

AWARENESS AND USE OF MASS MEDIA BY WOMEN GRAMA PANCHAYAT MEMBERS: A STUDY OF BIJAPUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The present paper explores and examines the information needs and gathering habits of the women grama Panchayat members of Bijapur district. The study identifies the information needs and channels of information and their gathering habits of information. The study reveals that majority of the women Grama Panchayat members belongs to Bijapur district and they belongs to the age group of 31-45years. Further, the majority of women grama Panchayat members hails from OBC category and they are illiterate and a majority of them are married and all of them know the Kannada language. Since, Majority of the women grama Panchayat members are housewives they do not have any income. Women Grama Panchayat members gather information from Local newspaper and regional newspapers. Majority of the women's are the member of Grama Panchayat. Most of them are never used to listen radio. Among the TV channels, majority of them are frequently watching TV9 and Suvarna 24X7 and least preference are given for Aaj tak, Star Plus and DD1 because they don't know Hindi language. Finally, the study reveals that there is a strong association between the status of women grama Panchayat members and frequency of watching TV and reading the news- papers. The study reports that most of the respondents are very least, aware of the ICT and Internet literacy. It can be concluded that women Grama Panchayat members should get educated and they should expose to ICT environment to aware about the various welfare schemes of the government.

KEYWORDS: *Information Needs, Gathering Habits, Searching Habits, GPM*

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is a multidimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own communities and their own society by action on issues that they describe as important. Empowerment is a recent concept of participation in decision making. Women's empowerment refers to the process by which women acquire due recognition on par with men to participate in the development process of the society through the political participation with human dignity. Women's role in the political process has virtually remained unchanged since independence. Broad-based political participation of women has been several limited due to various traditional factors such as caste, religion feudal attitudes and family status. As a result, women have been left on the periphery of political life. Observing this dark picture 73 rd constitutional amendment Act came to provide them an opportunity to ventilate their grievances and take active part in the decision making process in the local level. Political empowerment of women is regarded as a key drive for economic and social empowerment. The recent constitutional amendments (73 rd and 74 th) brought about significant changes in the political scenario of the

country with regard to women's participation in politics. Karnataka is one of the few states in India that has made remarkable efforts to make Panchayats stronger and therefore has made several provisions for revolution of power to Panchayats. In the 2010 Panchayat elections, 39,318 women representatives have been elected to 5,653 Grama Panchayats in Karnataka, Which is being the highest percentage of women grass root leadership in India. Article 243 D of the constitution provides that not less than 1/3 rd of total number of seats in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women including chairperson in every Panchayat and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies/ Panchayats at each level. The 73 rd constitutional amendment provides for the increased participation of women in the political institutions at the village, Taluka and District level. This has enabled several women who had never been in power and even those illiterate ones to enter politics. By participating in political process women have gained a sense of empowerment by asserting control over resources, officials and most of all by challenging men. It also gives many women a greater understanding of the workings of politics. Women are also gaining awareness about social problems like alcohol abuse, education, health and domestic violence, child marriage and child domestic labor, girl child education and also they have been taking steps towardstackling of these problems. The 73 rd constitutional amendment has created a space for women in political participation and decision making at the grass root level by providing that 1/3 rd of the seats have been reserved all over the country. 73 rd constitutional amendments Act 1992 provides reservation for women in PIRs set up in two ways; for the office of the members and for that of the chairpersons as per the clause (2) and (3) of article 243(d) not less than one third of the seats for direct election of members at each tier of the Panchayats are to be reserved for the women. By implementing these clauses now all most all the Grama Panchayats have the women members because of 1/3 rd of reservation policy. But these women members of Grama Panchayats have

- Educational backwardness
- Financial backwardness
- Lack of administration knowledge
- Lack of awareness about social problems
- Lack of political awareness

Therefore, it is necessary to study how these members will use the information for their progress and as well as development and their behavior in information seeking from various sources like libraries and other systems.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the present study is to know the information needs and gathering habits of women grama Panchayat members.

The specific objectives are

- To identify the information needs of women grama Panchayat members.
- To identify the information gathering habits of women grama Panchayat members.
- To examine information needs(nature and type of information required, sources of information used, etc) of

women grama Panchayat members.

- The Extent of the usefulness of sources of information by women grama Panchayat members.
- To examine whether socio-economic, education, gender and region are associated with information needs and gathering habits of women grama Panchayat members.
- To examine information seeking behavior of women grama Panchayat members

Hypotheses

- The socio-economic, educational, cost, income, and occupation are not associated with the information needs and gathering habits of women grama Panchayat members.
- There is a strong association between the status of women grama Panchayat members and frequency of watching TV channels
- There is a strong association between the status of women grama Panchayat members and reading the news papers.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

General characteristics of study population

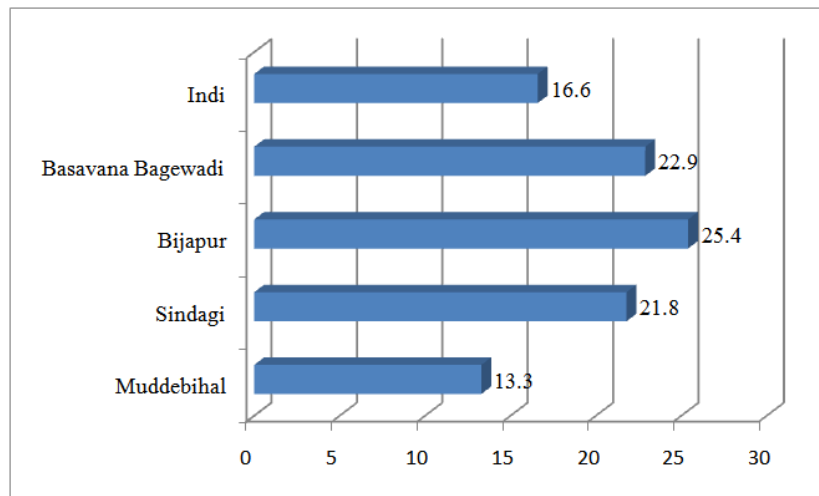


Figure 1: Taluka Wise Distribution of Women Grama Panchayat Members

The respondents of the study population represent women Grama Panchayat members belong to different talukas of Bijapur District. Considerable members of grama panchayat women are from Bijapur. (25.41%,N=101) Taluka, while, 22% (N=91) from Basavana Bagewadi, 21.8% (N=87) from Sindagi and 16.6% (N=66) from Indi taluk respectively. However, representation of Muddebihal taluka is very less I,e 13.3% (N=53) of the total population.

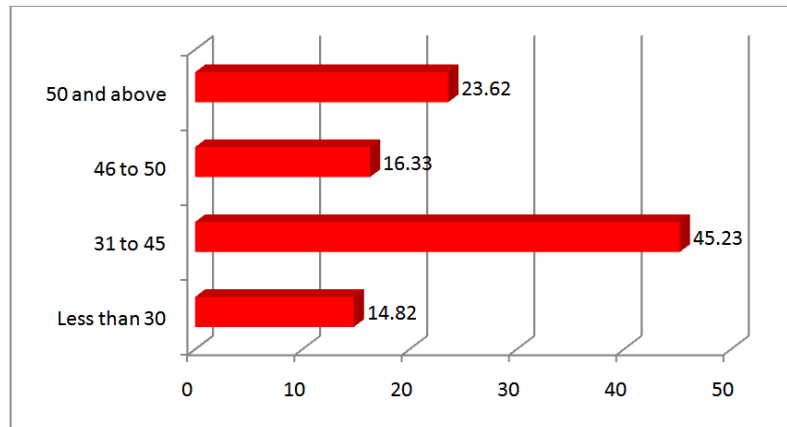


Figure 2: Age Wise Distribution of Women Grama Panchayat Members

The respondents of the study are from different age groups. figure- -2 shows that a maximum number of respondents are from the age group of 31 to 45 years that is 45.23%(N=180). Nearly one-fourth of the respondents are from the age group of 50 and above 23.62%(N=94), More than sixteen percentage of respondents are from the age group of 46 to 50 while 14.82% belongs to less than thirty years.

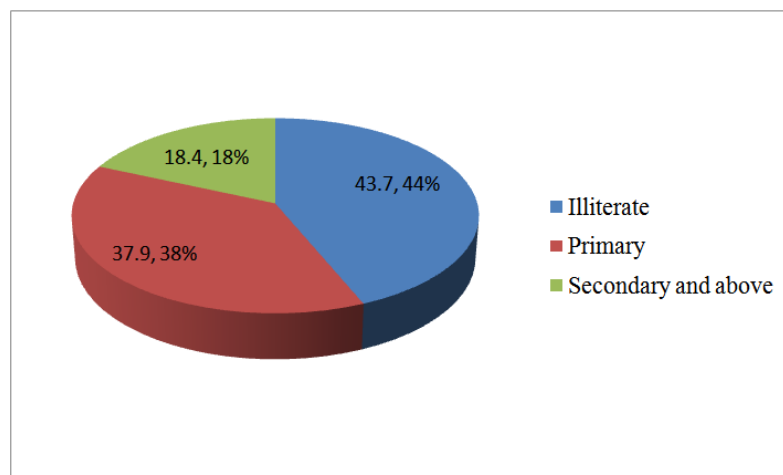


Figure 3: Education Wise Distribution of Women Grama Panchayat Members

Figure-3 describes the education level of respondents. It is found that more than forty-three percent of respondents are illiterate (43.7%,N=174), while more than one-third (37.9%,N=151) had primary education and 18.4%(N=73) had studied secondary and above.

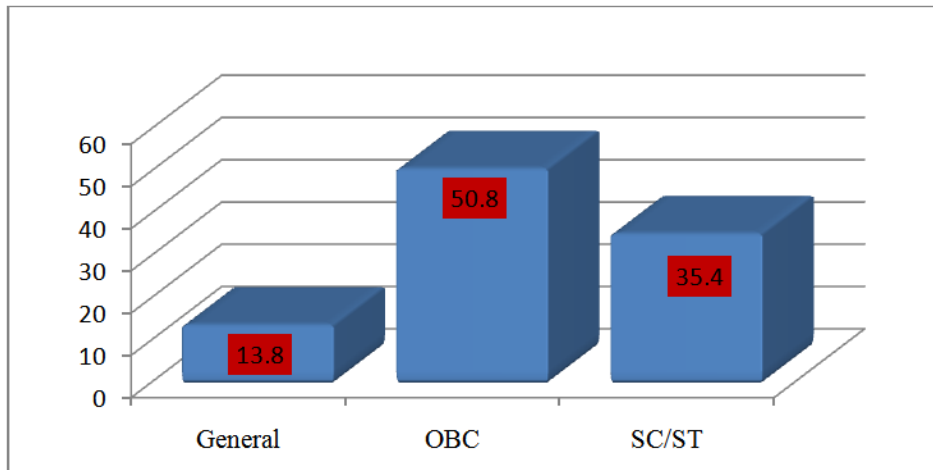


Figure 4: Category Wise Distribution of the Women Grama Panchayat Members

Figure- -4 explains category-wise distribution of respondents. More than half (50.8%, N=202) of the respondents belong to the Other Backward Class, while more than one-third (35.4%,N=141) belongs to SC/ST and more than thirteen percent 13.8(N=55) of the respondents belong to GM category.

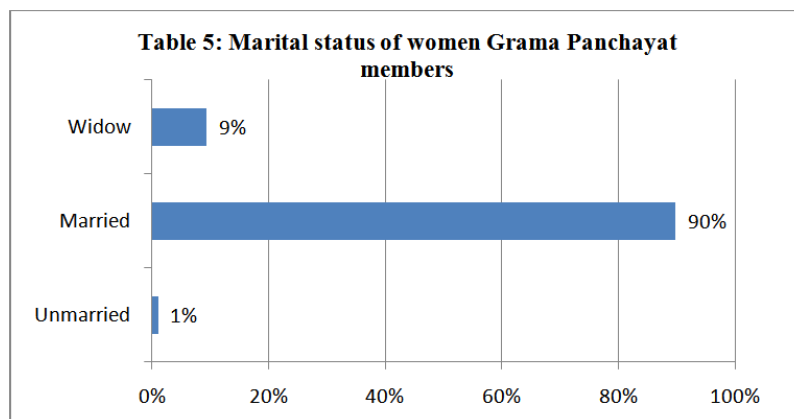


Figure 5: Marital Status of Women Grama Panchayat Members

Figure- -5 describes the marital status of respondents. A greater majority of respondents i.e., 89.7% (N=357) are married. 9.3% (N=37) are Widows and very few 1.0%(N=4) are unmarried.

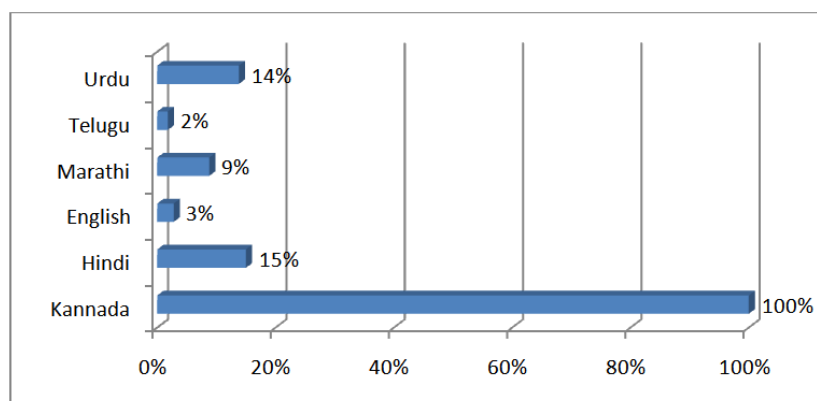


Figure 6: Languages Known to the Women Grama Panchayat Members

Figure- 6 describes the languages known to the respondents. It is found that every single (N=398) respondent knows Kannada while more than 15 percent (N=60) knows Hindi, more than 8 percent (N=35) of respondents know Marathi and more than thirteen percent (N=55) of the respondents know Urdu and English is known to only 2.8% (N=11) of the respondents while still fewer 1.8%(N=7) know Telugu. This clearly indicates that a majority of the respondents know only one language i.e Kannada and more than fifteen percent know more than one language.

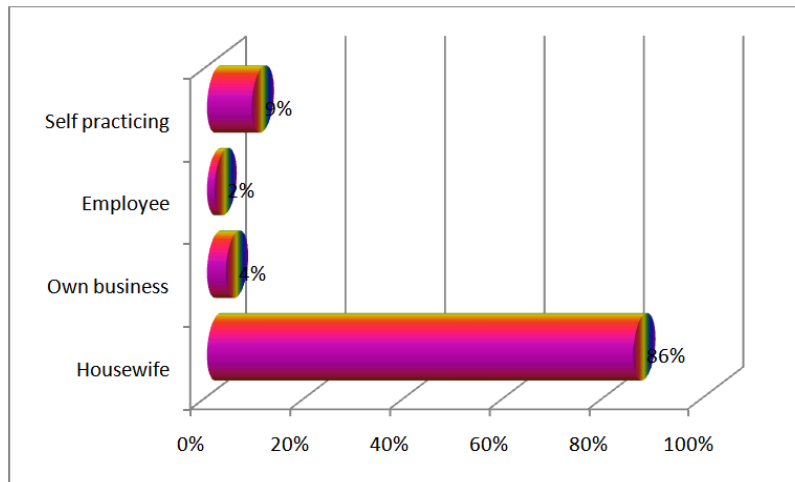


Figure 7: Occupation Wise Distribution of Grama Panchayat Members

Figure- 7 depicts the occupation wise distribution of respondents. It is found that more than eighty-five percent of the respondents are housewives (N=341) while nine percent of respondents are self-practicing professionals (N=36). More than three percent (N=15) have their own business, while few numbers of women were working elsewhere before becoming the Grama Panchayat member.

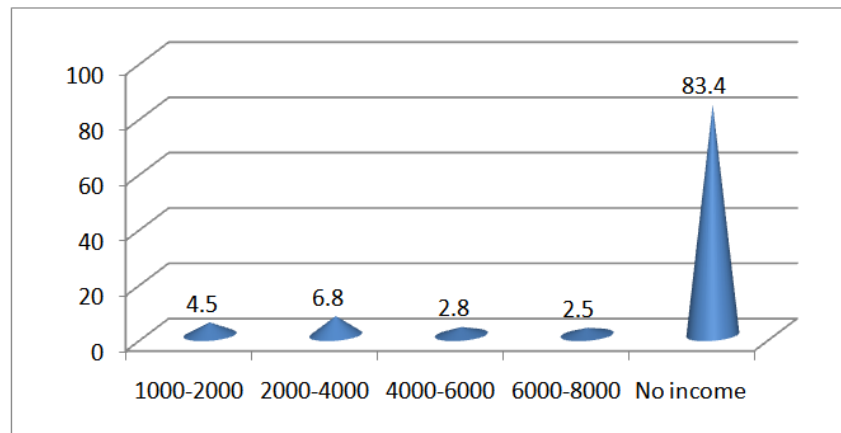


Figure 8: Income level of women Grama Panchayat Members

Figure- 8 provides data on the income level of respondents and it is found that more than eighty-three percent of respondents do not have any income of their own (N=332). More than six percent of respondents have an income of Rs. 2000- Rs.4000 per month (N=27), while the income is less than Rs. 2000 per month for more than four percent of respondents (N=18). For a small percentage of respondents, it is between Rs. 4000-6000 (N=11) while for still fewer it is between Rs. 6000-8000 (N=10).

Table 1: Use of newspapers by women Grama Panchayat Members (N=398)

| Use of News Papers | Every day | Occasionally | As and when Needed | Rarely | Never | Mean | Rank |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|--------|------------|------|------|
| Local | 96 (24.1) | 43 (10.9) | 00 | 00 | 259 | 1.28 | 1 |
| Regional | 107 (26.9) | 26 (6.6) | 1.(0.3) | 00 | 264 | 1.27 | 2 |
| National | 00 | 29 (8.3) | 00 | 00 | 369 (91.7) | 0.22 | 3 |
| International | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 398 (100) | 00 | 4 |

From table-1 it can be found that a very small group of less than ten percent read national newspapers occasionally while no one read international newspapers. Nearly a quarter of women Grama Panchayat members everyday read local newspapers while more than ten percent read local newspapers occasionally. Regional newspapers are read every day by more than one-fourth of the user community. A greater majority of the members never read local or regional newspapers at all.

Table 2: Usefulness of Newspapers

| Usefulness of Newspapers | Excellent | Very good | Good | Fair | Poor | Very poor | Mean |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|------|
| Local (N=139) | 89 (64.03) | 38 (27.34) | 11 (0.72) | 1 (0.3) | 00 | 00 | 4.55 |
| Regional (N=134) | 89 (66.42) | 22 (16.42) | 13 (9.7) | 9 (6.72) | 1 (0.75) | 00 | 4.41 |
| National (N=29) | 00 | 29 (100) | 0 | 0 | 00 | 00 | 4.00 |

The usefulness of newspapers as sources of information among those who use them has been tabulated in table-2. It is found that their usefulness ranges from excellent to very good. Those who use local or regional newspapers rate their usefulness as excellent while they rate the national newspapers as very good. This is due to the fact that local and regional newspapers give much emphasis to local and regional issues and these are published in the state language. Hence, these papers have better rating compared to national newspapers.

Table 3: Status of Grama Panchayat Member's v/s Use of Newspapers

| Sl No | Status in Panchayat | News Papers | | | Total |
|-------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| | | Everyday | Once in a Month | As when Required | |
| 1 | GP Member | 103 72.5% | 1 100.0% | 206 80.8% | 310 77.9% |
| 2 | GP President | 29 20.4% | 0 .0% | 25 9.8% | 54 13.6% |
| 3 | GP Voice President | 10 7.0% | 0 .0% | 24 9.4% | 34 8.5% |
| Total | | 142 35.68% | 1 0.25% | 255 64.07% | 398 100.0% |

$X^2 = 9.261$ Df= 4 $p = .055$ $X^2_t = 9.488$ Remark = Non Significant

Table-3 indicates the relation between the status of grama panchayat members and use of news papers. It observed that a greater majority (77.9%, N=310) of the population under study are GP members followed by GP presidents (13.6%, N=54) and GP vice presidents (8.5%,N=34) respectively. On the other hand most of the respondents under study (64.07% N=255) use the newspapers as when required for their information requirements. However, among the respondents, GP Members use the newspapers more as compared with GP president and GP vice president respectively. To see the association between these two variables, a chi-square test was applied, the calculated chi-square value ($X^2 = 9.261$) is much less than the table value, hence the null hypothesis is accepted and an alternative hypothesis is rejected i.e.

there is no relation between the status of Grama Panchayath members and use of news papers.

Table 4: Use of Radio by Women Grama Panchayat Members

| Use of Radio | Everyday | Occasionally | As and When Required | Rarely | Never | Mean | Rank |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|----------|---------------|------|------|
| Regional centers | 4 (1) | 30 (7.5) | 00 | 8 (2) | 356 (89.4) | 0.15 | 1 |
| National centers | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 398 (100) | 00 | |
| International centers | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 398 (100) | 00 | |

From table-4 it can be interpreted that the usage of the radio is very poor among women Grama Panchayat members. It is found that no one listens to, either national or international centers. A small percentage of women Grama Panchayat members listen to programmes of regional centers. More than 89% never listen to any radio programmes.

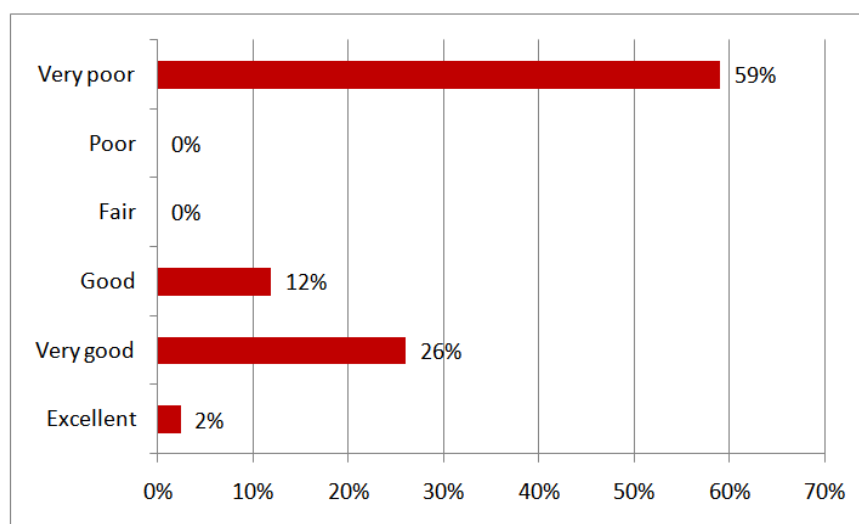


Figure 9: Usefulness of Radio

From figure-9 it is found that more than half of those who have used it rated it as very poor as a source of information. More than one-fourth of them have rated its usefulness as very good while more than ten percent rated the usefulness of radio as good. On the whole, its mean value is 1.52, indicating radio's usefulness as 'poor' among those who are using it.

Table 5: Status of Grama Panchayat Members V/S Use of Radio

| Sl No | Status in Panchayat | Radio | | | | Total |
|-------|---------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | Everyday | Once in a Week | Once in a Month | As When Required | |
| 01 | GP Member | 15 45.5% | 18 90.0% | 1 100.0% | 276 80.2% | 310 77.9% |
| 02 | GP President | 15 45.5% | 2 10.0% | 0 .0% | 37 10.8% | 54 13.6% |
| 03 | GP Voice President | 3 9.1% | 0 .0% | 0 .0% | 31 9.0% | 34 8.5% |
| | Total | 33 8.29% | 20 5.03% | 1 0.25% | 344 86.43% | 398 100.0 |

$X^2 = 34.091$ Df= 6 p=.000 $X^2_t = 12.592$ Remark = Significant

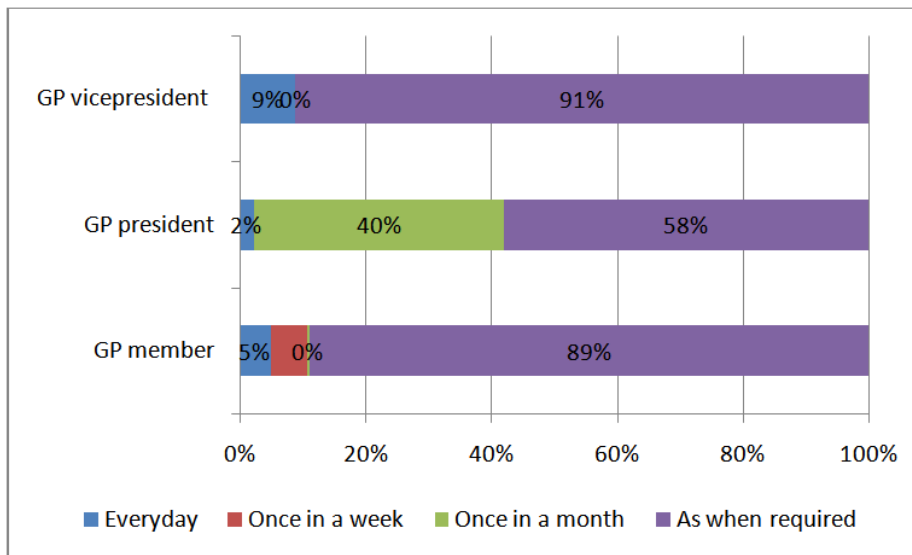


Figure 10

Figure-10 indicates the relation between the status of grama panchayat members and use of Radio. It observed that a greater majority (77.9%, N=310) of the population under study are GP members followed by GP presidents (13.6%, N=54) and GP vice presidents (8.5%,N=34) respectively. On the other hand, most of the respondents under study (86.43% N=344) use the Radio as when required for their information requirements. However, among the respondents, GP Members use the radio more as compared with GP president and GP vice president respectively. To see the association between these two variables, a chi-square test was applied, the calculated chi-square value ($X^2 = 34.091$) is much more than table value, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is a relation between the status of Grama Panchayath members and use of radio.

Table 6: Use of TV by Women Grama Panchayat Members

| Use of TV | Everyday | Occasionally | As and WhenRequired | Rarely | Never | Mean | Rank |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|------|------|
| DD 1 | 51 (12.8) | 9 (2.3) | 00 | 14 (3.5) | 324 (81.4) | 0.62 | 9 |
| ETV Kannada | 48 (12.1) | 14 (3.5) | 4 (1) | 25 (6.3) | 307 (77.1) | 0.67 | 8 |
| Samaya | 56 (14.1) | 33 (8.1) | 22 (5.5) | 19 (4.8) | 269 (67.6) | 0.97 | 7 |
| TV 9 | 113 (28.4) | 65 (16.3) | 16 (4) | 24 (6) | 180 (45.2) | 1.77 | 1 |
| Public TV | 63 (15.8) | 46 (11.6) | 10 (2.5) | 14 (3.6) | 265 (66.6) | 1.07 | 4 |
| Suvarana 24x7 | 84 (21.1) | 55 (13.8) | 20 (5) | 5 (1.3) | 234 (58.8) | 1.37 | 2 |
| Kasturi | 56 (14.1) | 53 (13.3) | 15 (3.8) | 5 (1.3) | 269 (67.6) | 1.05 | 5 |
| Janashree | 52 (13.1) | 27 (6.8) | 12 (3) | 27 (6.8) | 280 (70.4) | 0.85 | 6 |
| Aajtak | 23 (5.8) | 1 (0.3) | 36 (9) | 47 (11.8) | 291 (73.1) | 0.54 | 10 |

Table 6 Contd.,

| Use of TV | Everyday | Occasionally | As and When Required | Rarely | Never | Mean | Rank |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------|------|------|
| Star Plus (ABP) | 19 (4.8) | 9 (2.3) | 15 (3.8) | 45 (11.3) | 310 (77.9) | 0.45 | 11 |
| Udaya News | 70 (17.6) | 69 (17.4) | 12 (3) | 8 (2) | 239 (60.1) | 1.30 | 3 |

Women Grama Panchayat members were asked to indicate how frequently they have used different channels as information sources. Hence, only the news channels were listed which are popular in this part of the state. In all 11 channels were listed and they were asked to indicate the frequency of watching on a 5-point scale (4-Everyday, 3- Occasionally, 2-As and when required, 1- rarely, 0-Never). It can be found from table that women members do watch more than one channel everyday, while a greater majority never watch any of these channels. TV9 is watched every day by more than a quarter of the study population. Among the members it is rated number 1 but with a mean of 1.77. 21.1% of women members did watch Suvarna 24X4 everyday and it was rated second popular channel with a mean of 1.37.

Udaya News rated as the third popular channel was watched by more than seventeen percent of women members. More than fifteen percent did watch Public TV every day which is ranked fourth. The Hindi channels Doordarshan, Star (ABP) and Aajtak were not popular among women members as they had low mean value.

Further, it can be interpreted that, women members prefer to watch Kannada news channels compared to other language channels. The highest mean value, i.e., 1.77 is also not an encouraging aspect. This is an indication that TV news channels are also not a major source of information.

Table 7: Usefulness of TV

| Use Fullness of TV | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor | Mean | Rank |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------|------|
| DD 1 (N=74) | 28 (37.83) | 26 (35.14) | 3 (4.05) | 2 (2.70) | 15 (20.28) | 4.68 | 6 |
| ETV Kannada (N=91) | 60 (65.93) | 22 (24.18) | 1 (1.10) | 6 (6.59) | 2 (2.20) | 5.45 | 2 |
| Samaya (N=130) | 29 (22.30) | 30 (23.07) | 5 (3.84) | 41 (31.53) | 29 (22.30) | 4.04 | 9 |
| TV 9 (N=218) | 192 (88.07) | 10 (4.59) | 9 (4.13) | 4 (1.83) | 3 (1.38) | 5.76 | 1 |
| Public TV (N=133) | 67 (50.37) | 6 (4.51) | 13 (9.78) | 40 (30.08) | 7 (5.26) | 4.65 | 7 |
| Suvarana 24x7 (N=164) | 105 (64.02) | 4 (2.44) | 15 (9.15) | 6 (3.66) | 34 (20.73) | 4.85 | 5 |
| Kasturi (N=129) | 54 (41.86) | 3 (2.33) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 71 (55.04) | 3.73 | 10 |
| Janashree (N=118) | 67 (56.78) | 2 (1.69) | 7 (5.93) | 0 (0) | 42 (35.60) | 4.44 | 8 |
| Aajtak (N=107) | 74 (69.16) | 2 (1.86) | 1 (1.36) | 14 (13.08) | 16 (14.95) | 4.97 | 4 |
| Star Plus (ABD)(N=88) | 31 (35.23) | 6 (6.82) | 2 (2.27) | 0 (0) | 49 (55.68) | 3.65 | 11 |
| Udaya News (N=159) | 95 (59.75) | 16 (10.06) | 42 (26.42) | 4 (2.52) | 2 (1.26) | 5.25 | 3 |

The usefulness of TV is depicted in Table-7 It can be found that mean usefulness ranges between 3.65 and 5.76 i.e from good to excellent. TV9 has been rated as excellent by a majority of women who watch it. It has occupied the first position among women members. ETV Kannada with a mean usefulness of 5.45 and Udaya News with a mean usefulness Of 5.25 are the second and third best channels to women Grama Panchayat members. It clearly shows that women Grama Panchayat members prefer to watch TV channels in Kannada language only. The fourth place goes to Aajtak a Hindi news channel. Star Plus another Hindi news channel occupies the last position among women Grama Panchayat members and DD1 a national channel has been ranked 6th most useful TV channel. Barring these, all other TV channels are in Kannada Language only. These are Suvarna 24X7 (5th), Public TV (7th), Janashree (8th), Samaya (9th) and Kasturi (10th). It also is observed that there is not a single news channel either in English or in other regional languages, being watched by women members.

Table 8: Status of Grama Panchayat Members in Panchayat V/S Frequency of Watching of Television

| SINo | Status in Panchayat | Television | | | | | | Total |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Everyday | Once in a week | Twice in a week | Once in Two Weeks | Once in a Month | As When Required | |
| 01 | GP Member | 161 76.7% | 5 41.7% | 16 94.1% | 13 48.1% | 4 100.0% | 111 86.7% | 310 77.9% |
| 02 | GP President | 29 13.8% | 6 50.0% | 1 5.9% | 10 37.0% | 0 .0% | 8 6.3% | 54 13.6% |
| 03 | GP Voice President | 20 9.5% | 1 8.3% | 0 .0% | 4 14.8% | 0 .0% | 9 7.0% | 34 8.5% |
| Total | | 210 52.76% | 12 3.02% | 17 4.27% | 27 6.78% | 4 1.01% | 128 32.16% | 398 100.0% |

$$X^2 = 39.896 \text{ Df} = 10 \text{ p} = .000 \text{ X}_t^2 = 18.307 \text{ Remark} = \text{Significant}$$

Table-8 indicate the relationship between the status of Grama panchayat members and use of Television. It observed that a greater majority (77.9%, N=310) of the population under study are GP members followed by GP presidents (13.6%, N=54) and GP vice presidents (8.5%, N=34) respectively. On the other hand, most of the respondents under study (52.76% N= 210) use the Television every day for their information requirements. However, among the respondents, GP Members use the radio more as compared with GP president and GP vice president respectively. To see the association between these two variables, a chi-square test was applied, the calculated chi-square value ($X^2 = 39.896$) is much more than the table value, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is a relation between the status of Grama Panchayath members and use of television.

Use of Internet

From table, it can be found that the Internet was never used by more than 94% of women Grama Panchayat members. A very few used it rarely, while still fewer used it as and when required. It clearly shows that the Internet has not made any inroads among women Grama Panchayat members.

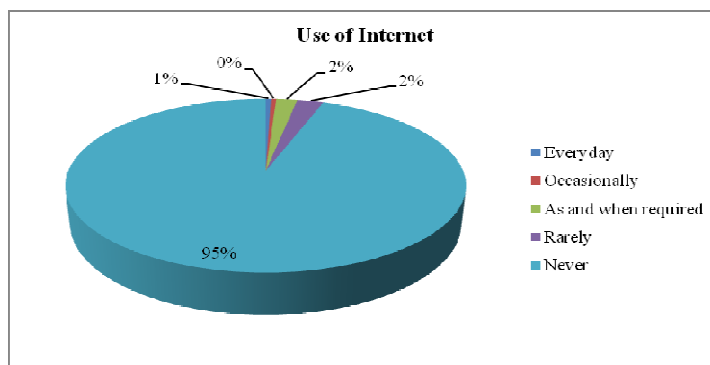


Figure 11

Table 9: Status of Grama Panchayat Members in Panchayat V/S Use of Internet

| SI No | Status in Panchayat | Internet | | | | Total |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Poor | |
| 01 | GP Member | 10 66.7% | 8 80.0% | 0 .0% | 292 78.5% | 310 77.9% |
| 02 | GP President | 5 33.3% | 2 20.0% | 1 100.0% | 46 12.4% | 54 13.6% |
| 03 | GP Voice President | 0 .0% | 0 .0% | 0 .0% | 34 9.1% | 34 8.5% |
| Total | | 15 3.77% | 10 2.51% | 1 0.25% | 372 93.47% | 398 100.0% |

$X^2 = 13.947$ Df = 06 p = .030 $X^2_t = 12.592$ Remark = Significant

Table- 9 reveals the relation between the status of grama panchayat members and use of Radio. It observed that a greater majority (77.9%, N=310) of the population under study are GP members followed by GP presidents (13.6%, N=54) and GP vice presidents (8.5%, N=34) respectively. On the other hand, most of the respondents under study (93.47% N=372) poor in using the Internet for their information requirements. However, among the respondents, GP Members use the radio more as compared with GP president and GP vice president respectively. To see the association between these two variables, a chi-square test was applied, the calculated chi-square value ($X^2 = 13.947$) is much more than the table value, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is a relation between the status of Grama Panchayath members and use of the Internet.

Major Finding of the Study

Following are the important findings of the study.

- Considerable members of grama Panchayat women are from Bijapur. (25.41% ,N=101) Taluka.
- The maximum number of respondents are from the age group of 31 to 45 years.
- More than forty three percent of respondents are illiterate (43.7%, N=174), while more than one-third (37.9%, N=151) had primary education.
- More than half (50.8%, N=202) of the respondents belong to Other Backward Class,
- A greater majority of respondents i.e., 89.7% (N=357) are married. 9.3% (N=37) are Widows and very few 1.0% (N=4) are unmarried.

- Every (N=398) respondent knows the Kannada language.
- More than eighty -five percent of the respondents are housewives under study.
- Eighty -three percent of respondents do not have any income of their own(N=332).
- Very small group of less than ten percent read national newspapers occasionally while no one read international newspapers.
- Use of local or regional newspapers rated as excellent while they rate the national newspapers as very good for their usefulness.
- The greater majority (77.9%, N=310) of a population under study are women GP members followed by GP presidents (13.6%, N=54) and GP vice presidents respectively.
- Most of the respondents under study use the newspapers as when required for their information requirements.
- There is no relation between the status of Grama Panchayat members and use of newspapers.
- Listening to radio is very poor among women Grama Panchayat Members.
- TV9 is watched every day by more than a quarter of study population rated as first position followed Suvarna 24X4 news channel as a second and Udaya News third position.
- TV9 has been rated as excellent in usefulness by a majority of women who watch it.
- There is a relation between the status of Grama Panchayat members and use of television.
- The internet has not made any inroads among women Grama Panchayat members.
- There is a relation between the status of Grama Panchayat members and use of the Internet.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study following suggestions have made

- It is observed from the study that most of the Grama Panchayat Members are illiterate and remaining are less educated. Hence efforts should be made by the concerned authority to educate them properly during their childhood.
- Most of the women GPM are not aware of various welfare schemes launched by the government so effort should be made to expose them by giving proper training by the local body.
- A greater part of the study population does not have any knowledge about computers and internet the government should take lead to educate them in ICT environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The present paper explores the information needs and gathering habits of the women grama Panchayat members of Bijapur district. It is found from the study that the majority of the Women grama Panchayat members used to watch only Kannada TV channels Women grama Panchayat members don't know the Hindi language, even though it is our national

language to it is very much essential to understand the central government schemes. Since the majority of the women are illiterate, so both central and state governments try to work on it regularly for example Night schools (Adult Education) for women grama Panchayat members. As radio is one the most popular mass communication channel, they are broadcasts very useful government schemes through them, so, every women grama Panchayat member should cultivate the habit of listening radio. Now a day's majority of the information is available on the internet through government websites day to day information is updated in their websites if women grama Panchayat members wanted to know about new programmes they must be computer literate then only they can able to update their knowledge and gather information from proper media. The government must try to educate Women grama Panchayat members about internet and Computer literacy.

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