

## **TELEVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN- A STUDY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Television as a mass medium has profound impact on society. The pivotal role of Television as an instrument of development by altering the human perspective and transforming the traditional mindset of society is well recognized. TV has not only occupied the leisure hours of women but the whole family is also found busy viewing television programmes for varying length of hours. This paper basically intends to examine the role of TV in the development of rural women. The term development in its broadest sense in the context of India refers to rural development. Rural development has been viewed as an economic planned change to achieve desirable social goals in India since independence. Eapen (1988: 67), in his diagnosis and analysis opens up the Pandora of problems related to the inherent conflicts and contradiction between the state policy regarding electronic media and actual use for development. This study quantitatively analyses the role of television in igniting development among rural women. Thiruvarur, one of the most back ward district in Tamil Nadu is taken as the locale of the study. Hundred rural women samples are selected for the research. This research paper underscores that TV has profound impact on social, economic, cultural and political life of rural women

**Keywords:** Development, Television, rural development, rural women, social goals, culture.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Television as a mass medium has tremendous impact on today's society. It has become part of life without which life is unimaginable. TV has changed our sense-lives and our mental processes (McLuhan, 1964/2001). TV is basically an extension of the sense of touch, which involves maximum interplay of the all the senses. According to Marshall McLuhan "If the movie was the mechanism of movement and gesture TV was the 'electronification' of the same. "The emergence of satellite and cable television has transformed the world in to a global village" (McLuhan, 1964/2001). To McLuhan all the media were "the extension of man". All the mass media are having some sought of influence on the social life of human beings.

Television has contributed much for the rural development by acting as a catalyst for social change. Thomas (1998:20) refers to exploration in to the Indian television stemming from two historical movements, the period co-terminus with the SITE (1975-77) and second the era of media liberalization which started in mid-eighties and accelerated in the early nineties with the cross border broadcasting. Indian television industry experienced phenomenal changes after globalization. The monopoly of DD ended and umpteen private channels started occupying the airwaves. Since 2009 audiences are be subjected to a cacophony of nearly 450 commercially driven broadcasts, which caters to around 500 million viewers in India (Ranganathan & Rodrigues, 2010). According to PwC report on media and entertainment, television penetration stood at 124 million with in the country

## **TV AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN:**

When Television broadcasting started in India, in 1959, communication scholars, media experts and policy makers were quite sure that television as a mass medium will definitely help national development. Eminent communication scholars such as Daniel Learner, Wilbur Schramm and E.M. Rogers, who based on their theories of development and media efficacy, stressed that the economic development achieved by the western nations were results of increased media use (Vilanilam, 2005).

A book on development communication related to women appeared in 1988 (Agrawal and Rai 1988). The authors observed that "Communication for development in most cases, assumes that the major burden for bringing about desirable changes in rural life remains man's responsibility, though women equally participate in it"(Agrawal and Rai 1988: 91). It was observed 'that the communication boundaries, in most cases, are separate for men and women. (Agrawal and Rai1988: 91). Based on an in depth study the authors concluded that the information needs of rural women were comparatively much more than urban women and men. Hence, development communication for women would be exclusive and separate (Agrawal and Rai 1988: 91).

As far as the Television in India is concerned, there is variety of programmes telecasted by various channels empower rural women in areas of social, cultural, economical, educational, health, technological, equal rights, freedom of expression, gender sensitization etc.

Dhruva (2004) carried out a survey of 100 married women in the age group of 25 to 35 years of age residing in urban slums of Mumbai to examine the influence of television serials in their lives. The findings indicated that television serials influenced daily routines and personal behavior of women whereas they negated any influence on family relationships. The study also states that in spite of the lower economic backgrounds of the respondents they reported a linking for 'rich lifestyles' projected in the television serials. This indicates the powerfulness television in captivating the minds of its viewers. Compared to development communication in agriculture, health and family planning, little is known about women and children. It would be one of the most important areas to be explored for organizing women to empower them for total human development (Ramiraz, 1987). The present study is making an effort to understand the role of TV in development of women.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

The following are the objectives of the study.

- 1.To find out the influence of socio-demographic factors in shaping TV viewing.
- 2.To study the role of TV in development of women.

**METHODOLOGY:**

This study takes an empirical approach to analyse the role of Television in rural development. The term ‘influence’ in this study is used in a broader perspective.

The population of the study consisted of women from Thiruvarur district. Thiruvarur was a part of Thanjavur district till 1991 and Nagapattinam district until 1997; it became the headquarters of Tiruvarur district when it was carved out of Nagapattinam district in 1997. Thiruvarur has a population of 58,301 with a sex-ratio of 1,053 females for every 1,000 males, much above the national average of 929. A total of 5,779 were under the age of six, constituting 2,888 males and 2,891 females. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes accounted for 14.35% and .66% of the population respectively. The average literacy of the town was 82%, compared to the national average of 72.99%,

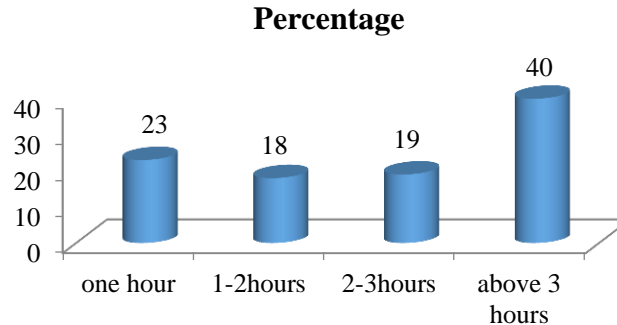
The sample in this research is broadly distributed in four different age groups i.e 15-20, 21-30, 31-40 and above 40. A total of 100 samples were selected for the study by employing simple random sampling method. A close ended questionnaire was developed and used as the tool for data collection.

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:**

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Back ground information and Viewing habits were analysed through frequencies and percentages. Intensity indices were computed to identify the perceptions and reactions women with reference to their exposure to television.

**TV VIEWING HABITS:**

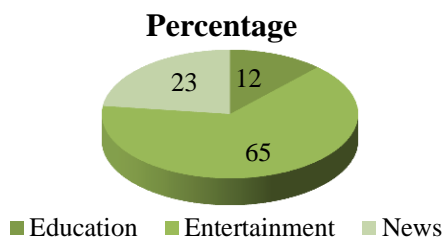
Television viewing habit of the respondents is explained in this part. Among the respondents 85% are having their own TV set. Remaining 15% is watching TV in their friends /neighbors home. Time spend on TV viewing is an important aspect in this study. The Figure-1 below explains how much time rural women dedicates for TV viewing.



**Figure-1: Time spend on TV viewing**

Most of the respondents (40%) watches TV more than 3hours. This is followed by 23% up to 1hour. This is in tune with the PwC (2013), survey result, which indicates the deep penetration of Television in rural India.

When the respondents were asked about their purpose of TV viewing, different responses were emerged. They are explained below in Figure-2.



**Figure-2: Purpose of TV viewing**

65% of the respondents use TV for entertainment. 23% depend on TV news. It is interesting to note that only 12 % uses TV for education.

Rural women were asked about their favorite TV channel. From Figure-3, it is observed that majority are watching Sun TV (61%), followed by Vijay TV.

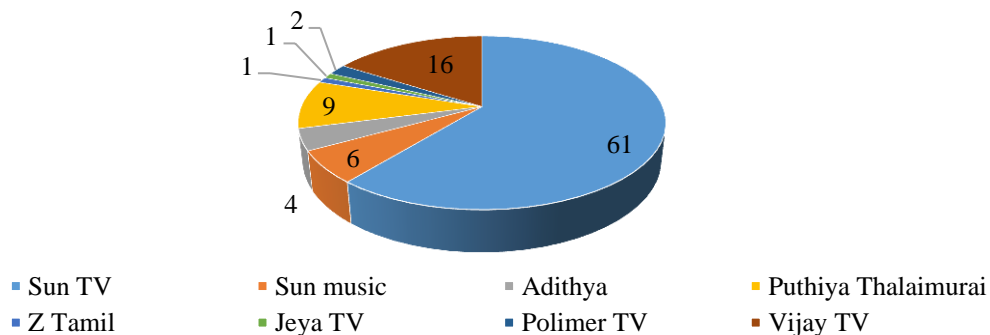


Figure-3: Preference of TV channel

After analyzing the channel preference of the respondents, an effort is made to find out the content which the rural women watch on TV. It is observed that majority of them watches films (44%) followed by comedy (26%). It is interesting to note that only 16% of them interested in watching TV news.

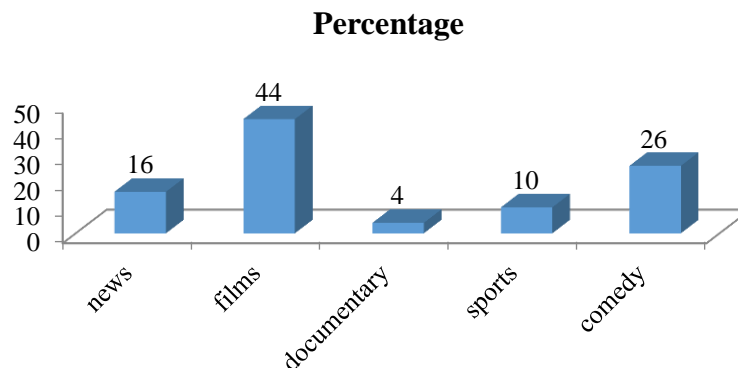


Figure-4: Preference of TV Programmes.

**IMPACT OF SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON TV VIEWING:**

Socio-demographic factors are important determinants that shape ones TV viewing habits. Desai & Agrawal (2009) accentuates that socio-demographic factors have greater influence in TV viewing habit. In present study the impact of socio-demographic factors on time spends on TV viewing is tested using Chi-square test and the results are presented below.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to their Age and time spend on TV viewing

Time Spend on Viewing TV	Age								Total	
	15-20		21-30		31-40		Above 40			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Hour	2	8.7	15	65.2	5	21.7	1	4.3	23	100
1 - 2 Hours	4	22.2	4	22.2	5	27.8	5	27.8	18	100
2 – 3 Hours	3	15.8	10	52.6	3	15.8	3	15.8	19	100
Above 3 Hours	5	12.5	7	17.5	10	25.0	18	45.0	40	100
Chi-Square = 23.858    df=9    p=0.005										

Base: 100    Source: field survey

From the above table it is evident that age of the respondents has an association with their time spend on TV viewing. Women who belong to different age group spend different amount of time before television. Like the age of the respondents, their educational background also has an impact on their time spend on Television. (Chi-Square = 20.124, df=9 , p=0.017 ). That means rural women who have different educational qualification spend different amount of time before TV.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents according to their Income and time spend on TV viewing**

Time Spend on Viewing TV	Income								Total	
	5000-10000		10001-20000		20001-30000		30001-40000			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>1 Hour</b>	14	60.9	5	21.7	3	13.0	1	4.3	23	100
<b>1 - 2 Hours</b>	8	44.4	10	55.6	0	0	0	0	18	100
<b>2 – 3 Hours</b>	13	68.4	6	31.6	0	0	0	0	19	100
<b>Above 3 Hours</b>	19	47.5	17	42.5	4	10.0	0	0	40	100
Chi-Square = 12.682 df=9 p=0.178										

Base: 100 Source: field survey

Unlike age and educational qualification, monthly income of the respondents has no impact on their time spend on TV. It is evident from Table-3 that the time spend on TV viewing by rural women is independent of their family monthly income.

Like educational qualification, marital status (Chi-Square = 14.256, df=9, p=0.114) of the respondents also has no impact on their time spend on TV viewing. That means both married and unmarried rural women spend equal amount of time before television.

An attempt is also made to analyse whether the respondents are discussing about the TV programmes. The study reveals that about 70% percent of the rural women are discussing about the programmes which they have seen on Television. This finding I supported by the views of Yadava & Reddy, (1980). According to then TV viewing in Indian Family is more of a social activity than private one. Chi-square is used to find out whether time spends on TV viewing has any association with discussion. But the result depicted in Table-3 says that Time spend on TV viewing has no impact on discussion.

**Table 3: Discussion about TV programs and time spend in viewing**

Time Spend on Viewing TV	Discussing about TV Programmes								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>1 Hour</b>	4	17.4	15	65.2	1	4.3	3	13.0	23	100
<b>1 - 2 Hours</b>	3	16.7	7	38.9	1	5.6	7	38.9	18	100
<b>2 – 3 Hours</b>	2	10.5	5	26.3	1	5.3	11	57.9	19	100
<b>Above 3 Hours</b>	3	7.5	25	62.5	2	5.0	10	25.0	40	100
Chi-Square = 13.904 df=9 p=0.126										

Base: 100 Source: field survey

After analyzing the demographic factors and Television viewing habit, respondent’s perception and reactions with reference to TV programmes are calculated. Before proceeding for that the reliability of the questionnaire is ensured.

**RELIABILITY:**

The reliability of the questionnaire is calculated by using Cronbach’s alpha. According to Nunnally (1978), an alpha score of 0.70 or more can be accepted as good reliability coefficient.

**Table 6: Reliability Statistic**

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.844	27

The Cronbach’s alpha for each category is provided in Table- 6. We can see that in the above case, Cronbach's alpha score is 0.844, more than the acceptable limit of 0.70. This indicates good internal consistency of the items in the scale.

**SCORING AND CATEGORIZATION:**

This part of the analysis is addressing the defined objectives of the study. In essence, the role of TV [through quantitatively] in development of women is being discussed. Firstly, information was gathered on a Likert scale based rather than usual qualitative based questions. In other words, the set of relevant questions was based on item scoring pattern.

**SCORING:**

This part of the questionnaire consisted of 27 items related to development classified under 3 parameters ie. Social and cultural awareness, Educational awareness, Economic and Political awareness. The Scoring was on a five point Likert ordinal scale from 1 to 5. The first pattern is as follows: Strongly Agree – the score is 5, ‘Agree – the score is 4’, Neutral– 3, Disagree –2 and Strongly Disagree -1.

For each respondent the mean response score as well as standard deviation on each question was calculated with respect to the selected group or category. If the mean score is close to 5, it indicates television is playing a complicit role in the development of women and if it is close to one it indicates TV is not successful in empowering women. In order to have a criterion for classification of respondents according to their opinions, we have used the following cut-off values;

**Table 4 : Cut off Values**

Mean Score	Opinion
1.00 - 2.59	Rejection
2.59 - 3.00	Undecided
3.10 - 5.00	Acceptance

Based on the above cut-off values the Table – 4.16 can be interpreted.

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics of items on development Indicators**

No	Statements	Percentage Respond					Mean	SD
		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
<b>Social &amp; Cultural Awareness</b>								
1	Knowledge about festivals and customs of various religions	2	6	6	59	27	4.03	.87
2	Influence on inter-caste marriage	3	3	2	34	58	4.41	.91
3	Provides knowledge relating to social rights of women	4	19	8	46	23	3.66	1.15
4	Helpful in strengthening family relations	6	25	5	39	25	3.53	1.28
5	Reducing Dowry system	26	11	2	31	30	3.28	1.61
6	Reducing caste/religious discrimination	6	16	6	55	17	3.61	1.12
7	Reducing atrocities against women	15	9	5	33	38	3.71	1.44
8	Combating against Child marriages/ early marriages.	4	6	4	48	38	4.11	1.00
9	Reducing child labour	4	1	2	59	34	4.18	.85
<b>Educational Awareness</b>								
10	Making women literate.	3	3	2	51	41	4.24	.87

No	Statements	Percentage Respond					Mean	SD
11	Helps in children’s education.	6	14	3	46	30	3.81	1.19
12	Aware about family welfare schemes	2	10	4	59	24	3.94	.93
13	Knowledge of balance diet / nutrition during pregnancy period.	0	4	2	36	57	4.47	.73
14	Aware about children’s health and importance of breast feeding.	2	10	6	33	49	4.17	1.05
15	Provides information about family planning (eg: Usage of contraceptive pills, condoms)	3	14	1	52	30	3.92	1.07
16	Provides information about pollution (save trees, water harvesting, etc )	0	2	0	31	67	4.63	.59
17	Aware about organic food	1	8	1	39	51	4.31	.91
18	Providing knowledge about sports	1	0	1	36	62	4.58	.62
	<b>Economic and Political Awareness</b>							
19	Aware of new employment opportunities.	1	6	6	42	46	4.26	.88
20	Increased awareness about new fashion.	4	3	47	45	1	4.75	4.13
21	Making aware of politics.	8	30	2	44	16	3.30	1.27
22	Provides knowledge about women’s political rights.	14	28	6	33	19	3.15	1.38
23	Helps in electing right representative.	14	22	6	40	17	3.24	1.35
24	Helps in developing secular feelings.	2	7	7	58	24	3.97	.89
25	Provides information about MGNREGS and other government schemes.	3	4	3	31	59	4.39	.95
26	Making aware of new agricultural practices, poultry , fertilizers etc.	1	2	2	31	64	4.55	.73
27	Provides knowledge about Self-help groups	8	11	6	50	24	3.72	1.18

**Base:** 100 Source: field survey

It is observed from the table that TV is playing vital role in the development of women. From the table we can see that as far as the social and cultural awareness is concerned TV is playing an important role. It is Helpful in strengthening family relations, Reducing Dowry system, reducing caste/religious discrimination, reducing atrocities against women, combating against child marriages/ early marriages and reducing child labor.

Similarly TV is successful in educating rural women. As a mass medium is successful in making women literate, helps in children’s education, making aware about family welfare schemes, provides Knowledge of balance diet / nutrition during pregnancy period, making about children’s health and importance of breast feeding, provides information about family planning, provides information about pollution, spreading awareness about organic food and providing knowledge about sports.

When we look at the third dimension i.e economic and political awareness, it is evident from the table that TV is making aware of the rural women about new employment opportunities, spreads awareness about new fashion, making aware of politics, provides knowledge about women’s political rights, helps them to elect right representatives and helps in developing secular feelings.



## CONCLUSION:

The study upheld the role of television in women's development. The roles cover the socio-cultural, political, economic, agriculture, health, education and employment spheres. With proper planning and by systematic research approach and meticulous execution television can be trapped as an efficacious medium for development of women. The deep penetration and largest reach of the medium will definitely improve the quality of rural women and bring them to the main stream. All needs to be done are proper and judicious content creation and execution.

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