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Television Viewing Behaviour of Rural Women

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ABSTRACT

Television, the mirror of a nation's personality, is one of the mostpotential media to create awareness, entertain, educate and inform large number of people at lesser cost and time. The television viewing behaviour of rural women indicates that majority of rural women (70.00%) had cable connection followed by DTH and Doordarshan connection. Even some rural women (2.67%) had no access to TV. They had the habit of viewing TV daily for up to one hour. They were more interested in entertainment programmes like popular serials, reality shows, music and films. Sometimes, respondents were alsowatching films, news, religious,agriculture and sports programmes. The identification of the constraints in utilization of the television and the assessment of their viewing behaviour would help the policy makers to amend the components and strategies for television programming

KEYWORDS: Biasness, constraints, viewing behaviour

Introduction

India is one of the developing nations with large network of mass media along the length and breadth of the country. Communication in rural areasis a necessary and vital process in achieving the set national goals. The distance between women and media, not only deprives the women of their right to information and knowledge but also keep the women in the dark regarding the blatant misuse of the females and the distortion of the truth. India cannot become a mighty superpower until half of its population comprising women is well informed. Take some of the basic parameters of progressand one finds that lack of education, unawareness, poor health conditions and discrimination in opportunities of work and income still haunt women. They still wear the chains that drag them down which slows down society as a whole.There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India: effective literacy rates (age seven and above) in 2011 were 82.14 per cent for men and 65.46 per cent for women. Though women's literacy has shot up from a shameful 8 per cent at the time of independence, it still leaves over 200 million of them unable to read and write, the largest such number in any country. Women constitute 48.46 per cent of the total population, bulk of which reside in rural areas and as many as 80 per cent of which is engaged in agricultural activities. In Himachal Pradesh, out of a total population of 6,856,509 the female population is 3382617 with a sex ratio of 974 female per thousand males. In Kangra district, the population of males and female is 748,559 and 758,664 respectively with a sex ratio of 1013 females per thousand males. Kangra district is the most populous district of Himachal Pradesh with rural population over 94 per cent (Census of India-2011). Nowadays, television is giving a lot of importance in empowering women by telecasting good programmes. The purpose of this study is to study television viewing behaviour of rural women and their information needsin depth, for the future programmes planning. In this light, the objectives of the paper are:

1. To ascertain the extent of television viewership among the rural women.
2. To identify the problems faced by rural women to access the television programmes.

Material and Methods

The research investigation was conducted in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. Data were collected with the help of an interview schedule from a sample of 450 rural women, selected through structured random sampling technique from fifteen villages of three development blocks. Percentage analysis was worked outfor finding out theviewing behaviour of rural women.

Results and Discussion

Television, the mirror of a nation's personality is one of the mostpotential media to create awareness, entertain, educate and inform large number of people at lesser cost and time.

The extent of television viewership among the rural women

The extent of television viewership among the rural women in terms of subscription of television connection, regularity of viewing, liking for programme and duration of viewing has been analysed.

1. Subscription of television connection

The details regarding the subscription of TV connection are presented in Table 1. In the study area majority of the respondents (70.00%) had cable connection followed by DTH connection (15.55%), Doordarshan connection (11.78%) and 2.67 per cent of respondentshad no access to TV. So it can be concluded that majority of rural women (70.00%) had subscription of cable TV.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to subscription of TV connection N = 450

Type of TV connection	Number	Per cent
Doordarshan	53	11.78
Cable	315	70.00
DTH	70	15.55
No Access to TV	12	2.67

Present study is similar with the findings of Aggrawal (1993), Murthy and Dixit (1994), Kalra and Kalra (1996), and Meenambigai and Seetharaman (2004).

2. Regularity of television viewing

The regularity of television viewing had been categorized in to three groups i.e. daily, sometime and never. Table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents (75.78%) were viewing the television daily whereas 21.55 per cent were occasional viewers and only 2.67 per cent respondents never viewed the television programme. Hence, most of the rural women (75.78%) had the habit of viewing TV daily which is in agreement with the findings of Bhople and Dhapke (1992),Mane and Shetay (1992), and Joshi and Bhatia (2002).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents on the basis of regularity of television viewing N=450

Sr. No	Days	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Daily	341	75.78
2	Sometime	97	21.55
3	Never	12	2.67

3. Television viewing behaviour of the respondents on the basis of liking of programme

The idiot box gives thrills through its programmes. The table 3 showed thatrespondents were more interested in entertainment programmes. In entertainment programmes, the majority of respondents (71.23%) had liking for popular serials and were watching those regularly, followed by reality shows (36.07%), music (26.71%) and films (6.85%). Religious/spiritual programmes, news and agriculture programmes were also watched by the respondents regularly with 37.90, 29.00 and 14.84 per cent, respectively. Only 2.74 per cent respondents watched the sports programmes regularly. Sometime 76.26 per cent of rural women

watched films for entertainment followed by news (53.20%), religious programme (46.12%) and agriculture programme (41.10%). On the other hand, the table depicted that 81.28 per cent of the respondents disliked sports programme. Therefore, entertaining features of TV were most popular among the respondents. Similar results were

Table 3: Television viewing behaviour of the respondents on the basis of liking of programme N = 438

Sr. No	Type of programme	Regular	Sometime	Never
1.	News	127 (29.00)	233 (53.20)	78 (17.80)
2.	Agriculture	65 (14.84)	180 (41.10)	193 (44.06)
3.	Religious/ spiritual	166 (37.90)	202 (46.12)	70 (15.98)
4.	Sports	12 (2.74)	70 (15.98)	356 (81.28)
5.	Entertainment			
	i) Popular serials	312 (71.23)	78 (17.81)	48 (10.96)
	ii) Films	30 (6.85)	334 (76.26)	74 (16.89)
	iii) Reality shows	158 (36.07)	189 (43.15)	91 (20.78)
	iv) Music	117 (26.71)	203 (46.35)	118 (26.94)

also reported by Aggarwal (1993), Murthy and Dixit (1994), Kalra and Kalra (1996), Anand (1998), Abhaya et al (2002), Singh et al (2003), and Meenambigai and Seetharaman (2004).

4. Duration of television viewing

Duration of television viewing has been categorized into three categories. As Table 4

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to duration of television viewing N=438

Sr No	Duration in Hrs	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Up to one	248	56.62
2	1-2	133	30.37
3	More than 2	57	13.01

revealed that majority of the respondents (56.62%) were viewing the television for up to one hour. Srivastava (1992), Sheela (1994), Saeedi (1998), and Meenambigai and Seetharaman (2004) had also quoted similar finding.

Problems faced by rural women to access the television programmes

It is noted from table 5 that affecting studies of children (64.89%), lack of adequate time (56.00%), tiredness due to work load (26.44%), gender biasness (20.89%), technical problems (2.89%), low economic status (2.67%), and illiteracy and low educational qualification (2.44%), were the major constraints experienced by rural women intelevision viewing. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Devasena (1992), and Meenambigati and Ravichandran (2004).

Table 5: Problems faced by rural women to access the television programmes

S. No.	Problem	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Lack of adequate time	252	56.00	2
2	Affecting studies of children	292	64.89	1
3	Tiredness due to work load	119	26.44	3
4	Gender biasness	94	20.89	4
5	Low economic status	12	2.67	6
6	Illiteracy and low educational qualification	11	2.44	7
7	Technical problems	13	2.89	5

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate thatmajority of rural women (70.00%) had cable connection followed by DTH and Doordarshan connection. Some rural women (2.67%) had no access to TV.Respondents were more interested in entertainment programmes and the majority of respondents (71.23%) had liking for popular serialsfollowed by reality shows, musicand films. Religiousprogrammes (37.90%), news (29.00%), agriculture (14.84%) and sportsprogrammes (2.74%) were also watched by them regularly. Sometime they were also watchingfilms, news, religious and agriculture programmes. Entertaining features of TV were most popularand majority of womenwereviewingdaily for up to one hour. It is noted that affecting studies of children, lack of adequate time, tiredness due to work load, gender biasness, technical problems, low economic status, and illiteracy and low educational qualification,were the major constraints experienced by them. In view of above findings, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Government should provide more resources for rural communication. Governmental agencies, NGOs, local community leaders, and women's organizations working for the rural development should co-operate with media. They should come ahead with programmes which instruct them at imparting education to rural women, giving them better health care, providing them with means of livelihood and opportunities to participate in the decision making process at home and in the society.

2. Information need of women and identification of the constraints in utilization of the television needs to be studied in depth for the programme planning.

3. Strategies should be developed to promote level of literacy, job creation, and economic growth of them.

4. The creation of documentaries or films whichchange the mind set of people and create awareness among rural women, should be encouraged.

5. Some problems of rural women can be solved byequal sharing of family responsibilities by men and women. Women should be mobilized to secure such legitimate rights.

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