

Evaluation of newspapers as information supporting agencies: A study of rural women in Karnataka state

¹Shobha Patil and ²P. G. Tadasad

¹UGC-Post Doctoral Fellow, Department of Library and Information Science,
Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, Karnataka

²Professor and Chairman, Department of Library and Information Science,
Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, Karnataka

Abstract:

The present work is an effort to know the evaluation of newspapers as an information supporting agency among rural women in Karnataka state. Data was collected on newspaper readers and Usefulness of newspaper as information supporting agency. A sample size of 1800 rural women was taken for the study, the research identifies the general characteristics of study population, newspaper reading habits of women, preferred places for reading newspapers, categories of newspapers read by rural women, list of daily newspapers read by women, purpose of reading newspapers, newspapers as an information supporting agency and usefulness of newspapers as information supporting agency. Concludes that the onus is on libraries to prove their significance.

Keywords: Newspaper, Periodical, Rural Women, Karnataka

1. Introduction:

Newspapers, magazines and books are a good means of mass-communication. This is a print medium which travels far and wide. The newspapers have a very wide circulation and every literate person tries to go through them. They bring us the latest news, rates of the commodities, advertisements, employment news, matrimonial and other information [1].

Newspapers tend to reach more educated, elitist audiences in many developing countries. This may not seem the quickest way, compared with radio or TV, to reach a mass audience. But newspapers and magazines do have the advantages of being more permanent, carrying more information and often being more authoritative than other media. Writing and issuing a straightforward press release remains the most effective and economic tool for mass communication. And the other branches of the mass media tend to feed on what they have read in the press [2].

The era of Kannada newspapers in Karnataka started in the year 1843 when Hermann Mögling, a missionary from Basel Mission published the first Kannada newspaper called Mangalooru Samachara from Mangalore. The first Kannada periodical, Mysuru Vrittanta Bodhini was started by Bhashyam Bhashyacharya in Mysore. Shortly after the Indian Independence in 1948, K. N. Guruswamy started the company, The Printers (Mysore Private Limited) and started publishing two newspapers Deccan Herald (in English) and Prajavani (in Kannada). Vijaya Karnataka, owned by the Times of India group is the highest circulating Kannada newspaper in Karnataka. Times of India are the largest selling English newspaper in Karnataka. Tabloids like Lankesh Patrike and Hai Bangalore also find favour because of their publications of controversial topics. Sudharma, the only daily newspaper published in the Sanskrit language in India is printed and distributed from Mysore. Udayavani, Kannada prabha, Samyuktha Karnataka, Vartha Bharathi, Sanjevani, Eesanje, Hosa digantha, Karavali Ale are also some popular dailies published from Karnataka [3].

In this modern age newspapers play a very important role in promoting commerce, trade and business. Big corporate and industrial houses promote their products by giving spacious advertisements in newspapers. Classified advertisements, important public announcements and public notices also constitute the important

content and material of newspapers. Sports, educational and campus news, dance drama, cultural activities and fine arts are some of the necessary features of all leading newspapers [4].

Newspaper have been the most conventional and popular medium of conveying local, regional, national and international news to the readers. Newspaper serves us the latest happenings in different parts of the world through a network of correspondents and news agencies [5]. The national dailies employ their correspondents and reporters in all the major cities of the world. The major newspapers like Kannada Prabha, Prajavani, Samyuktha Karnataka, Vijaya Karnataka, Udayavani, Deccan Herald, The Hindu, Times of India, Indian Express would, shape and influence the views, opinions and attitudes of thousands of readers throughout the state.

2. Review of Literature:

Prathap and Ponnusamy [7] experimentally examined the effectiveness of mass media viz., radio, television, print, and internet in influencing the symbolic adoption behavior of rural women on rabbit farming technologies. The 144 rural women belonging to self-help groups of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, India formed the sample. Results indicated that all the four mass media formats were effective enough in convincing the respondents to mentally adopt the technologies. While identifying radio as the most effective and superior treatment, offers guidelines for extension agents while utilizing this medium.

Ghatak [8] notes that mass media aims to contribute to the lives of the local community by creation of content by the people and for the people of that community. It will focus on issues relating to education, health, environment, agriculture, rural and community development. It is a powerful communication medium, particularly in India where, in the absence of regular and stable electric supply in rural and far flung areas. People have to depend on radio to meet their needs of information, education and entertainment. Community radio serves to bring small communities together, focuses on the common man's day-to-day concerns and helps in realizing local aspirations.

Issa [9-10] describes the information needs of rural dwellers and information provision available to rural dwellers in Kwara state. He also discusses the role of the popular mass-media of information dissemination such as the Radio, Television and Newspaper conclude that it is in the combined efforts on the parts of these information professionals that the challenges of information dissemination to these rural dwellers actually lies.

Waris, Singh and Chauhan [11] analysed the mass media sources utilized by rural Women of Arid Zone. Data was collected from 120 rural women from four randomly selected villages of Jodhpur district. Rural women's utilization of mass media sources such as Radio, Television and newspapers, for obtaining information related to Agricultural and livestock activities was analysed. The probable reasons for low utilization of mass media sources may be low economic status thereby inability to purchase radio and T.V. Low literacy of women was the reason for no utilization of printed material on Agricultural and livestock activities. The traditional folk media of this region could be used for dissemination of technical information to rural women as their participation in Agricultural and livestock activities was found to be 60 and 90 percent respectively. Rural women's access to and understanding of technical information is highly essential for adoption of improved technologies.

3. Scope and methodology:

The scope of the present study is limited to evaluation of newspapers as an information supporting agencies by the rural women in Karnataka state. For the spatial coverage the selection of sample respondents have been made from thirty districts of Karnataka State. From each district one taluka (block), from each taluka (block) two villages have been selected for this study. From each village 30 respondents have been selected. Thus Total 60 villages and 1800 respondents have been chosen for this study. Further it is limited to know whether educational qualification of rural women as any bearing on the usage of newspaper.

4. Data Analysis:

Table 1: Reading of Newspapers: Education of women

Response	Education				
	Illiterate	Primary education	Secondary education	Diploma/ Degree	Total
Yes	0 (0)	63 (12.5)	225 (45.4)	113 (70.6)	401 (22.3)
No	640 (100.0)	441 (87.5)	271 (54.6)	47 (29.4)	1399 (77.7)
Total	640 (35.6)	504 (28.0)	496 (27.6)	160 (8.9)	1800 (100.0)

(Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages)

From table 1, it is found that 45.4% (N=225) of women who have completed their secondary education read newspapers. 70.6% (N=113) of diploma/degree qualified women and 12.5% (N=63) of women who have done their primary education prefer to read the newspapers.

Table 2: Most preferred places for reading newspapers: Education of women

Places	Education									
	Illiterate	Rank	Primary education	Rank	Secondary education	Rank	Diploma / Degree	Rank	Total	Rank
Library	0 (0)	-	2 (0.1)	2	14 (0.8)	2	13 (0.7)	2	29 (1.6)	2
House	0 (0)	-	61 (3.4)	1	208 (11.6)	1	93 (5.2)	1	362 (20.1)	1
School/ college	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	3 (0.2)	3	7 (0.4)	3	10 (0.6)	3

(Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages)

Table 2 reveals that home is the highly preferred place for all educated women who read newspapers. Few women with primary education (0.1%, N=2), secondary education (0.8%, N=14) and diploma/degree (0.7%, N=13) read newspapers at library.

Table 3: Categories of newspapers read by rural women: Education of women

Categories	Education									
	Illiterate	Rank	Primary education	Rank	Secondary education	Rank	Diploma / Degree	Rank	Total	Rank
Daily Newspapers	0 (0)	-	63 (3.5)	1	218 (12.1)	1	111 (6.2)	1	392 (21.8)	1
Newspaper carrying Employment news	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	8 (0.4)	3	15 (0.8)	2	23 (1.3)	3
Weekly Newspapers	0 (0)	-	5 (0.3)	2	21 (1.2)	2	11 (0.6)	3	37 (2.1)	2
Subject Newspapers	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	2 (0.1)	4	1 (0.1)	4	3 (0.2)	4

(Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages)

Table 3 shows that women irrespective of educational level rate daily newspapers as first. Weekly newspapers and newspaper carrying employment news is ranked second and third by women with secondary education. Women possessing diploma/degree rank newspapers carrying employment news and weekly newspapers as second and third respectively.

Table 4: List of daily newspapers read by rural women: Education of women

Daily Newspapers	Education									
	Illiterate	Ra nk	Primary education	Ra nk	Secondary education	Ra nk	Diploma/ Degree	Ra nk	Total	Ra nk
Kannada Prabha	0 (0)	-	11 (0.6)	4	56 (3.1)	3	31 (1.7)	3	98 (5.4)	3
Prajavani	0 (0)	-	20 (1.1)	2	71 (3.9)	2	53 (2.9)	2	144 (8.0)	2
Samyukta Karnataka	0 (0)	-	14 (0.8)	3	33 (1.8)	4	11 (0.6)	4	58 (3.2)	4
Vijaya Karnataka	0 (0)	-	29 (1.6)	1	98 (5.4)	1	57 (3.2)	1	184 (10.2)	1
Udayavani	0 (0)	-	7 (0.4)	5	12 (0.7)	5	5 (0.3)	5	24 (1.3)	5
Deccan Herald	0 (0)	-	1 (0.1)	6	0 (0)	-	5 (0.3)	5	6 (0.3)	6
The Hindu	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-
Times of India	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	2 (0.1)	7	0 (0)	-	2 (0.1)	8
Indian Express	0 (0)	-	1 (0.1)	6	4 (0.2)	6	0 (0)	-	5 (0.3)	7

(Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages)

From table 4, it can be observed that women who have completed secondary education prefer to read 'Vijaya Karnataka' (5.4%, N=98) and assigned it 1st rank, 'Prajavani' is assigned 2nd rank (3.9%, N=71), 'Kannada prabha' 3rd rank (3.1%, N=56), 'Samyukta Karnataka' 4th rank (1.8%, N=33) and 'Udayavani' is assigned 5th rank (0.7%, N=12).

Diploma/degree qualified women 'Vijaya Karnataka' which is the most preferred newspaper read by 3.2% (N=57) of women. 2.9% (N=53) of women read 'Prajavani', 1.7% (N=31) of women read 'Kannada prabha', 0.6% (N=11) of women read 'Samyukta Karnataka' and least preferred newspapers are 'Udayavani' and 'Deccan Herald' (0.3%, N=5). 1.6% (N=29) of women who have obtained primary education read 'Vijaya Karnataka' and gave 1st rank. 2nd rank for 'Prajavani' (1.1%, N=20), 3rd rank for 'Samyukta Karnataka' (0.8%, N=14), 4th rank for 'Kannada prabha' (0.6%, N=11) and 5th rank for 'Udayavani' (0.4%, N=7). English newspapers like 'Deccan Herald' and 'Indian Express' (0.1%, N=1) are read by very few.

Table 5: Purpose of reading newspapers: Education of women (N=1800)

Purpose	Education									
	Illiterate	Ra nk	Primary education	Ra nk	Secondary education	Ra nk	Diploma/ Degree	Ra nk	Total	Ra nk
Political	0 (0)	-	29 (1.6)	4	123 (6.8)	3	69 (3.8)	3	221 (12.3)	3
Social	0 (0)	-	46 (2.5)	2	158 (8.8)	2	89 (4.9)	2	293 (16.3)	2
Entertainment	0 (0)	-	54 (3.0)	1	192 (10.7)	1	100 (5.6)	1	346 (19.2)	1
Regional	0 (0)	-	14 (0.7)	7	39 (2.2)	6	27 (1.5)	6	80 (4.4)	6
Foreign	0 (0)	-	6 (0.3)	10	7 (0.4)	10	12 (0.7)	10	25 (1.4)	10
Economic	0 (0)	-	13 (0.7)	8	26 (1.4)	9	25 (1.4)	8	64 (3.6)	9
Sports	0 (0)	-	9 (0.5)	9	35 (1.9)	7	26 (1.4)	7	70 (3.9)	7
Trade	0 (0)	-	15 (0.8)	6	31 (1.7)	8	23 (1.3)	9	69 (3.8)	8

State	0 (0)	-	16 (0.9)	5	75 (4.2)	5	43 (2.4)	5	134 (7.4)	5
Local news	0 (0)	-	30 (1.7)	3	106 (5.9)	4	65 (3.6)	4	201 (11.2)	4

(Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages)

From table 5, it can be interpreted that women irrespective of educational qualification read newspapers for entertainment and societal needs. However women with primary education also read local news which is ranked as third purpose. Political affairs are given third preference by other category women i.e. those having secondary education and diploma/degree.

Table 6: Newspapers as an information supporting agency: Education of women

Response	Education				Total
	Illiterate	Primary education	Secondary education	Diploma/ Degree	
Yes	0 (0)	61 (12.1)	222 (44.8)	113 (70.6)	396 (22.0)
No	640 (100.0)	443 (87.9)	274 (55.2)	47 (29.4)	1404 (78.0)
Total	640 (35.6)	504 (28.0)	496 (27.6)	160 (8.9)	1800 (100.0)

(Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages)

It is observed from table 6 that 44.8% (N=222) of women who have secondary education, 70.6% diploma/degree qualified women (N=113) and 12.1% (N=61) women with primary education feel that newspapers support their information requirements.

Table 7: Usefulness of newspapers as information supporting agency: Education of women

Usefulness	Education				Total
	Illiterate	Primary education	Secondary education	Diploma/ Degree	
Mediocre	0 (0)	26 (1.4)	78 (4.3)	34 (1.9)	138 (7.7)
Good	0 (0)	35 (1.9)	129 (7.2)	67 (3.7)	231 (12.8)
Excellent	0 (0)	2 (0.1)	18 (1.0)	12 (0.7)	32 (1.8)

(Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages)

A very small percentage (Table 7) i.e. 0.1% (N=2) of women with primary education newspapers are excellent agencies to supports their information requirements. 7.2% (N=129) of women who have completed secondary education feel that newspapers are good in supporting their useful information requirements. Only 1.9% (N=34) of diploma/degree qualified women consider it is a mediocre agency that supports their required information.

5. Conclusion:

In today's world print and electronic media play a vital role in effectively conveying message that needs to be conveyed [6]. No doubt, media highlights the importance of Panchayat Raj, Rural Water Supply, Wasteland development, Employment, Assurance Scheme, Mahila Samridhi Yojana, etc. Mass media covers number of sources of information. Some of the popular one's are Kannada Newspaper. Newspapers are different from rural to urban. It covers the local news in order to satisfy the local people because it is not possible for regional and national newspapers. Newspapers deal with the problems of rural people surrounding in their day to day life. It draws attention to literacy movement and motivates the educated to volunteer to make others literate. It may also provide information on better agricultural practices, health, nutrition and other high priority subjects. But due to illiteracy, this source remains inaccessible. In such a situation, rural library/librarian may help the people providing information services to those who cannot read. All the channels

of communication play a key role in the socio-economic development. We cannot neglect any of the channels in the process. Proper co-ordination and integration of different channels of communication such as newspaper. Newspapers give place to the news related to Crime, Political, Sports, State, International, Regional, Tenders/Notifications, Business, Market, TV and Leisure, Advertisements and Economics and discussions on issues related to women in general are completely missing. Local media like newspaper, radio and doordarshan have to focus on creating awareness among the people about the specific problems and potentialities for augmenting the pace of rural development.

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