

Occupational Pattern and Information Needs of Rural Women in Chikkaballapur Taluk: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT-

This exploratory study focuses on the occupational patterns and information needs of rural women in Chikkaballapura district, Karnataka State, India. The sample selected for this study comprises 180 occupational rural women, (90 women chosen randomly from each of the two taluks of Chikkaballapur District namely Gowribidanuru and Chintamani). The study adopted the survey method with a questionnaire to collect the data. The participants were served a structured closed-ended questionnaire and also interviewed for data collection. Out of 180 participants in the sample, only 165 responded. The study revealed that 53.93% of the women are agriculture workers and 21.81% of the respondents were employed in the non-agricultural sector. The majority of the women in the non-agricultural sector did tobacco rolling work in the small industrial sector. 98.2% of rural women opined that they accessed information through Audio and Video mode.

KEYWORDS: *Occupational pattern; Information needs; Information sources; rural women; Chikkaballapur.*

INTRODUCTION

In rural areas women start to work at an early age balancing their education, house chores and farm work. Especially in India majority of the rural women drop out of their education due to a lack of interest and a lack of facilities. Normally they follow their family-oriented jobs such as farming work, animal husbandry, pottery, tailoring, grocery shop, etc. However, due to a lack of literacy rural women are unable to get the information essential for their growth and development, in time. Rural women need information related to agriculture-weather forecasts, fertilizers and pests, equipment, innovations, experiments, animal husbandry, health, law, tax, childcare, employment, education, politics, sports, finance and loan-related information in time or at the right moment which is very essential for their growth and development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

- To study the occupation patterns of rural women in the selected villages of Chikkaballapura taluk.
- To identify the information needs of rural women of Chikkaballapura taluk.
- To identify the types of information sources consulted by the rural women.
- To identify the difficulties faced by rural women in getting the required information to support their work.

METHODOLOGY

The survey method with a questionnaire has been adopted for the study to collect the data. A structured closed-ended questionnaire was prepared specifically and it was given to all 180 participants. The study also used the interview method as a research tool for data collection. The data was collected and tabulated using simple statistical methods and tables, percentages and graphs were generated using MS Excel 2016. The questionnaire was prepared in the Kannada language so that the respondents could easily understand and answer the items mentioned in the questionnaire.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The sample population chosen is 180, who belong to two talukas of the Chikkaballapur district. The scope of the present study is limited to the occupational rural women residing in the selected villages of Chikkaballapur district. In each village 45 occupational rural women were selected randomly. The study intended to cover only occupational rural women; therefore, the results of the study do not apply to the entire population of the region. Furthermore, the

information was collected from a small population of 165 of rural women.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The summary of the work already done in this area is placed in brief:

Mehak Kapoor and Harpreet Singh (2023) conducted a study on “Information Needs and Dissemination among Farmers: A step towards sustainability” and in this study, 607 farmers were participated, majority of the farmer’s information needs were on pesticide applications followed by fertilizer application, market and price information etc., The study shows that the rural farmers use and access information through other farmers followed by input received from dealers, Television, Radio, Newspapers or magazines etc. The study suggested, to develop policies and appropriate information centers for providing information to farmers on time.

Dilini Rathnachandra; Pushpa Malkanthi and Pathmanathan Srivashankar (2022) studied on agricultural information needs and accessibility of women farmers in the Imbulpe DS division in Sri Lanka. In this study most of the 47.9% of women's main information sources were extension agents, followed by fellow farmers and ICT equipment such as phones, internet etc. The study suggested to conduct awareness programs, related to the use of ICT equipment and dissemination of the latest information on agriculture to the women farmers. Boraet et al (2021) conducted study in Assam, Sonitpur district and Nagaon district, in which overall eight villages were chosen, the study reveals that the majority of the 95.83% farmers need information on inspection and certification process on organic vegetable production, followed by information on soil treatment for organic vegetable production, and on the variety/planting material suitable for organic vegetable production.

Harpreet Kaur (2020) shows that a majority of the 94% farmers need to know about weather forecasting, marketing, and various govt. schemes, 92% of them need information on pesticides/fertilizers and 60% of them need information on diseases of crops. 98% farmers are using mass media communication channels such as television, 80% farmers are using mobile phones, 30% use you- tube, newspaper, and neighbors as an information sources.

Ching Seng Yap (2020) in this study used survey and interviews to collect the data through questionnaire method and used the quota sampling technique. In this study 83% of respondents used mobile data as an information channel, followed by 81% who used television as an information source. Here the majority of the ($M=3.75$ $SD=1.23$) respondents needed information about religion, followed by health and medication ($M=3.72$ $SD=1.230$) etc. This study shows that their main information barrier is poor infrastructure ($M=3.46$ $SD=1.26$). Finally, the study suggested many important points to the public policy maker and for practice.

Beatrice Arthur; Kojo Bawa Dukper & Sakibu Bawa (2019) their study aimed to identify information needs and access to information by women farmers. It showed that the 87% of women need information on agriculture, followed by 83% on health, 76 % on family planning and 72% on marketing. 35% of the women opined that they get information through interpersonal communication, followed by 25% who got information from television, 23% from radio, 10% from newspapers and 7% from the internet. This study recommended bridging the information gap through their local radio and television programs.

Tumsifu Elly; Ephraem Epafra Silayo (2018) observes that rural farmers in Tanzania need agricultural information on crop and livestock

husbandry and they prefer to get proper information in the beginning of the season. Their main sources of information were interpersonal communication, social gathering- of farmers followed by groups, village associations, cell phones etc.

Austine Phiri; George T Chipeta; Winner D Chawinga (2018) the study aimed to identify the information needs and barriers of farmers. The study reports that 77.6% of the farmers like to know about crop husbandry and only 8.9% farmers are interested to know Agro technology-related information. The results revealed that 96% of the farmers felt that their main information sources were personal experiences and only 7% of the farmers got information from conferences and workshops. Sangita Yadav (2017) summarizes a study on information needs and seeking behavior of female workers in Lakhipur Tea Garden Assam. It was observed from the findings of the study that 40% women need information on child care and family relationships. Here, 56% women informed that family and friends are their main information sources. This study shows that only 2% women are using library facility for information and 52% of the women would like to get information to improve their occupation.

Rabeesh Kumar Vermal; Shantanu Rakshit (2017) surveyed rural women in Uttar Pradesh state. They adopted a simple random technique among two districts. In each district, two villages were selected for sampling and a structured interview schedule was used to collect the data. The results explained that 80.83% of the respondents felt that they needed information on insect management, 75% on weather advisory, and 73.33% on market advisory. This study also reveals that the family members, fellow farmers and radio are the main sources of information to the rural women in agricultural farmers.

Below are the findings of this exploratory study:

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table-1: General Characteristics

Age (In Years)	Respondents	Percentage
20-30	70	42.42
31-40	38	23.03
41-50	29	17.57
above 51	28	16.98
Total	165	100
Education	Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	71	43.03
Primary School Edu	20	12.12
Middle School	10	6.06
High School	15	9.09
SSLC	26	15.75
Pre University	12	7.25
UG	11	6.7
Total	165	100
Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage
Married	144	87.27
Unmarried	11	6.66
Widow	10	6.07
Total	165	100
Languages	Respondents	Percentage
Kannada	156	94.54
Hindi	2	1.21
English	15	9.09
Telugu	139	84.24
Other	37	22.42

The above table represents the occupational rural women's characteristics such as age, education, marital status, and languages known. The majority 42.42% of the working women are in the age group of 20 to 30, followed by 23.03% of rural women in the age group 31 to 40 years. They work in agriculture farming, animal husbandry, labor work including house chores. The above table shows that 43.03% of women are illiterates and they only use interpersonal communication as their sources of information, whereas the remaining working women have access to information from printed sources and electronic sources. 87.27% out of

165 are married, 6.66% are unmarried and 6.07% are widows in the sample. The above table reveals that 94.54% of women know the local Kannada language. Since Chintamani and Gowribidanuru talukas are attached to the Telangana border, 93% of them also know the Telugu language.

Figure 1 & 2: Occupational patterns (Chikkaballapur Taluk)

The following two graphs show the occupational patterns of rural women. There are two categories - agriculture-related occupations and non-agricultural occupations.

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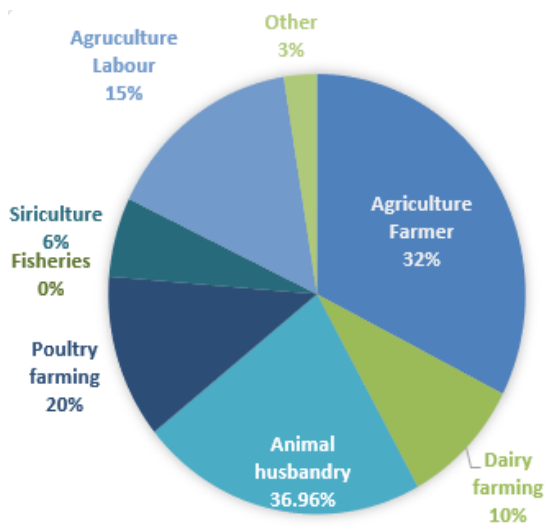


Figure-1: Agriculture related occupations occupations

In Chikkaballapur taluk 53.93% of the rural women depend on agriculture-related work. The rural women work as agriculture workers, followed by 36.96% who do animal husbandry and 20% are engaged in poultry farming. In the non-agricultural sector, 21.81% of the women work in the small-scale industrial sector, especially in the tobacco rolling industries, followed by 8.48% who are engaged in pottery occupation. In rural areas, there are very few opportunities for rural women to earn money; nevertheless, women seek work opportunities based on their education, talent and the facilities available in their area.

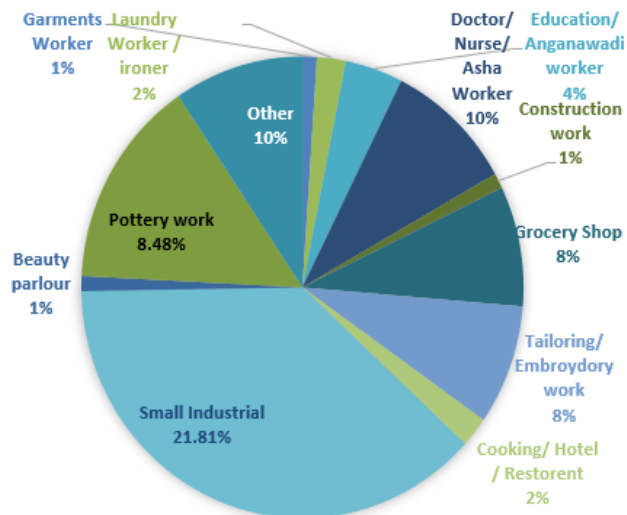


Figure-2: Non-Agriculture related occupations

The above table (No-2) reveals that for 63.03% of the rural women, the main information source is the family, 58.18% of them have friends as the main source of information, and for 22.42% their relatives. The researcher likes to observe, that women confined to their houses and hence they depend on interpersonal or oral communication. Secondly, due to lack of literacy, they are not using other sources. Interviewing non-agricultural workers revealed that most the women engaged in pottery and tobacco rolling occupations, women consult experts in their field to get occupational information.

Table-2: Information Sources used by rural women

SL No	Information Source	Respondents	Percentage
1	Family	104	63.03
2	Friends	96	58.18
3	Relatives	37	22.42
4	Daily Newspapers	21	12.72
5	Beat Drum	13	7.878
6	Internet/social media	17	10.30
7	Magazine	2	1.21
8	NGO	3	1.81
9	TV	30	18.18
10	Radio	7	4.24
11	Panchayath Office	7	4.24
12	Library	2	1.21
13	SHG	19	11.51
14	Bank staff	2	1.21
15	Asha Worker	13	7.87
16	Experts	37	22.42
17	Other Information Sources	2	1.21

Table-3: Preferred Sources of Information of Rural Women

SL No	Source of Information	Respondents	Percentage
1	Audio & Video	162	98.2
2	Print	34	20.6

The above table (No-3) reveals that 98.2% of rural women access information through audio and video mode, followed by 20.6% who access information through print mode. Thus, it is clear that majority of the women use television and radio as their preferred sources of information, probably because it is easy to understand and access. Though there are some educated women among them they are not able to access information through the print form due to unavailability of time and sources.

The above table (No-4) shows that 72.12% of the rural women access information for the purpose of improving their knowledge. Further, 37.57% respondents access the source of information to complete their daily routine

work. 19.39% of the rural women who like to do the work without disturbance; followed by 18.18% of respondents who like to learn new skills and earn more money.

Table-4: Purpose of accessing information Sources

Purpose of accessing information	Respondents	%
a. To get knowledge	119	72.12
b. To do daily routine work neatly	62	37.57
c. To earn more money	30	18.18
d. To do the work without disturbance	32	19.39
e. To learn new skills	30	18.18
f. Other	15	9.09

Table-5: Barriers faced by rural women while searching the information

Barriers faced by rural women while searching the information	Respondents	Percentages
a. Lack of Knowledge	118	71.5
b. Lack of Information Material	51	30.9
c. Lack of awareness to access information	56	33.9
d. The cost of information is high	35	21.2
e. Lack of mass literacy program	32	19.4
f. Lack of people to provide information on time	27	16.4
g. Languages barrier	26	15.8
h. Lack of IT knowledge	33	20

The data presented in the above table (No-5) shows that 71.5% of respondents are lacking in the knowledge of searching information. Furthermore, it is clear from the table that 33.9% of respondents expressed that lack of awareness about accessing information, as a barrier, followed by 30.9% of women who feel that lack of information material is a barrier. 21.2% responded that the cost of information is high and 20% opined that lack of IT knowledge is a barrier. Thus, it is clear that for people in rural areas, the availability of information sources and knowledge of accessing the information are the main barriers. Using information sources required adequate knowledge in searching for the required information from various information sources. An attempt is made to investigate the problems faced by respondents in searching the information.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 53.93% of rural women work as agriculture workers or farmers and 36.96% are employed in animal husbandry.
- 63.03% of the women's main information source is family and 58.18% opined as friends are the main sources of information.

- 98.2% of rural women like to access information through audio and video mode.
- 72.12% of rural women access information sources to get knowledge.
- 71.5% rural women opined that they lack the knowledge of how to access information.

RECOMMENDATION

- The literacy level of rural women must be increased by conducting adult education programs and interest in reading to be improved.
- Information channels such as libraries, milk dairies, and the primary health centre are to be used in a proper way to convey the messages.
- More awareness programs are to be conducted in rural areas by using human resources such as SHG, Asha workers or Anganwadi teachers, school teachers and through Jathas.
- There is a need to conduct meetings at the panchayath level so that panchayath members and officers can give updated information about the new rules, schemes and programs.

- Conducting street plays or dramas, songs, posters, handbills, and advertisements and with the support of student information can easily reach rural women.
- Rural women need to attend more training programs, and workshops and women should show interest in learning new skills on their own.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that most of them share the information through interpersonal communication, which means that they use face-to-face or telephonic information. 20.6% rural women, who are educated, use print forms of information. Family and friends are the main sources of information for rural women. By conducting workshops, training and awareness programs rural women can be made to learn new skills. Reaching the right information at the right time to a person is very important, which in rural area it is very difficult. If the information reaches on time, automatically its effects on overall socio-economic growth will become evident.

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