



Socio-Economic Profile of Rural Women in Nearby Areas of Pantnagar Janvani: A Study in Tarai Region of Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT

The community radio acts as a medium for providing a voice to the voiceless power to the powerless. It caters the needs of rural women by giving the way of bottom up approach. Before designing and developing community radio programmes, study of audience profile is very important. Thus, a study was conducted to assess the socio-economic characteristics of rural women. A sample of 1000 respondents was selected through Census method in Rudrapur Block of Udham Singh Nagar District in Uttarakhand. Data was collected through semi-structured interview schedule, observation and focused group discussion. The collected data was analyzed through Frequency, Mean and Percentage. The results indicated that the rural women belonged to middle age group, could read and write, had joint family, were of middle income group and had no formal social membership. Majority of rural women attended *mela* and went to their neighbors' home at the time of festivals.

Keywords : Community Radio, Socio-Economic Characteristics, Rural women

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INTRODUCTION

A community radio station, by its broad based definition, is one that operated by a community, in the community, for the community and about the community. The community for the purpose of community radio can be territorial or geographical - a township, village, block, tehsil, district or island. It plays a central role in community development (Fraser and Estrada, 2001). To play this role they need to provide quality programs to ensure continued audience and support from the community. Community radio plays a very important role in social, economic and psychological empowerment of rural women. According to Ullah *et al.*, 2011 community radio contributes to social change by initiating or accompanying communication processes and should carry responsibility for being effective in facilitating rural development through women empowerment. Pantnagar Janvani Community Radio Station is licensed to Govind Ballabh Pant

University of Agriculture and Technology (GBPUAT) and based in Pantnagar. Pantnagar Janvani was launched on 8th August 2011 and initiated its service from 15th August, the same year. It is running at 90.8 MHz and programmes are being transmitted thrice a day. Presently it is working on voluntary basis, getting the programmes from the local people of Pantnagar and of nearby area and the students of the University.

Studies aptly showed that audience profile is important in context of development of participatory media. Community radio is an example of participatory communication in which more than fifty per cent is expected to come from the community. Therefore success of a developmental media like community radio depends on proper understanding of community whom the community radio programmes are expected to cater. It caters to different types of information needs such as economic, social and cultural. Future programmes, plans, success stories all these aspects cover community radio showcasing overall society. The judges of socio-

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economic profile become important but it was inadvertent. Thus, for the success of community radio audience profile is important. According to Singh (2011) Community Radio is a Participatory Information Communication Technology. It may prove more effective in an urban as well as rural setting if CR programmes would be based on audience profile.

Past researches showed that audience profile is important before developing community radio programmes. CEMCA (2011) reported that among the *Vasundhara Vahini* CR Station listeners more than 19.2 per cent of the respondents belonged to households with monthly income below Rs. 1,500. Around 30.6 per cent of the respondents felt that women did not have enough employment opportunities. The community is essentially Hindu (90 per cent) with a percentage of 6.2 per cent Muslim families living in the villages. Over 93 per cent of the houses showed presence of male members as the head of the household and presence of the female members as the head of the household was merely at 5.9 per cent. Singh *et al.*, (2010) reported that most of the community radio programmes in the developing countries have started with the support from some outside donor either national or international. Community voices are struggling at the periphery of a contrasting and often iniquitous media landscape.

Community radio can be used as a tool for women empowerment but only broadcasting of various programmes for rural women is not sufficient. Rather there is need to develop programmes based on the audience researches for improving the effectiveness of community radio programmes. In context of programmes on women empowerment, it is necessary to know the socio-economic characteristics of rural women (Suman, 2014). It requires formal research on audience analysis which is lacking in context of most of the community radio stations of the country. According to Sharma and Kumar (2010) for the Women Empowerment, Community Radio Programmes should be designed on the basis of general profile of rural women. Keeping in view, the present study was undertaken with main objective to study socio-economic characteristics of rural women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Rudrapur block of Udham Singh Nagar District was selected purposively because *Pantnagar Janvani* Community Radio Station is situated in the

Rudrapur block. There are 69 villages in Rudrapur block of Udham Singh Nagar district. Out of these sixty nine villages, three villages viz; Jawaharnagar, Shantipuri No.2 and Gokulnagar were selected purposively. The main reason to select these villages was that a Community radio is confined to a small geographical area. It depends on low power transmission covering by and large not more than 20-30 Km. radius. Pantnagar Janvani covers the villages which come under the 20-30 km periphery of Pantnagar. Samples of 1000 respondents were selected through Census method. Data was collected through semi-structured interview schedule, Observation and Focused Group Discussion. Prior interview respondents were taken into confidence by revealing the actual purpose of the study and full care was taken in to consideration and developed good rapport with them. The collected data was analyzed by the help of various statistical tools *i.e.* Frequency, Mean and Percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age, Education, Caste, Family Type, Occupation, Income, Social Participation were considered as socio-economic characteristics of respondents. Foresaid characteristics were processed, analyzed and is presented in table 1.

Age

As revealed in table 1, maximum number of respondents (42.8 per cent) belonged to middle age group (25-35 years) followed by young age group (32.5 per cent) whereas, only 24.7 per cent respondents belonged to old age group (35-45 years). From the overall view, it can be concluded that in the area studied, maximum number of respondents belonged to middle age group category.

Education

Data reveals that maximum number of respondents (48.5 per cent) could read and write, while 21 per cent respondents had education up to intermediate level. 15.1 per cent respondents had education up to high school. A limited number of respondents (2.5 per cent) had studied graduation. Still, only ten respondents were post graduate. It is interpreted that women understand the need of education. It indicates that the content of the community radio programmes should be lucid and must be understood to a layman or a person who can read and write.

Caste

The table 1 reveals that maximum respondents

(40 per cent) belonged to Other Backward Caste followed by Schedule Caste and Schedule tribe (35 per cent). Only 25 per cent respondents were of General Caste.

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents according to socio-economic characteristics (N=1000)

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
Age		
Young (15-25)	325	32.5
Middle (25-35)	428	42.8
Older (35-45)	247	24.7
Education		
Illiterate	119	11.9
Can read and write	485	48.5
High School	151	15.1
Intermediate	210	21.0
Graduate	25	2.5
Post Graduate	10	1.0
Caste		
General	250	25.0
Other Backward Caste	400	40.0
Schedule caste/ Schedule tribe	350	35.0
Family Type		
Nuclear	150	15.0
Joint	850	85.0
Occupation		
Labour	90	9.0
Farming	240	24.0
Business	10	1.0
Service	10	1.0
Animal Husbandry	320	32.0
Income Level		
Low (Less than Rs 3,000/)	249	37.16
Medium (Rs 3,000-Rs 6000/)	321	47.91
High (More than Rs 6000/)	100	14.92
Social Participation		
Informal Social Participation		
No membership	920	92.0
Membership of one organization	50	5.0
Office holder	10	1.0
Formal Social Participation		
<i>Mela</i>	900	90.0
<i>Natak/Katputli Nraty</i>	150	15.0
<i>Mahila Baithak</i>	50	5.0
Festivals	735	73.5
Religious Ceremonies	505	50.5
Folk songs	60	6.0

Family Type

The data enclosed in table 1 depicts that the percentages of respondents in nuclear family (15 per cent) were less as compared to percentage of respondents in joint families (85 per cent). Thus, it can be concluded that in the villages, still joint family system is dominant over nuclear family.

Occupation

33 per cent respondents were engaged in unpaid household work. Maximum numbers of respondents (32 per cent) were engaged in animal husbandry as a main occupation followed by farming (24 per cent) and labour (9 per cent). Equal percentages (1.0 per cent) of respondents were engaged in service and business. The women under study area were working as *anganwadi* workers, *Asha* workers and also as teachers in primary school of the village and there were women labourers engaged in agriculture farms of Pantnagar University. Such community radio programmes should be made which can give information on the various occupations such as: animal husbandry, agriculture etc.

Income

Income level differs according to the occupation of the respondents. Out of One Thousand women, Three Hundred thirty were not gainfully employed. Only Six Hundred Seventy respondents were earning. Perusal of table 1 clearly denotes that among the six hundred seventy women who were gainfully employed, majority (47.91 cent) fell in the category of medium income group followed by low income level (37.16 per cent). Only 14.92 per cent respondents fell in high income group. This is attributed to the fact that those women who were gainfully employed were engaged in low or medium salaried occupations. This indicates that such community radio programmes should be made which provide methods of increasing income level of rural women.

Social Participation

It is defined as the voluntary sharing in person to person and in group to group relationship beyond the immediate household.

Formal Social Participation: Formal social participation refers to membership in any recognized organization like Self Help Group, distinctive feature like *Gram Sevak* of village. Office bearer like *anganwadi* workers and teachers in school. It was found that majority of respondents (92 per cent) had no membership,

while only fifty respondents were found to be having membership of one organization (Self Help Group). Ten respondents were office holders. This signifies that women under study were not much aware of the various social institutions. Thus it can be concluded that selected village did not have social activity hence the social participation of most of the respondents were negligible. The respondents who belonged to formal social participation were the member of Self Help Group, but these women do not know about the other organization. This indicates that community radio programmes should be developed which encourage formal social participation of rural women in the formal organizations.

Informal Social Participation: Informal social participation refers to the participation in festivals, religious Ceremonies, dramas, puppet plays, fairs etcetera. From the perusal of table 1 it was found that large proportion (90 per cent) visited *mela*. *Melas* are a part and parcel of the cultural heritage of India. Traditionally, such *melas* are held at temples and other places of worship. It will indeed be very commendable if these *melas* can be organized at the new temples of scientific learning like agricultural universities and colleges which are the seats of technology and innovations. Women attended *melas* in the temples or farmers' fair organized by Pantnagar University. These *Melas* of the temples did attract a sizable gathering, but the chief point of attraction, in due course of time, turned out to be cultural programmes rather than any educational content. These villages are nearer to GBPUAT. Respondents were visiting farmers' fair in twice a year. The farmers' fair devoted towards a visual portrayal of the salient aspects of scientific and improved methods of agricultural operations for the benefit of the tillers of the soil is, indeed, one of the most welcome steps towards establishing an effective lien between the scientists and the farming community. About 15 per cent attended *Natak/ Katputli Nraty*. *Katputli Nraty* (Puppet play) is one of the features of farmer's fair of Pantnagar University. Women like to see these puppets play. Sometimes dramas were organized by the university students of Home Science College in the study area. Five per cent women attended *Mahila Baithak*. *Mahila Baithak* was organized once a week by *anganwadi* workers. Women were gathering in a common place of village and they discussed their problems. About 73.5 per cent respondents visited their neighbour during festivals followed by religious ceremonies

(50.5 per cent). They were meeting each other in the festivals like *Holi, Diwali, Chut, Makar sankranti, idh*. They attended the religious ceremonies like *Havan, yagh*. Only sixty respondents celebrated festivals with folk songs. Folk songs are an inseparable part of our life. They are main source of entertainment, self expression and inspirations. All social events, marriages and births, religious and seasonal festivals are celebrated with songs and dances. Folk songs and dances are the most potent sources of entertainment and also provide space networking. Women in study area had more informal meetings rather than formal meetings or memberships. From the overall view, it can be concluded that maximum respondents attend informal meetings as *mela*, festivals and religious ceremonies. This indicates that community radio programmes should be developed which encourage informal social participation of rural women in the *mela*, religious ceremonies etc. Maximum women like folk songs and *Katputlai Natray*, so the information through the CR programmes should be given in the formats like drama, folk songs.

CONCLUSION

Socio-economic profiles of audience become important in context of development of community radio programmes for women empowerment. It was concluded that the listeners of *Pantnagar Janvani* were mostly from middle age group and from that segment were simply literate, therefore it was assessed that community Radio profile should specially cater to the needs of middle age group rural women having efficiency of merely read and write. The listeners were mostly from joint family background and were gainfully employed. Majority of them belonged to medium income group. Community Radio Programmes should be formed for this segment is supposed to be listeners to the profile of the audience. The listeners were found to be having less association of formal social organization. It was found that maximum women interested folk songs and *Katputali Natry*. It revealed that format like drama and folk songs are the preferred format for most of the listeners of community radio services *Pantnagar Janvani*.

Therefore it seem apparent and essential that the socio-economic profile of the listeners emerge as a critical component to be analyzed before conceptualizing the community Radio programmes for enhance effectiveness according to the community Radio objectives.

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