



Socio-personal Characteristics of Televiewing Rural Women

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ABSTRACT

The research study was conducted to know the socio-personal characteristics of televiewing rural women in Belgaum, Dharwad, Gadag and Haveri districts of northern part of Karnataka state. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group, illiterate, married, medium and nuclear families, working as agricultural labour and low income group. Cent per cent of the respondents owned Television with cable connection. More than half of the respondents were members for self help groups followed by anganwadi. Nearly fifty per cent of the respondents have contacted nearest urban places once in a fortnight.

Key words : Mass-media, Rural Women, Socio-personal Characteristics, Television Viewing

Rural India still continues to be traditional in many respects in spite of significant changes in its economic and political organizations. Majority of rural population is affected by problems like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of healthcare facilities and poor housing. To create awareness about these, TV can act as powerful media of communication for extending education to the formally uneducated rural population which gives additional role in national development. Nowadays, television is important by telecasting good programmes to empower women in the areas of social, cultural, economical, educational, legal, decision making, health, technological, equal rights, freedom of expression, gender sensitization, *etc.* Keeping these facts a study was conducted to find out the social, personal and economical characteristics of televiewing rural women.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Belgaum, Dharwad, Gadag and Haveri districts of northern part of Karnataka state. Multistage sampling method was adopted for the investigation. Selected villages were 25 km away from the nearest town, urban or semi urban areas to know the real effect and impact of TV on rural women of interior villages. A purposive random sampling procedure was used for selection of respondents. A total of 480 respondents, selecting 120 from each district, taking equal number of 40 televiewing rural women from each village were selected for the study. Data were collected with the help of pre-tested interview schedule. Collected data was analyzed by using suitable statistical methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-personal characteristics of televiewing rural women

An investigation of Table 1 stated that 43.34 per cent of respondents belonged to middle age group as compared to a very less percentage (15%) under old age group. The remaining 41.66 per cent belonged to young age group. The possible reason for this trend might be middle and young age women are generally enthusiastic, innovative and have more strength, vigor and challenge. They are interested to earn more and to develop their personality. Unlike in the earlier days, the present day young generation is not compelled to follow their traditions and customs which discourage their hidden potential talents. In recent years, lot of effort is put from both government and non-governmental organizations in making rural women empowered. These women can take initiation to influence their family members regarding their participation in farm and home activities. The findings are in line with Cherin and Vats (2001) and Khandai (2006).

From Table 1 it was observed that 43.13 per cent of the respondents were illiterate followed by 39.79 per cent who had completed middle school. Nearly 17 per cent of the respondents obtained high school level education, whereas none of the respondents belonged to "PUC and above" or "can read and write" category. The reason for higher illiteracy might be poor socio-economic conditions of the parents, lack of awareness about girl education, higher involvement of girls as labourers in the fields and discrimination attitudes of parents towards girl child. This was also the picture in almost

Table1. Socio-personal characteristics of televiewing rural women.

N =480

Independent Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Young (below 31 years)	200	41.66
	Middle (32-34 years)	208	43.34
	Old (above 35 years)	72	15.00
Educational status	Illiterate	207	43.13
	Can read and write	-	-
	Up to 7 th (Primary school)	191	39.79
	Up to 10 th (High school)	82	17.08
	PUC	-	-
	Degree	-	-
Marital status	Married	328	68.33
	Unmarried	89	18.54
	Widow	63	13.13
	Divorced	-	-
Family size	Small (below 4 members)	108	22.50
	Medium (5-7 members)	187	38.96
	Large (above 7 members)	185	38.54
Type of family	Nuclear	269	56.04
	Joint	211	43.96
Occupation of respondents	House wife	41	8.54
	Agricultural labour	294	61.25
	Service	38	7.92
	Working in own field	107	22.29
Family occupation	Main		
	Agriculture	459	95.63
	Service	21	4.37
	Subsidiary *		
	Dairy	356	74.70
	Sheep rearing	106	22.08
	Grocery shop	85	17.71
	Bangle seller	11	2.29
	Vegetable seller	63	13.12
Tailoring	42	8.75	
Family Income (annual)	Low (below Rs.25,000)	188	39.17
	Medium (Rs.25,000-Rs.47,000)	140	29.17
	High (above Rs.47,000)	152	31.66

* = Subsidiary occupation of the respondents in more than one activity.

Table2. Mass media utilization of televiewing rural women

Mass media	Subscriber/ Owner	Listening/Viewing /Reading behavior		
		Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Radio	338 (70.40)	297 (61.90)	41 (8.50)	142 (29.60)
Cable TV/ DTH	480 (100.00)	454 (94.58)	26 (5.42)	-
Newspaper	148 (30.83)	61 (12.71)	87 (18.12)	332 (69.17)
Magazine	38 (7.92)	38 (7.92)	-	442 (92.08)

Values in parentheses indicate percentage

Table3. Organizational participation of televiewing rural women in local institutions.

Organization	Member	Office bearer	Extent of participation		
			Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Gram panchayat	38 (7.92)	-	-	38(7.92)	442(92.08)
Co-operatives	-	-	-	-	480(100)
Mahila mandal	23(4.79)	-	-	23(4.79)	457(95.21)
Anganawadi	106(22.08)	-	56(11.67)	50(10.41)	374(77.92)
School	-	-	-	-	480(100)
Self help group	258(53.75)	-	209(43.54)	49(10.21)	222(46.25)
Religious	-	-	-	-	480(100)

Values in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table4. Urban contact of televiewing rural women (during last 6 months)

Category	N =480	
	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	-	-
Weekly	190	39.58
Fortnightly	228	47.50
Monthly	62	12.92
Rarely	-	-
Never	-	-

all villages of rural India where level of education is generally low and so more among in women. The findings are consistent with Masali (2002) and Paloti (2003).

It was clear from the data that majority of the respondents (68.33%) were married while 18.54 per cent of them were unmarried. Only few of the respondents were widows (13.13%). None of the respondents fell under divorced category (Table 1). Unlike women in urban areas, women in rural areas have got more responsibility in running their families. Moreover a large percentage of women were in the age range of 32-34 years by that age, most of the women are married. The findings are in conformity with Paloti (2003).

It could be seen from Table 1 that almost equal number of respondents belonged to medium (38.96 %) and large (38.54%) family *i.e.*, five to seven members and more than seven members, respectively, whereas less per cent (22.50%) of them belonged to small family *i.e.*, below four members. About 39 per cent of women had family size consisting of five to seven members. The reason could be attributed to lack of knowledge of the benefits of small or planned families; still the small family norm is not accepted to a larger extent by rural people. The other reason might be that every child is an added asset to the family who can contribute by way of labour.

It was noticed from the Table 1 that half of the respondents (56 %) belonged to nuclear families while 44 per cent belonged to joint families. Because of urbanization, growing individualism, an urge to lead an independent life with personal assets and need for proper accommodation, people prefer to live in nuclear family for the sake of close contacts, better harmony and satisfaction of basic needs under one roof, could be the possible reasons to find nuclear families. The results are in conformity with Usha Rani (1999), Patil *et al.*, (2000) and Paloti (2003).

Majority of the respondents (61.25 %) were working as agricultural labourers followed by working in their own fields (22.29%). Only seven to eight per cent of the respondents either occupied in government/non-government service or engaged in household work. Agriculture being the back bone of the country's economy and most agriculturists living in rural India, it is quite natural that most of the respondents would either belong to farming families or dependent on farm labour for their livelihood. The findings of Kotegoudar (2002) and Paloti (2003) are in conformity with present findings.

More than 95 per cent of the families were engaged in agriculture followed by service as their main occupation. Under subsidiary occupation, dairy activity was taken by 74.20 per cent of families followed by sheep rearing (22.10%). About 15 per cent of them were engaged in running grocery shop and sales of vegetables. Very few of them were doing tailoring (8.60%) and bangles selling (2.30 %) as their subsidiary activity. The reasons quoted for respondents occupation *i.e.*, respondents working as agricultural labourers holds same for the families whose main occupation is agriculture. Subsidiary occupation of the family is found to be highest in dairy activity. The possible reason might be that rural women play an important role in preparation of cattle feed and feeding of animals, cleaning animals and cattle sheds, collecting fodder, chaffing of fodder, preparation and sale of milk products. Livestock, which constitute an important element, is capable of making large contribution to the development of rural economy and thus help in raising the living standard of rural masses.

With regard to annual family income, 39.17 per cent of them had low income group (below Rs. 25,000) followed by 31.66 per cent of the families who belonged to high income group (Rs.>47,000) and 29.17 per cent in the medium income group (Rs. 25,000 to 47,000) (Table 1). The probable reason for this might be that the majority of respondents being landless, earned low wages through the work in others field. Though most of the respondents own lands, they may not be getting consistent income because of failure or excess of rainfall. So the income was neither consistent nor assured. Hence, the findings show low level of income.

Mass media utilization

It can be observed from the Table 2 that, cent per cent of the respondents owned television with cable network followed by radio (70.40 %), newspaper (30.83%) and magazine (7.92%). Ninety five per cent of them watched TV regularly. In case of radio though 70.40 per cent of them owned radio, only 61.90 per cent of them listened regularly. With respect to print media though they subscribed for newspapers and magazines their reading behaviour was very low.

Audio visual presentation might have attracted and motivated rural women to purchase TV. It is capable of influencing rural people living in remote areas and gives lot of information, knowledge about farm, home and occupation related aspects. TV is entertaining whole family at cheaper cost. These

may be some of the reasons to own TV by cent per cent of rural women. With respect to radio, nearly seventy per cent of them owned, because of its portable nature they may be taking radio to their work place. Some respondents expressed that radio programmes specially film songs and folk songs influenced their work potential to a great extent. With respect to print media low reading behavior might be due to the high percentage of illiterates in the study sample.

Organizational participation

Table 3 indicated that about 53.75 per cent of them were members for Self Help Groups (SHG) followed by Anganawadi (22.08%), Grampanchayat (7.92%) and Mahila mandal (4.79%). None of them was office bearer in any of the local organizations. This table also shows the extent of participation in various organizations wherein, majority of the members of Anganawadi and Self Help Group participated in the activities regularly and the members of Grampanchayat and Mahila mandal occasionally participated. None of the respondents was either member for co-operatives, schools and religious organizations or participated in their activities.

Efforts of central and state development agencies, especially women and child welfare, banks, local government and voluntary organizations might have created awareness of the social and economic benefits of being member and taking active participation in Self Help Groups (SHGs), Anganawadi, Mahila mandal and Panchayat. Their participation is nil in other social institutions like schools, co-operative society and religious groups. The reasons might be that not functioning of the organizations in their village, lack of interest to participate in the organizations and belief among the women especially with poor economic and social status that only men and rich people are eligible for such positions in the organizations, as also reported by Usha Rani (1999), Patil *et al.*, (2000) and Paloti (2003).

Urban contact

The data presented in Table 4 showed that nearly fifty per cent of the respondents have contacted nearest urban places once in a fortnight followed by weekly (39.58%) and monthly (12.92%) groups. The respondents did not have urban contact on a regular basis. Women in rural areas usually visit nearby city market during the fixed day in a week to purchase vegetables, fruits, grocery and other basic needs of the family. This might be the plausible reason for visiting the urban areas weekly and fortnightly by the rural women.

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