

A Survey Study on Rural Women in Gurugram District on Media Literacy

Received: 22 February 2023, **Revised:** 26 March 2023, **Accepted:** 28 April 2023

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keywords

Women, Media, Literacy, Media Literacy, Description, and Analytical study.

Abstract

As technology has developed, it has become a tool that empowers women in various ways in India, where they hold a prominent place in society. Although new forms of literacy are emerging as a result of the new media environment, they are not necessarily promoted as being essential to prosper in a society that values knowledge. In light of the media's growing convergence, women must be provided with the resources they need to effectively advocate for this and participate in active involvement.

Using a random sample of rural women from four Haryana villages in the Gurugram district, the current study, which is both descriptive and analytical in nature, was carried out. The use of interview schedules as part of a survey methodology allowed researchers to learn more about women's access to and use of the media, as well as their interest in and need for information on a range of topics, including health care, the cost of expensive educational institutions, legal protections in various jurisdictions, etc. The report also emphasizes the importance of self-help groups, microloans, and employment possibilities.

1. Introduction

“A powerful woman is one who has a voice”- Melinda Gates.

The media play a growing and bigger role in the distribution of information in the modern world. Media consumption is a part of daily chores, whether done at home or at work, for entertainment, education, or a variety of other goals. The media may be used to empower individuals, particularly women. Previous research has shown that women who are media literate may use the media to empower themselves. Without progress in women's emancipation, any efforts to raise the standard of living for those living in developing nations would be unsuccessful (*Ms. Padmaja Tamuli and Dr. Kaushik Mishra, July 2022*).

We are surrounded by media, and very few people either ignore it or use it as a part of their daily lives. Over the years, the majority of people have regularly listened to the radio, watched television, and read newspapers. The World Wide Web's establishment in the 1990s, the full transformation of the media landscape brought about by computers and digitalization in the 1970s, and the mobile revolution

in the early 21st century have all enhanced communication. It is much easier and faster to create and distribute content now (*Bennett, 2002*).

Ironically, there is a significant literacy gap between the educated and illiterate in today's highly technological society, where there is information overload on the one hand and total disconnect on the other. In order for women to engage in the greater conversation about media literacy, it is essential to teach them how to use technology. Because of poverty, gender inequality, illiteracy, and disconnectedness, women are helpless to access knowledge anywhere on the globe. Unfortunately, due to past global trends these inequalities are not exclusive to a particular culture, region, country, or position.

Women have a crucial role in Indian society, and technology has developed into a tool that gives women more influence in a number of different ways. Media consumption has significantly expanded in rural India as a result of this empowerment process, which also uses mass media and other digital technologies to improve media literacy. Traditional, electronic, and digital media are essential for

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disseminating knowledge and information as well as affecting women's opinions, attitudes, and behaviors.

2. Review of Literature

Media education, in the opinion of some experts, is the capacity to access, dissect, evaluate, and spread communications in a variety of ways (Livingstone, 2004). Media competence is the ability to use and learn about computers, the Web, broadcast communications, and electronic media. By developing their analytical and logical thinking skills, people can better understand modern media culture, assuming all other factors are equal.

The effects of the media on people range widely. These two-time spans are both conceivable. Potter identifies five categories of media effects this group includes variables that are cognitive, attitudinal, emotional, physiological, and behavioral). Knowledge acquisition and the capacity to retain that knowledge in either short- or long-term memory are examples of cognitive consequences.

Publicists typically employ this strategy to market their products. People who are exposed to a subject over time eventually develop an appreciation for what is being disclosed. According to a 2003 study by Ross, 52% of young people who saw movies starring smokers started smoking as a result of what they observed onscreen.

According to (Johnson, N. 2013) When it comes to media literacy, the well-known proverb "If a woman gets educated, the whole family gets educated" is a great fit. Women all across the world are unable to access information because of poverty, gender inequality, illiteracy, and disconnectivity. Unfortunately, these differences have not just existed historically in certain cultures, regions, countries, or social classes. But it's been seen that this is more visible in rural and underdeveloped places. In order for women to be involved in the greater issue of media literacy, they must be taught how to use technology. If you can't use technology, it's the same as not having it. It's also essential to acquire media literacy. If female citizens have the ability to be critical information consumers, they will undoubtedly contribute significantly to public discourse. Another reason for this is the capacity of female citizens to protect themselves and others from harmful content,

which is principally fostered by contemporary information and communication technology.

Significance of the Study

The most common informative forms in the media, the literacy rates of rural women, access to and ownership of media, media use, and time consumption, the popularity of various media and its drivers, and all of these topics are addressed in this study. It was important to address issues about women's independence in research that focused on media literacy and empowerment. Basic issues, such as decision-making, have been addressed as a consequence.

Objectives

- To search the media access and ownership of rural women.
- To identify how people use media and how much time they spend doing so.
- To examine the kinds of data that are accessed via each medium (including SHGs and panchayat local bodies).
- To determine the degree to which rural women are empowered in terms of owning property, selecting their own friends, and freedom to live as they like, as well as decision-making in financial, familial, and personal affairs,

3. Methodology

A total of 300 people were included in the sample size for the empirical data collection, which was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. According to the findings of this study, socially and economically disadvantaged groups' access to the media did not significantly affect their daily lives despite having access to those groups' homes. A cell phone was the most used gadget, and then came radio, newspapers, TV, and so on. Most media was largely consumed by women for their own entertainment, and it almost always sought to raise awareness of women's empowerment. 13.5% of the people were also found to not use any media at all.

For the sake of this study, the Haryana district of Gurugram has been chosen. Four villages, which are

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situated on the southernmost tip of Haryana, are surrounded by the districts of Gurugram, in the north. In the present research study, the researchers identified four rural villages and chose 300 rural women at random from all age categories for the study. The research includes the rural villages of Chandu, Sultanpur, Farukhnagar and Kaliawas. The field trips happened in January 2023.

Pre-test study

A sample questionnaire and a pre-test were delivered by the investigators. In January 2023, the study was conducted with 50 rural women in four villages in Haryana. The survey found that television was the most widely used medium and that few people listened to the radio. All age groups watched the most television. The ladies stated that they would be highly interested in receiving information from various media covering farming, agriculture, animal husbandry, education, the weather, health, and financial matters. As it stands, they did learn certain things from TV shows and self-help organizations.

Results of Pilot Study

After the 100 women who took part in the 100 interviews for the pilot study were analyzed, the final

study's methodology was as follows: The most practicable method for this inquiry was deemed to be a quantitative methodology based on a survey. It is more common to ask "what goes with what" and "how many" questions rather than "why" questions, and there is less emphasis on finding representative patterns and more on associations and explanations. Less emphasis is also placed on describing data, and more emphasis is placed on making predictions.

Given the above-indicated facts, the current study employed a straightforward descriptive survey approach. A simple survey was first conducted to compile basic demographic information and understand certain sociocultural factors. Following that, a thorough set of questions and an interview schedule were used to look into the accessibility and use of media in these areas.

Analysis and Findings

To better comprehend the link between women and media in this assessment, the experts largely relied on percentile analysis. The chi-square test was used to determine if the females' age, educational level, and amount of media consumption were related. The insights and comprehension gained from the quantifiable analysis of the data are displayed here.

Demographic Information

Table -A

Age	Frequency	Percent
15-25	193	65.29
26-35	52	17.33
36-45	43	14.33
46-55	8	2.66
55 & Above	4	1.33
Total	300	100

The aforementioned information indicates that 65.29% of the study's female participants were between the ages of 15 and 25. 17.33% of them were between the ages of 26 and 35, 14.33% of the population is under the age of 36, 2.66% is between 46 and 55, and 1.33% is above 55.

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Table- A (a)

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	128	43
Up to 10 th	70	23
Up to 12 th	63	21
Higher Education	39	13
Total	300	100

In terms of educational qualifications, it was discovered that 128 (43%) of 300 respondents were uneducated, 70 (23%) completed their education up to

the 10th grade, 63 (21%) completed their education up to the 12th grade, and only 39 (13%) completed higher education.

Table –A (b)

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Laborers	126	42
Farmers	100	33.33
Homemakers	74	24.66
Total	300	100

According to the aforementioned data, 42% of women work in labor work, whereas 33.33% are farmers.

24.66% of people work in the home – making activities. The majority of them were day laborers.

Table –A(c)

Family Income	Frequency	Percent
Up to 10000	98	33
20000	108	36
30000	94	31
Total	300	100

According to the aforesaid statistics, 33% of respondents earn less than Rs. 10,000 per month, 36% earn less than Rs. 20,000 per month, and 31% earn

more than Rs. 30,000 per month. Despite this, no household earns more than Rs. 30,000 per month.

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Table –A (d)

Family Structure	Frequency	Percent
Joint	176	59
Nuclear	124	41
Total	300	100

According to the table, the majority of them (59%) come from joint families, with the remainder nuclear 41% from families.

Table –B Excess of Media to the Family

Medium	Frequency	Percentage
Print – Newspaper/ Magazine	27	9
Radio	17	6
Television	200	67
Mobile	43	14
Computer	13	4

It was fascinating to see in the above figure that 67% of the respondents claimed to possess a TV set when asked about their media ownership. Only 4% of people had an internet connection, compared to 14% of people who had a mobile phone. Only 6% had access to periodicals and magazines, and only 9% had a radio in their home. Whether they possessed a TV or not, all of the respondents had access to it, and the majority of the women watched TV for hours on end.

Few people either owned or were proficient at using computers. It was shocking to see how few homes had radios. The term "radio" was often unfamiliar to them. In reality, the vast majority of those who claimed to listen to the radio do so through their smartphones. Due to the sporadic and extremely limited delivery of newspapers in these areas, access to newspapers is minimal. Numerous of the ladies also lacked literacy.

Table B (a): Number of hours reading Newspapers / Magazines

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
0	202	67
1 Hour	56	19
1 to 3	33	11
< 4	9	3
Total	300	100

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As per the information, 67% of individuals didn't understand papers or magazines, while 19% read for under 60 minutes, 11% watched for one to two hours, and 3% read for over three hours of the day. This

absence of reading serves two important purposes. It could be hard to find understandable material, and a lack of education is another issue.

Table B (b): Number of hours Spent Using the Internet

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
0	240	80
1 Hour	42	14
1 to 3	14	5
< 4	4	1
Total	300	100

According to the aforementioned data, 80% of respondents don't use the Internet, 14% do so for less than 60 minutes, 5% do so for one to three hours, and only 1% spend more than four hours online. Since

there is no wifi or other network in rural areas, there is no basic Web access. Almost no females who enter the contest use an Android phone. They have individual identification cards.

Table B (b): Number of hours spent listening to the radio

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
0	57	19
>1 Hour	225	75
1 to 3	14	5
< 3	4	1
Total	300	100

According to the aforementioned statistics, 19 % of people never listen to the radio, 75 % only listen for under 60 minutes, 11% only listen for between one and three hours, and only 4% listen for more than three hours. Cell phones are mostly used to listen to

the radio, which is actually important. A significant portion of them had never heard of radios, and just two or three households owned a typical radio set. They listened to the radio because their family's elders prefer radio to other forms of media.

Table B (c): Number of hours spent watching T.V

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
0	104	34.66
>1 Hour	57	19

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1 to 3	93	31
< 3	46	15.33
Total	300	100

According to the aforementioned measures, the majority of women (34.66%) watch television for 1-3 hours each day, with 31% watching for longer than 3 hours. 15.33% of people watch for around an hour

every day. The 19% of people who don't watch TV were influenced by two factors. They either lacked the leisure to watch a set or they never had one.

Table B (d): Number of hours spent on the computer

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
0	220	73.33
1 Hour	60	20
1 to 3	15	5
< 4	5	1.66
Tot	300	100

It may be seen from the data that the majority of respondents (73.33%) do not use PCs. Only 20 % of people use it for less than an hour. 5% use it for between one and four hours, while only 1.66% use it for several hours. In remote regions, finding a

computer is challenging. Owning a PC is still a serious thing nowadays. It is mostly used by children at school or by a small group of them in the workplace.

Table B (d): Number of hours spent viewing cinema outside the home

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
Do not Views	140	46.66
Very rarely	146	48.6
Once a month	10	3.33
Once a week	4	1.33
Total	300	100

According to the aforementioned data, 46.60 % of people don't view movies outside of movie theaters. Only 48.6 % of people watch movies at least once a

week, compared to 3.33 % who watch them rarely. 1.3 % watch movies at least once a month. The main reason why theatres are unusual locations to visit is

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the scarcity of public transportation. Few households have bicycles.

Table No C (a): Information from Newspapers/Magazine

Information from Print Media		
Types of Information from print Media	Frequency	Percentage
Do not Search at all	250	83.33
Education	2	0.66
Financial Information	5	1.66
Environment	13	4.33
Cultural	10	3.33
Political	20	6.66

In contrast to the 83.33% of respondents who did not seek knowledge-based information, the table above shows that .66% of respondents examine educational information from newspapers or magazines for any

information? Only 1.66 % of data searchers are interested in financial data, compared to 3.33% who are interested in cultural data. The remaining 6.66% percent researched interested in political information.

Table No C (b): Information from Radio

Information from Radio		
Types of Information from Radio	Frequency	Percentage
Do not Search at all	100	33.33
Education	32	10.6
Financial Information	26	8.66
Environment	6	2
Cultural	120	40
Political	16	5.33

According to the aforementioned table, the highest percentage of people (40%) listen to radio programs for cultural information, followed by 8.66% for financial information, 10.6% for information on educational programs 2% for programs outside the

environment, and 5% for information on dairy production, material recycling, and agribusiness. 33.33% didn't use the radio at all for information of any type.

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Table No C (c): Information from T.V

Information from T.V		
Types of Information from T.V	Frequency	Percentage
Do not Search at all	85	28.33
Education	25	8.33
Financial Information	36	12
Environment	64	21.33
Cultural	26	8.66
Political	64	21.33

While 8.66% of respondents use television to learn more about cultural issues, the majority of respondents 28% did not use T.V. for any kind of information. Access to information about finances is

available to 12% of the population. Environment and political information were equally watched by the respondents 21.33%.

Table No C (d): Information from the Internet

Information from Internet		
Types of Information from the Internet	Frequency	Percentage
Do not Search at all	230	76.6
Education	12	4
Financial Information	46	15.33
Environment	3	1
Cultural	6	2
Political	3	1

According to the aforementioned chart, 76.6 % of respondents don't access any information at all, whereas 4% of respondents obtain educational information online. 15.33% use the Internet to get data about finances, 1% for the environment and politics, and 2% for cultural information and interpersonal connections.

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Table No C (e): Information collected from their surroundings

Information collected from their surroundings		
Types of Information from the Internet	Frequency	Percentage
Do not Search at all	153	51
Education	36	12
Financial Information	10	3.33
Environment	25	8.33
Cultural	52	17.33
Political	24	8

In accordance with the aforementioned table, 51% of the population did not receive any information from anyone, 12% received information from their surroundings about educational projects, 17.33% received information about culture, 3.33% received

information about finances, 8.33% received information about the environment, and 17.33% received information about the environment, 8% of people asked the political news from their surroundings.

Table No C (f): Freedom to take their own decisions

Decision Making	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	56	18.66
No	244	81.33
Total	300	100

We may infer from the above data that 18.66 % of women are unable to make decisions about their families, while 81.33 % are free to follow their families' lead.

4. Conclusion

The information gathered and examined led to the following findings: The majority of the women (42.7%) who participated in the current study had only completed their elementary schooling or the 10th standard, and just 13% had attended college. Women who took part in the survey had an illiteracy rate of 23%. Despite all the efforts at development, illiteracy remains an issue in our country.

Monthly incomes for families ranged from less than 10,000 rupees to slightly more than 20,000 rupees for the lowest earners. It is obvious that the poor nowadays have incredibly low earnings. Male and female literacy rates differ nowadays, as was also demonstrated in the current study, and gender inequity is persistent in both urban and rural areas. Most families could not afford to send all of their children to school, so the boy was the obvious choice when it came to education.

Regional entertainment channels on the TV were found to be the most popular choice among respondents from rural regions during the inquiry. There are two causes. One is that many of these

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networks air TV dramas exposing important societal truths that the women believe they can relate to. Second, there is a ton of entertainment available, which serves as a fantastic escape for these ladies, and it's all in a language they can easily understand.

According to TV scholars George Gerbner and his colleagues, television encourages viewers to adopt a common point of view or worldview. The more television a person watches, the more likely they are to accept the principles and realities of television reality as if they were universal truths. Consider how regular television viewers usually underestimate the level of violence in their own lives because violence is so prevalent on television. Gerbner refers to this approach as mainstreaming (Matei, Sorin Adam, 2012).

Surprisingly, very few women listened to radio shows, and when they did, they generally did so on their mobile phones. Almost all of the others had never heard of a radio! Rural communities are rapidly embracing cell phones, but few of them come equipped with internet data cards. In these little towns, computers were an uncommon find. Only the females who were in college knew how to use a computer and used their phones to access the Internet.

The category of education was the one most frequently looked for while looking for information in the media. The other topics included weather reporting, farming, weaving, caring for animals, cleanliness, and health. It was actually very clear that the women had a tremendous appetite for information and a strong desire to receive a formal education. It is necessary to increase global awareness among all people.

The only way to do this is via education, which is also a potent tool for improving an individual or a community. Prosperity can only be attained in this manner. The effectiveness of women's education is well documented in Vedic literature¹⁷; however, as previously stated and evident from the study's findings, very few households could afford to provide more than a rudimentary education to their daughters.

It is not surprising that newspapers and the Internet were the least preferred sources of information when it came to the media because they were used so infrequently. Television and self-help organizations

were used to acquire information about government-sponsored loans. Even having access to knowledge is empowering. Many of the women received a range of information from the neighborhood panchayats (68.3%) and self-help groups (80%).

Finding out how capable or emancipated these rural women were in their daily activities was crucial for the investigation. It was estimated that 60% of them were permitted to make private decisions without seeking the consent of any males and that 55% of them took part in family navigation. Additionally, 48% of them owned resources and property. Until these types of subjective distinctions are retained, it will be impossible to accurately identify the complete quantitative effects of broad overview work. We should concentrate on the complex relationships between viewing TV and a range of common behaviors, as well as what those relationships imply for those behaviors (Postil, John, 2010).

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