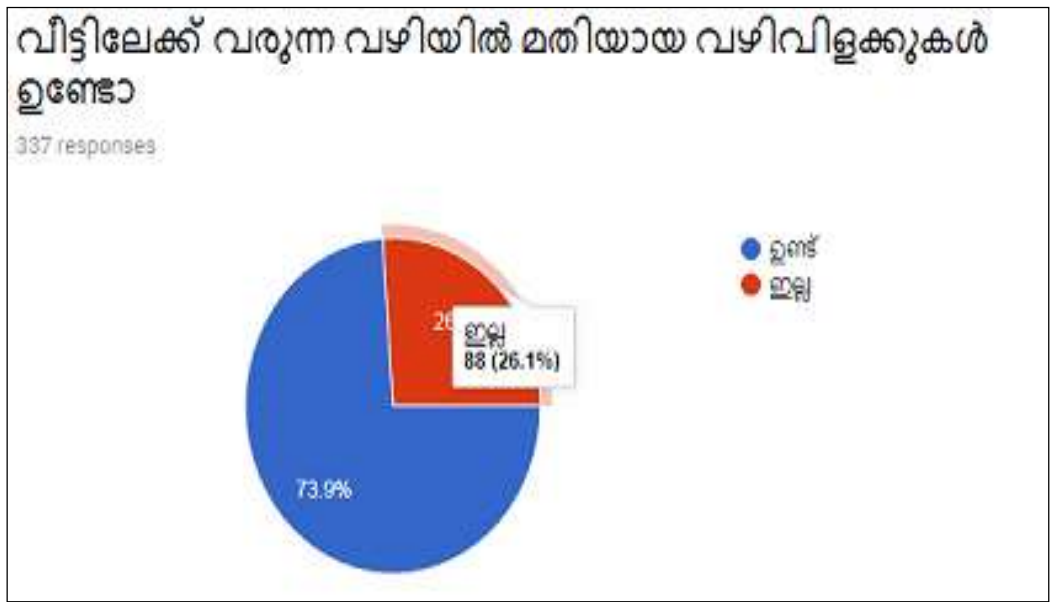


Figure 21: Information on Street Lights in the Ward

Figure No 21 depicts that 73.9% reported the presence of street lights and 26.1% complained about the lack of street lights.

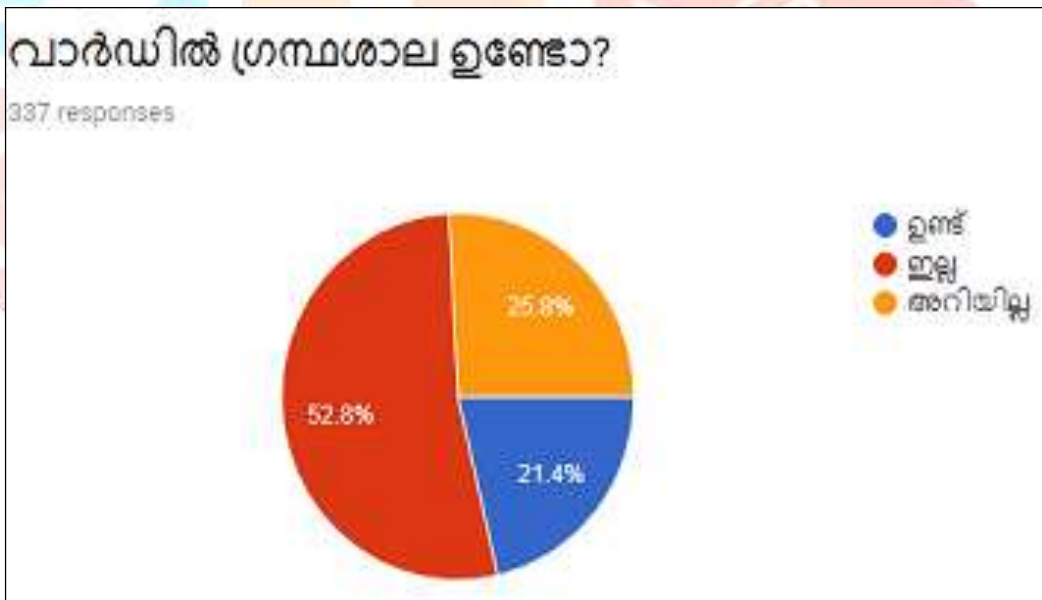


Figure 22: Information on Library Facilities in the Ward

In the survey 52.8% answered there are no library in the ward and only 21.4% were aware about the library in the ward and 25.8% answered that they don't know whether library is present in their ward as shown in Figure No 22.

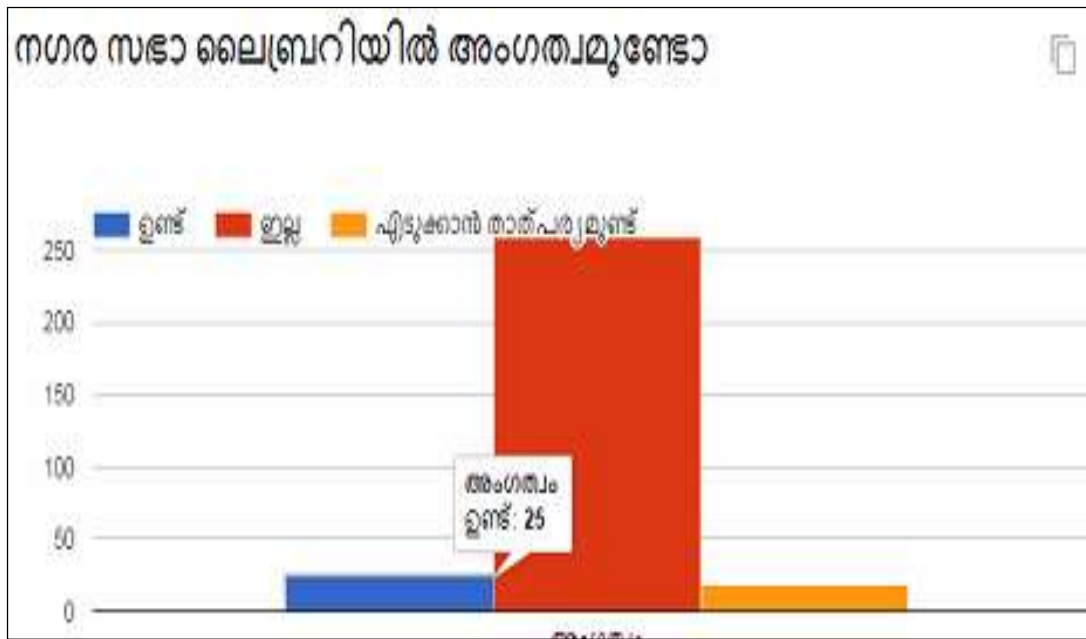


Figure 23: Information on Membership in Library

- Majority(270) were not having membership in the nagarasabha library, only 25 reported having membership and 18 liked to have membership in the library(Figure No 23).

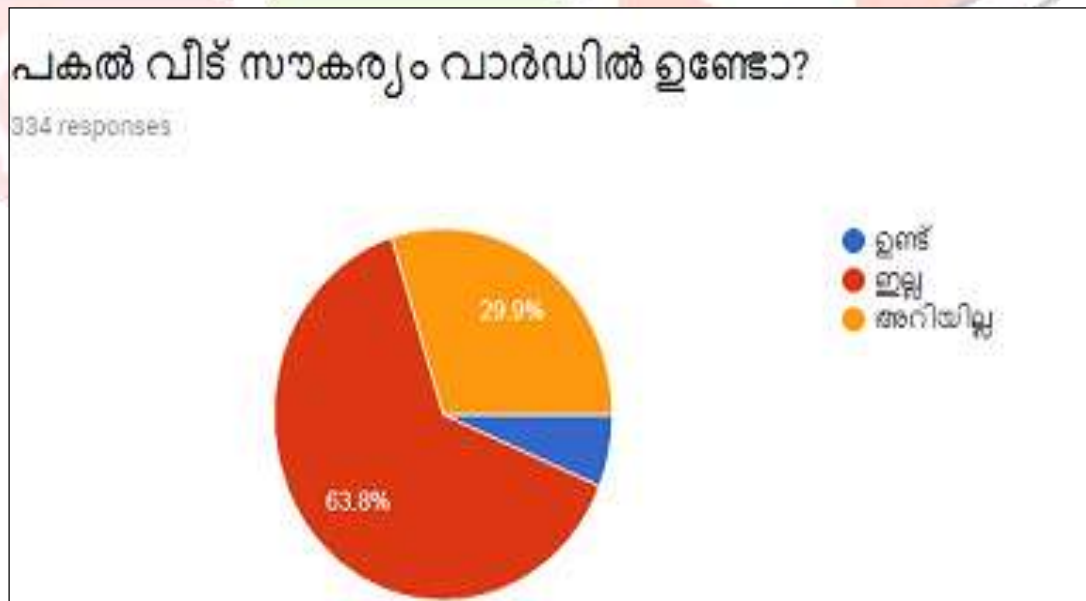
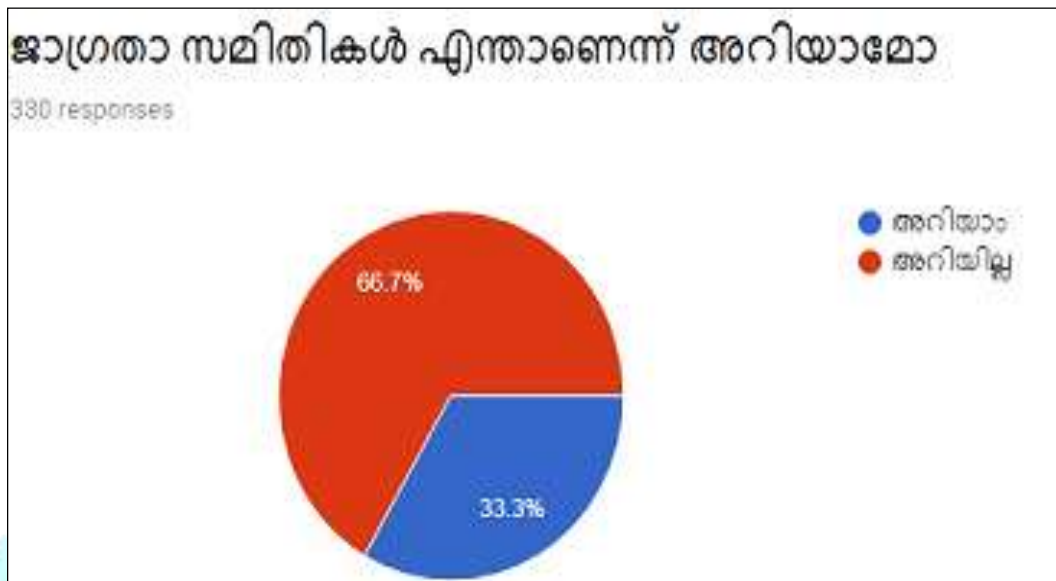


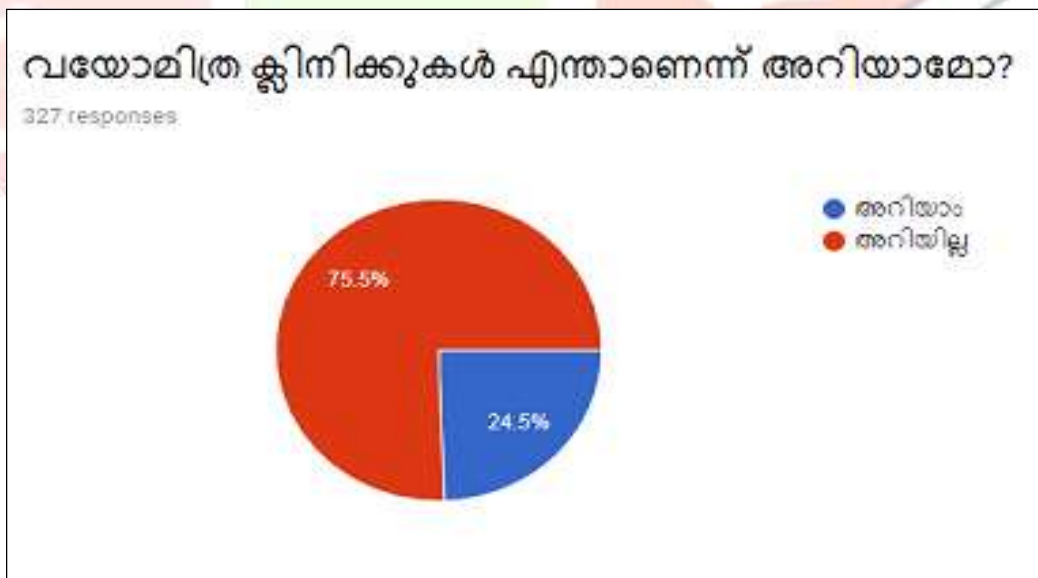
Figure 24: Information on Old Age Day Care Centre

- From the survey 63.8% answered that there is no facility of day care for elderly in the ward and 29.9% were not aware of the facility. Only 24.5% reported that there is old age day care centre as shown in Figure No 24.



**Figure 25: Information on Emergency Help Centre for Women**

Figure No 25 shows that 66.7% were not aware of women emergency help centre and only 33.3% were aware of women emergency help centres.



**Figure 26: Information on Old Age Clinics**

Figure No 26 shows that 75.5% were not aware of old age clinics whereas only 24.5% were aware of old age clinics.





Figure 27: Information on Anganwadis in the ward

Figure No 27 shows that about 66.7% were not aware of women welfare homes. Only 61.2% were aware of anganwadis in the ward.

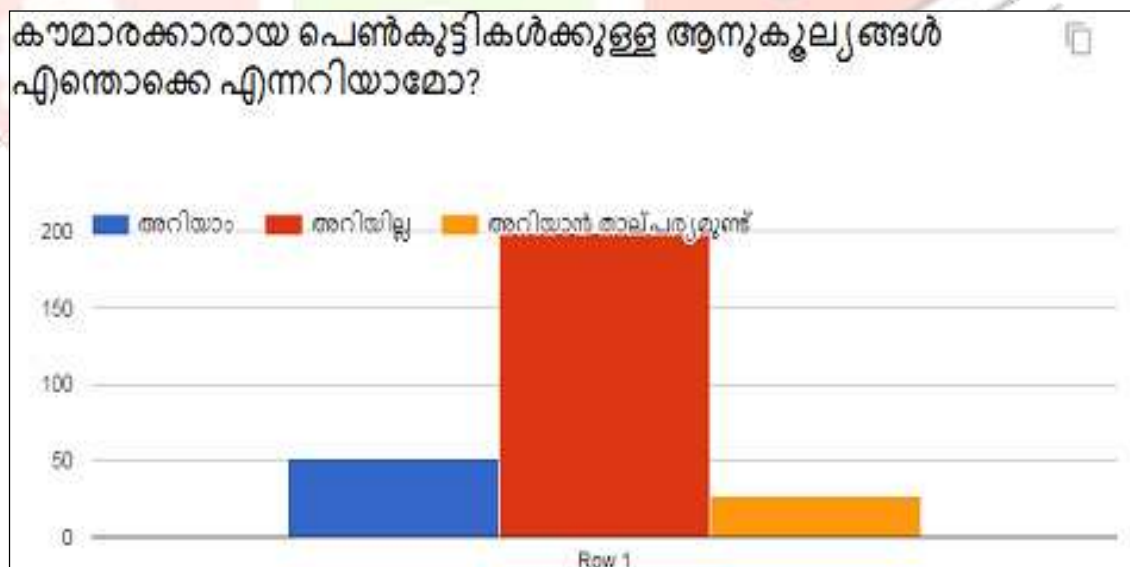


Figure 28: Information on Services Offered to Adolescent Girls

Majority (200) were not aware about the welfare services offered to adolescents. Only 50 were aware about adolescent services and 25 were interested to know about adolescent services offered as shown in Figure No 28.

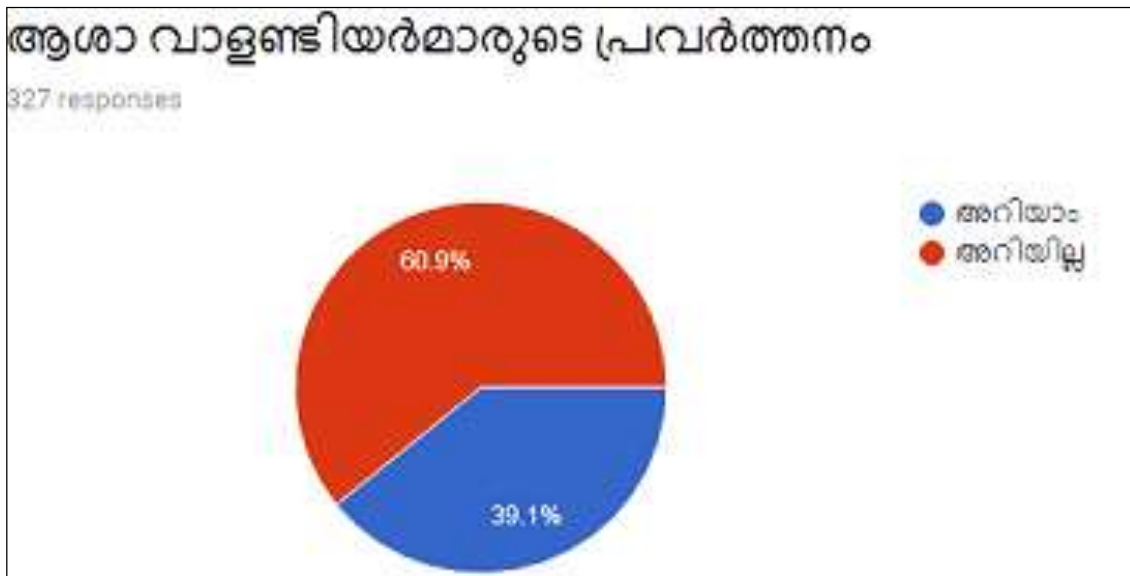


Figure 29: Information on Services Offered by ASHA workers

Figure No 29 depicts that only 39.1% were knowing the services offered by ASHA workers and majority (60.9%) were unaware of services offered by ASHA workers.

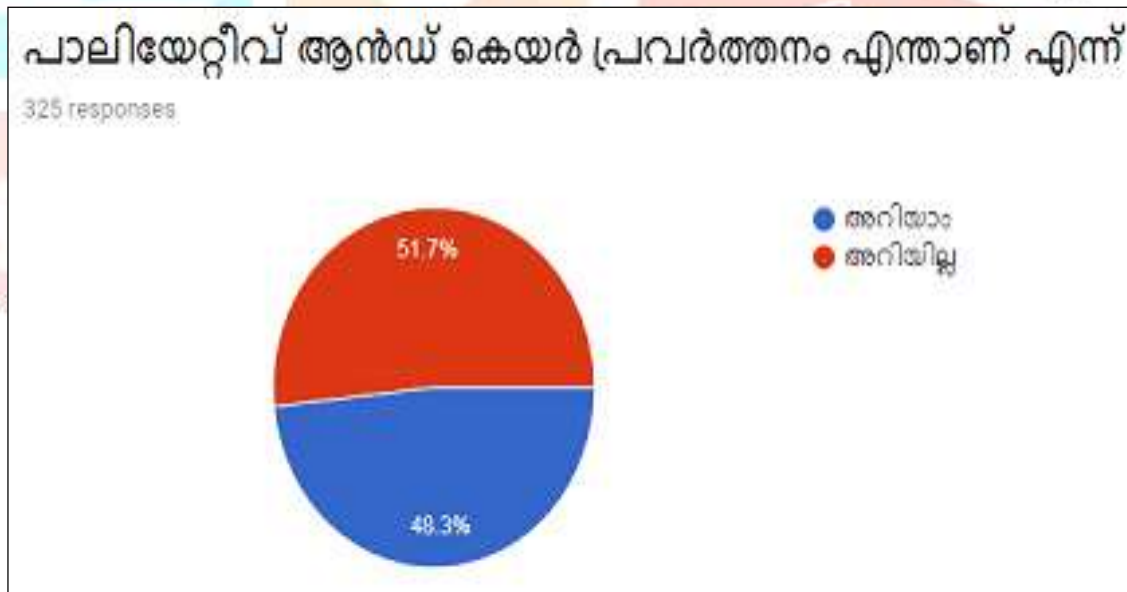


Figure 30: Information on Palliative Care Services

Figure No 30 points that only 48.3% were only aware of palliative care services and half of the population (51.7%) were unaware of palliative care services.

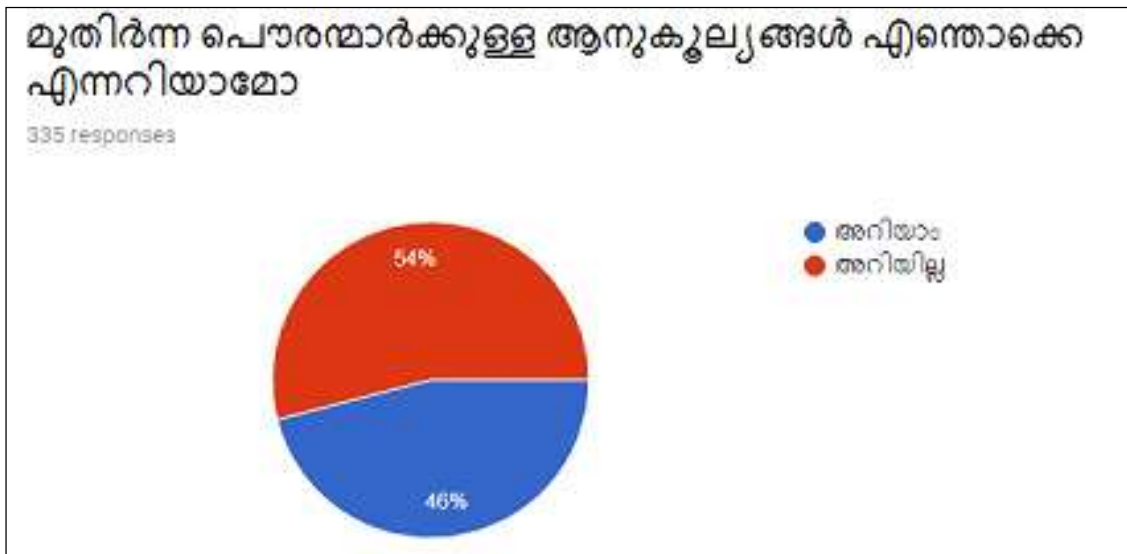


Figure 31: Information on Services of Elderly

Figure No 31 shows that only 54% were aware about the Old age Schemes and 46% were unaware of old age schemes.

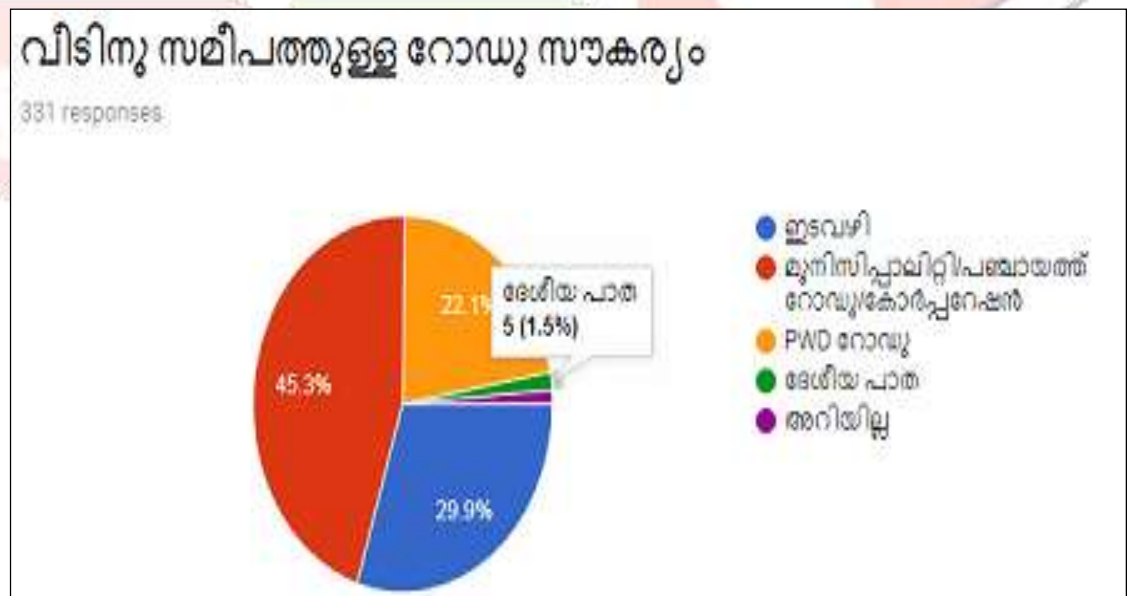


Figure 32: Information on Road near to house

In the survey 45.3% reported municipality roads, 29.9% reported as by roads, 22.19% as PWD roads and only 1.5% as national highways as shown in Figure No 32.

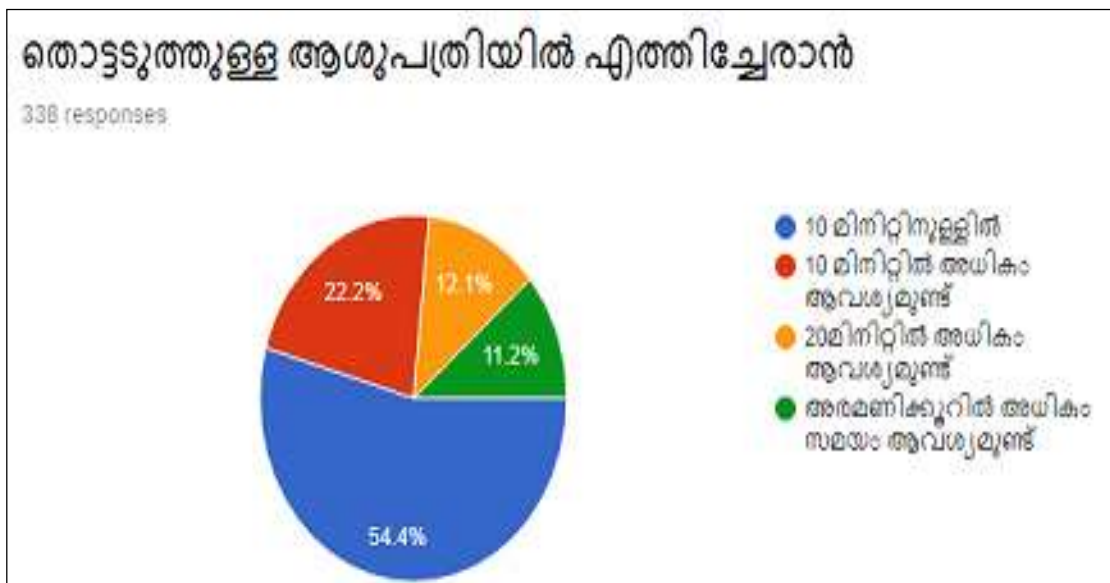


Figure 33: Information on Distance to Near by Hospital

- Figure No 33 shows that 54.4% reported the reachability to hospitals within 10 minutes and 12.1% reported the reachability within 20 minutes.

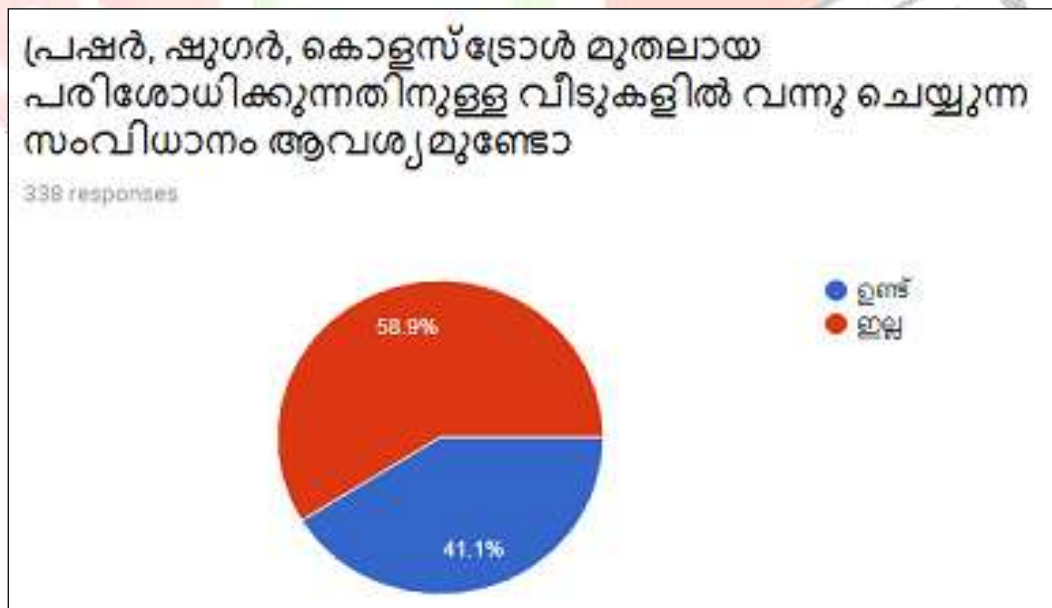
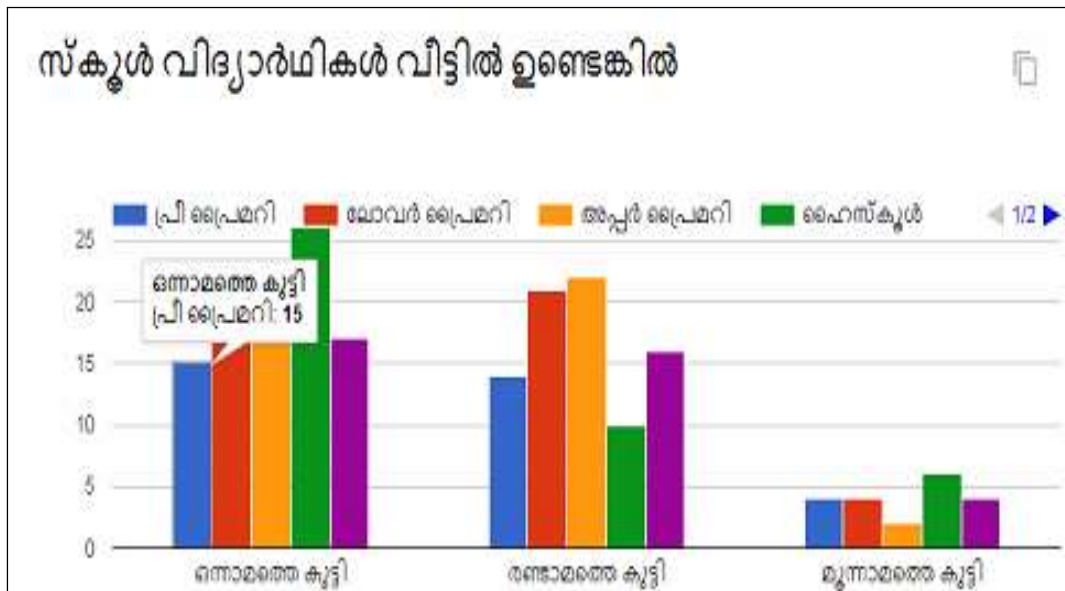


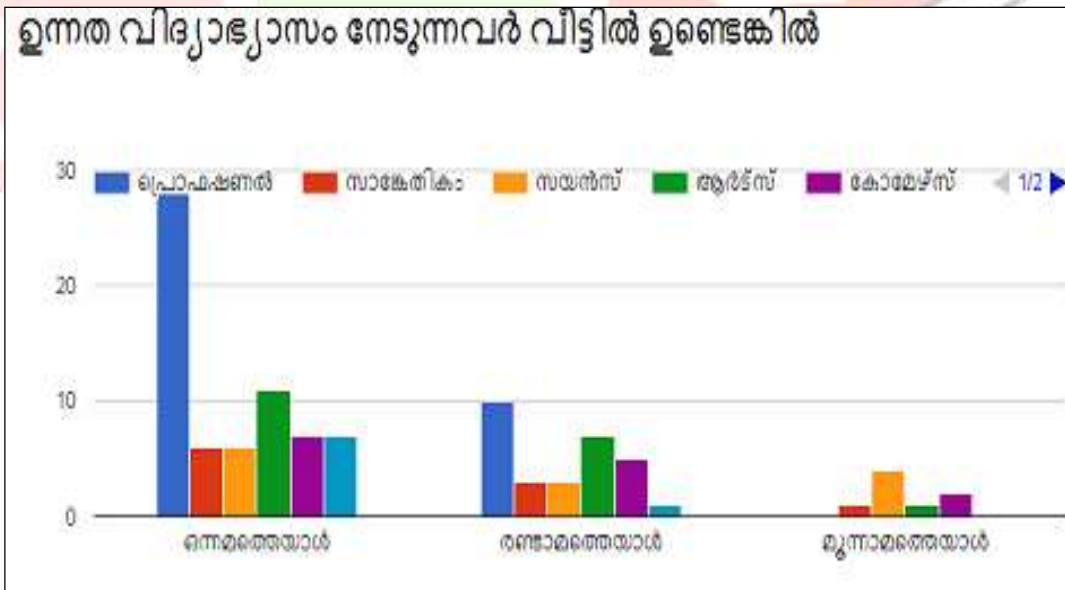
Figure 34: Information on Mobile Clinics

Figure No 34 shows that only 41.1% reported the need for mobile clinics and majority (58.9%) were not aware of mobile clinics.



**Figure 35: Information on School Going Children**

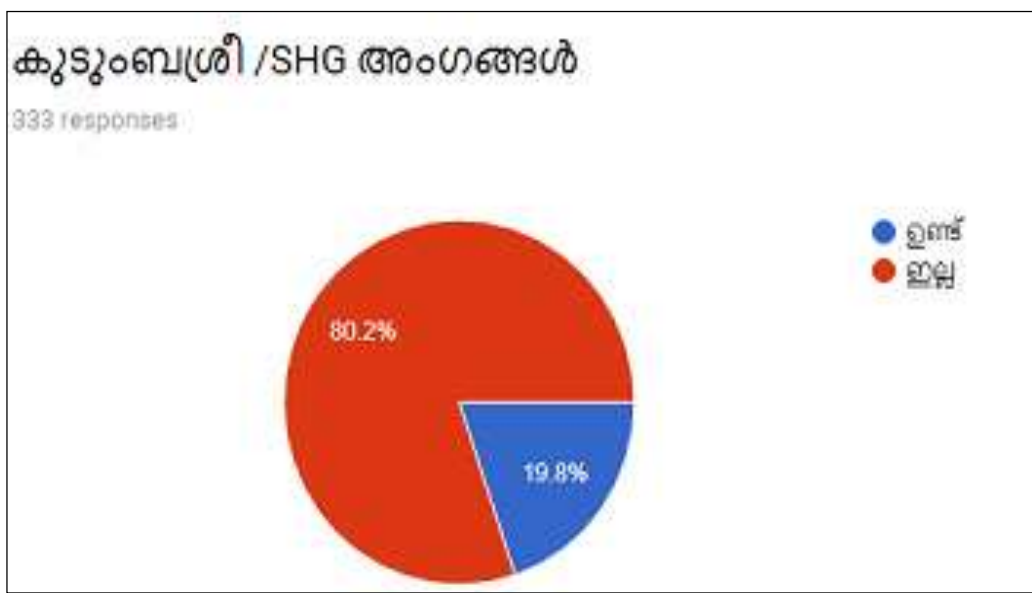
Information on school going children revealed that in ordinal position majority of first child(27)were in high schools, . second child in upper primary(23) and third child also in high school(7). Majority of first child were involved in professional courses (Figure No 35).



**Figure 36: Information on Students Seeking Higher Education**

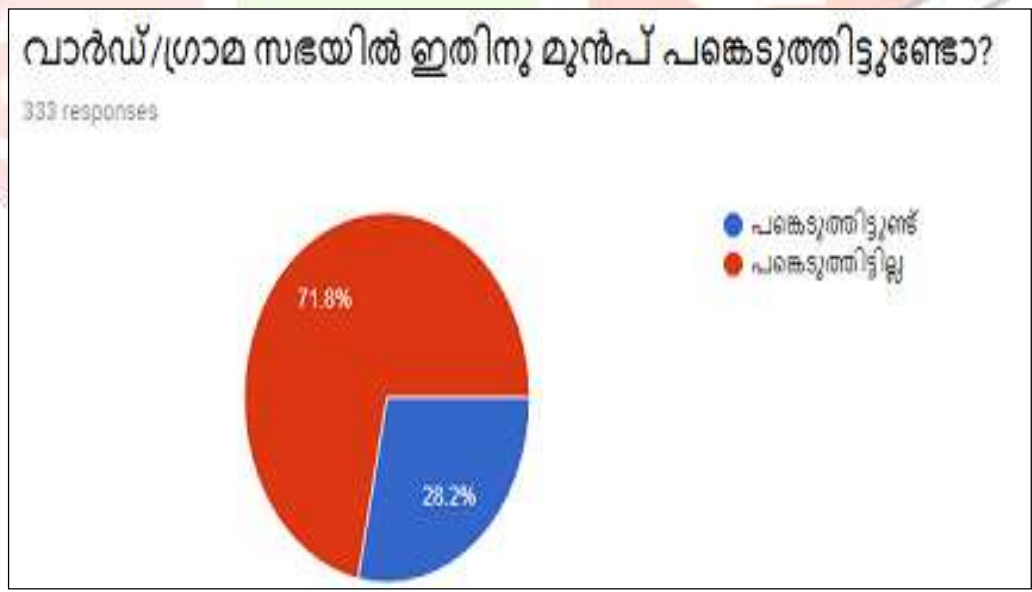
In ordinal position first child were seeking professional (27), and arts (11) compared to second and third child (Figure No 36).





**Figure 37: Information on SHGs in the Ward**

Figure No 37 shows that only 19.8% were only aware about the SHGs and majority (80.2%) were unaware of SHGs.



**Figure 38: Information on participation in Ward Sabha**

Figure No 38 shows that 71.8% were not involved in ward sabha meeting and only 13.9% were aware that within one year atleast 3 meeting should be held with respect to ward sabha and 51.5% were not interested to participate their family members in ward sabha meetings.

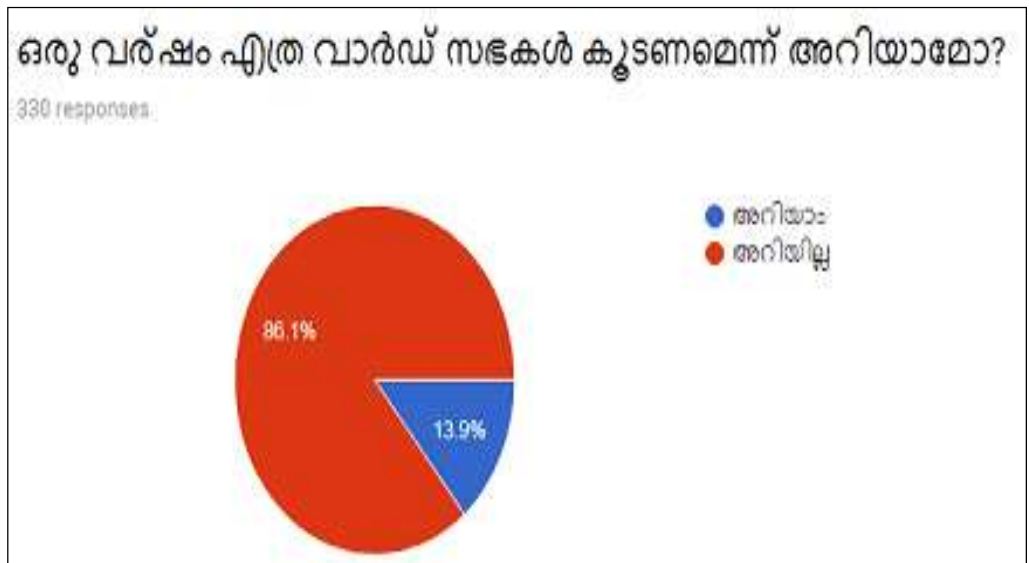


Figure 39: Information on Awareness on Conduct of Ward Sabha Meetings

Figure No 39 shows that 44.4% were aware giving significance to ward sabha as that of election and 40.2% were not aware of its significance.

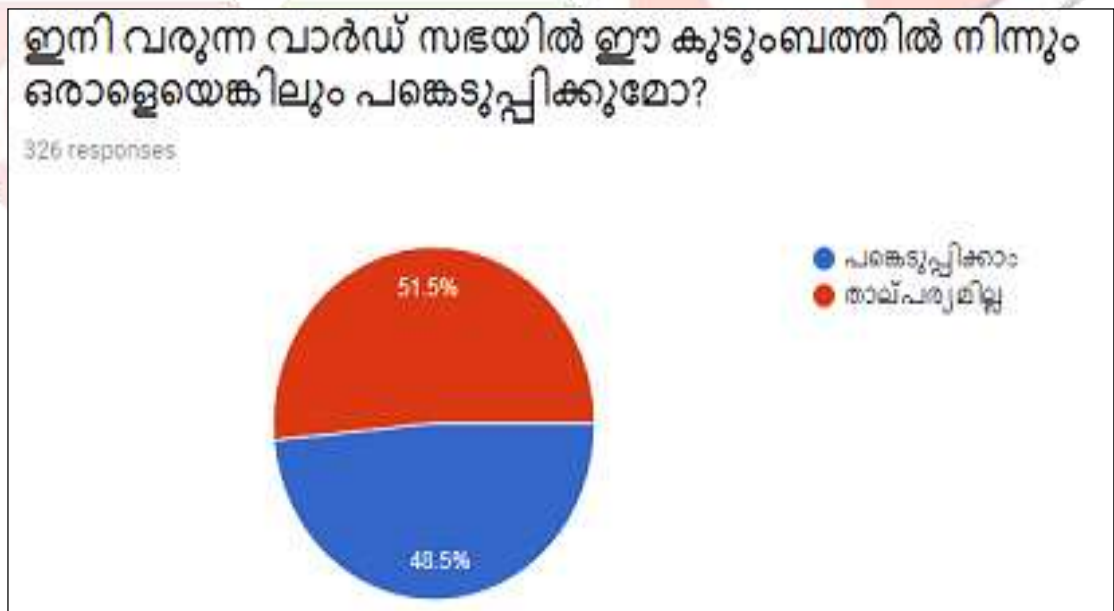
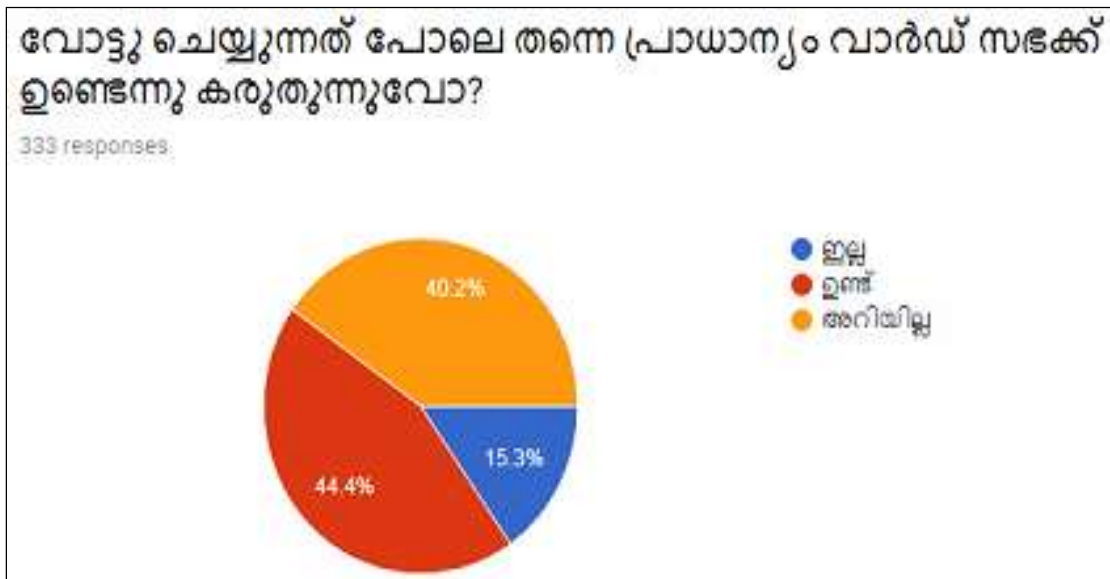


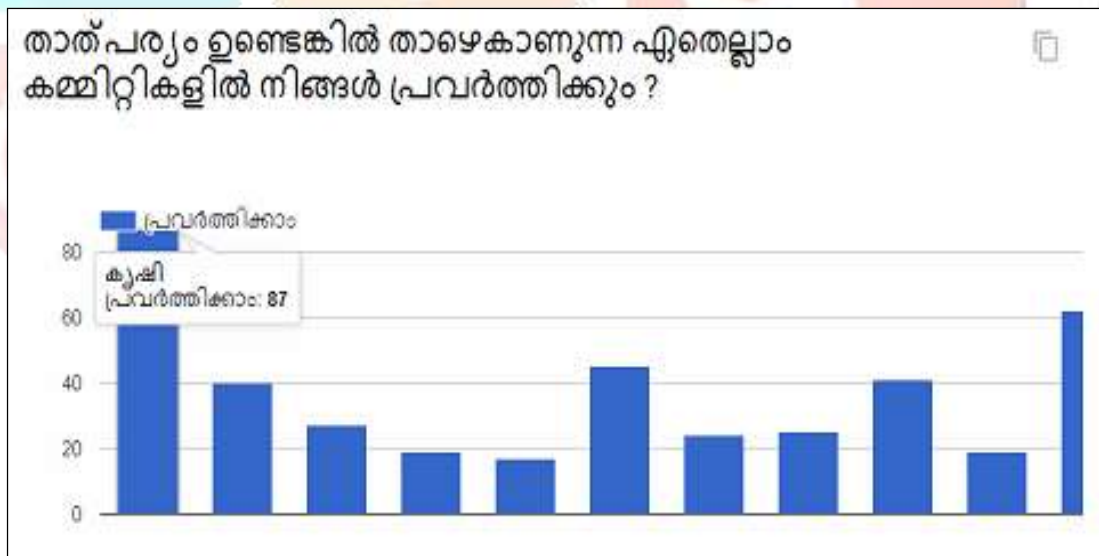
Figure 40: Information on Attitude Towards Participation in Future Ward Sabha Meetings

Figure No 40 shows that 48.5% had a positive attitude towards participation in ward sabha and 51.5% were not having good attitude towards participation in ward sabha.



**Figure 41: Information on Importance of Participation in Ward Sabha**

Regarding importance of ward sabha 44.4% only reported the importance of ward sabha, 15.3% were reported no significance and 15.3% were unaware of importance of ward sabha (Figure No 41).



**Figure 42: Information from Natives on Interested Committees to Work**

Among interested committees to work 87 reported agriculture, sanitation 62, health 53, job 40, social justice 45, animal husbandry 40, water conservation 41, town planning 22, energy 19 and administration 14 (Figure No 42).

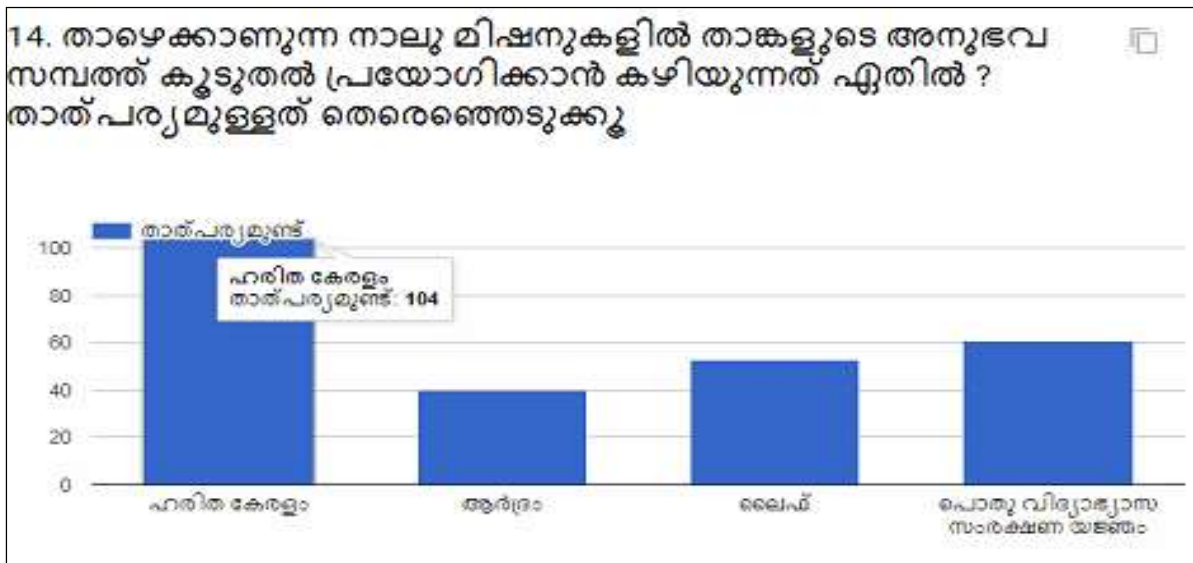


Figure 43: Information on Interested Govt Schemes to Work

Among the schemes harithakeralam, ardraam, life and education majority were having interest to work in harithakeralam(9104) followed by Education (61), Life (53) and Ardraam (40) scheme (Figure No 43).

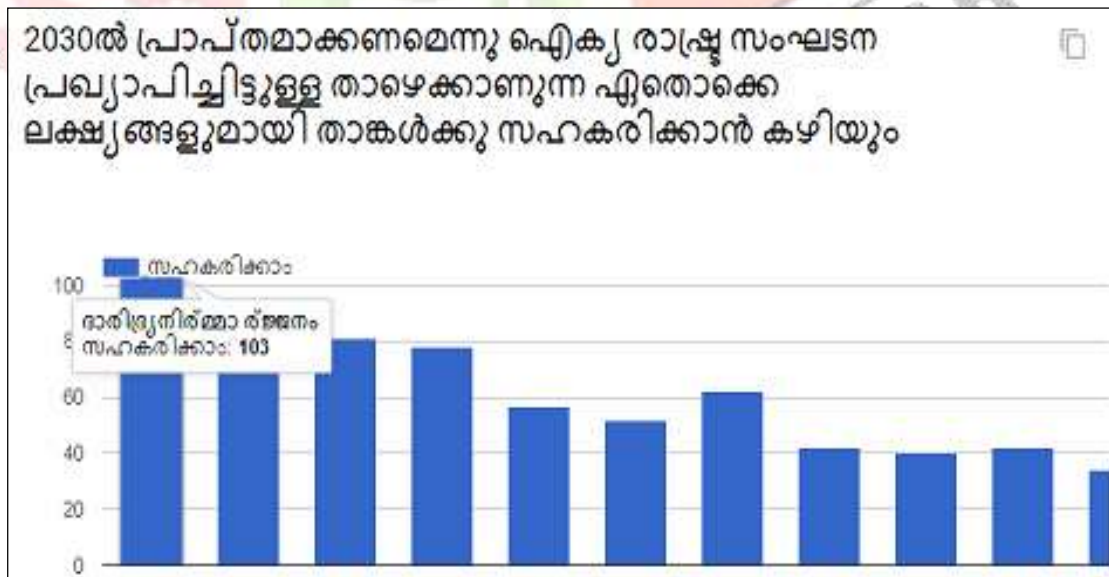


Figure 44: Information of Natives on interested UN Developmental Goals to Work

Figure No 44 shows that among the UN recommended goals to be achieved by 2030 majority were ready to co-operate especially in poverty eradication (103), health(81) and hunger(75).

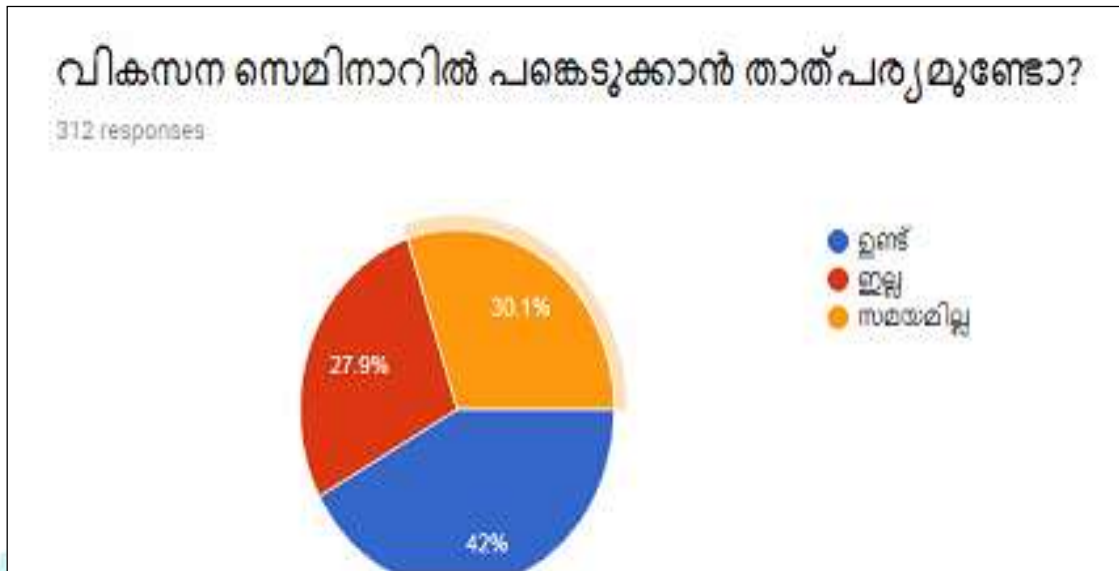


Figure 45: Information on Interest on Participation in Vikasana Seminar

Figure No 45 points that only 42% were interested to attend the vikasana seminar.30.1% reported lack of time and 27.9% were not interested to attend the vikasana seminar.

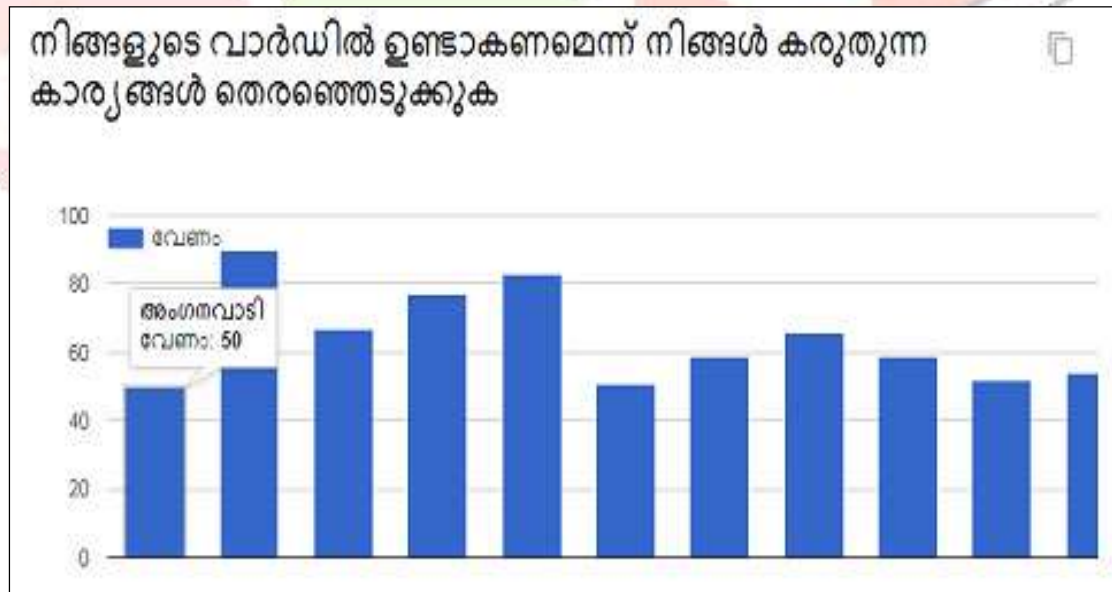


Figure 46: Information on Services needed in the Ward

The services needed in the ward were library (90), health centre (83),day care (77), sports and arts (67), nirbhaya centres (59), study centre (54), AYUSH (52),anganwadi (50),canteen (48) and public toilet (42) (Figure No 46).



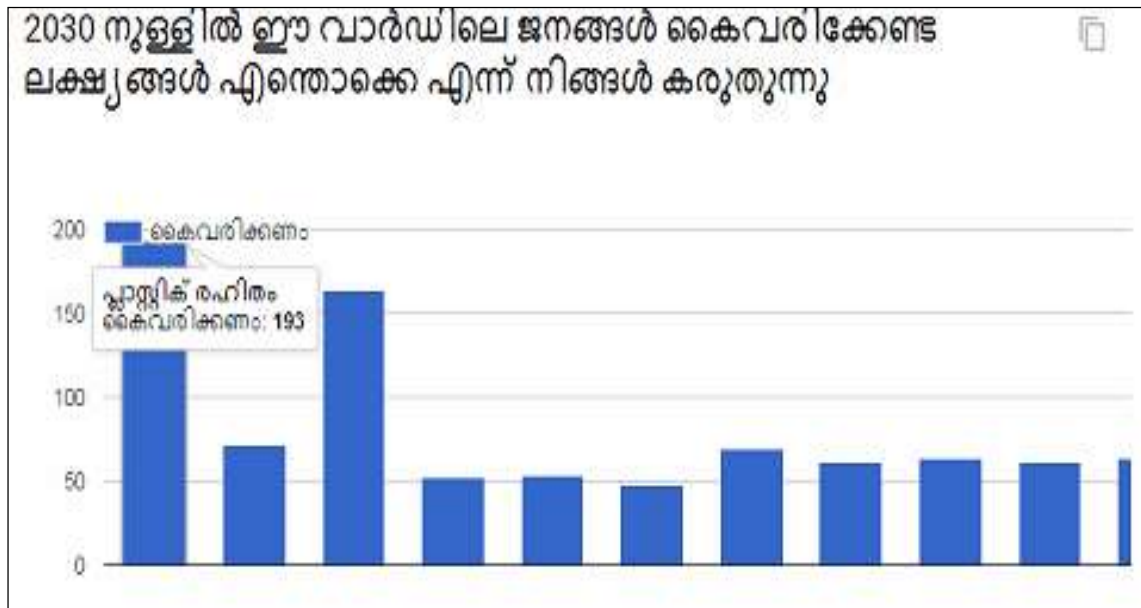


Figure 47: Information on UN Developmental Goals to be Achieved by 2030

Un developmental goals to be achieved in ward by 2030 are plastic free (193), Cleanliness (164), organic vegetables, milk, meat(72), drug eradication (69),women and child welfare (64), geriatric friendly (62), digital transaction (56),widow and single parent welfare (54), youth friendly (52), no mortality due to malnutrition (52), energy conservation (44) (Figure No 47).



Figure 48: Information on Suggestions of Services Needed in the Ward



Suggestion of services from the ward were reported to be poverty eradication, waste management, nirbhaya centres, old age clinics, play grounds, youth clubs, parenting, library, street lights, cleanliness and organic farming (Figure No 48).

### **Conclusion:**

- In short from the study it was found that participatory democracy was lacking in the ward and only a few representation were only found in the ward sabha meetings. The role of ICT was found to be useful in promoting developmental activities. From the survey it was found that the residents were not aware of ward sabha, its significance, UN Global Goals, the facilities in the ward, the government schemes and the services offered. The productive age group percentage was found to be very less compared to vulnerable age groups elderly and children below 18 years and the services to adolescents and elderly were not found to be reaching the target properly. Only representative democracy was found practiced. For achieving the UN goals by 2030 the necessity of strong campaign and awareness was found to be needed.

### **Limitations of the Study:**

- Time
- From each house one response was taken irrespective of age and educational status
- Direct awareness to all family members were not possible
- Smart phones with net connection is needed

### **Follow ups**

- Has to take Sea view ward as model of Participatory Democracy
- Continue survey for the coming planning ward sabha
- Presentation of the survey reports to authorities and ward committee of the sea view ward

### **Implications of the survey on state level**

- ❖ Each ward should replicate the survey process before the planning ward sabha every year with the help of students, volunteers, Area Development Societies and other social organizations.
- ❖ A comprehensive survey is essential to make a database of the house -holds. So it is easy to ensure the service delivery within no time

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