

View of women readers on regional newspapers

■PRIYANKA A. KAUSADIKAR AND UMA S. HIREMATH

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted during 2007-08 in urban area of Parbhani district of Maharashtra state to know the non-working and working women readers' view in terms of opinion, preferences and suggestions about home science information published in regional dailies. Majority of the women readers opined that the home science information published was readable, adequate, clear and timely. Diet and nutrition, family resource management and welfare programmes were the most preferred topics. Important suggestions were publication of home science information on special supplement, detailed information on particular topic, use of local and familiar language and more illustrations.

KEY WORDS : Opinion, Readability, Adequacy, Clarity, Practicality, Timeliness, Preferences

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INTRODUCTION

Newspaper is primarily a means of disseminating news and influencing the public on the current events. Nowadays almost all language newspapers are publishing special supplements to cater the varied tastes and interests such as diet and fitness, family relationship, wise parenting, human psychology, ecological concerns, welfare programmes etc. Thus, it plays important role in improvement of family life and human development. Newspaper has also a vital role in informing specially the women readers about new home science technologies. It is also important to note the opinion, preferences and suggestions of women readers about family related home science information, so that if the information were to be presented in accordance with their liking there would be a better utilization of the information to be published.

Hence, with the objective to know the non-working and working women readers' view in terms of opinion, preferences and suggestions about home science information published in regional dailies, the present research study was carried out.

METHODS

The study was conducted in the urban area of

purposely selected Parbhani district of Maharashtra state during 2007-08. One hundred twenty women respondents (sixty non-working and sixty working) were randomly selected who were readers of one or both of the major newspapers in Marathi viz., Sakal and Lokmat. The data were collected with the help of pre-tested structured interview schedule. Collected data were scored, tabulated, analysed and interpreted with the help of suitable statistical tools.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads:

Opinion of the women readers about home science information published in dailies:

A cursory look of Table 1 shows the opinion of the women readers about home science information published in terms of readability, adequacy, clarity, practicality and timeliness.

According to most of the women readers (54.17%), the home science information published in the dailies was readable. The information was easy as opined by 45.00 per cent of them. Very few of them felt that the information

Author for correspondence:

PRIYANKA A. KAUSADIKAR, PRIYANKA A. KAUSADIKAR, Departmentn of Extension Education, Rajiv Gandhi Agricultural College, (Marathwada Agricultural University), PARBHANI (M.S.) INDIA

Address for the coopted Authors:

UMA S. HIREMATH, Department of Extension and Communication Management, College of Rural Home Science, University of Agricultural Sciences, DHARWAD (KARNATAKA) INDIA

was difficult (0.83%). 29.17 per cent of working women expressed that the information was readable amongst the non-working women 25.00% gave the same information. Most of the non-working women opined easy readability (24.17%) compared to working women (20.83%). The plausible reason behind this may be that the home science information published in newspapers was not much difficult to be read and understood by most of the respondents.

More than half of the respondents reported that the home science information was adequate (60.83%), whereas, 23.33 per cent of them reported that it was more adequate and 15.83 per cent of them felt that it was inadequate. Both the categories of women respondents expressing that information published was adequate were equal in number (30.00%). About 15 per cent of the non-working women expressed that the published information was more adequate. This indicated that coverage of home science information in the dailies was sufficient to their needs. The findings are in line with the observation made by Nanjappa *et al.* (1998).

Majority of the respondents (80.00%) were of the opinion that the home science information was clear. Some said that it was not clear (15.83%) and few said that it was confusing (4.17%). Non-working women were more in percentage (41.67%) than working women opining the information was clear (38.34%). This showed that respondents might have understood the information and also getting the information without ambiguity. Hence, they did not find difficulty in understanding the information given in these dailies. Similar results were found by Nanjappa *et al.* (1998) and Amaresh Kumar (2000).

Maximum number of the respondents (77.50%) opined that only some of the home science technologies

were practical. Remaining 22.50 per cent respondents reported that all home science technologies were practical. The possible reason behind this could be that all home science technologies or innovations may not be applicable for women readers of all socio-economic strata with available resources and existing conditions.

The home science information was timely as reported by majority of the women readers (70.83%). Non-working women were more than working women opining the information was timely with percentage of 37.50. More number of non-working women (37.50%) expressed the information was timely when compared to working women (33.33 %). Thus, the home science information published was communicating the message to the women readers almost in time. For example, considering the season and proper care to be taken regarding diet, clothing, and remedies for problems during that particular season. The findings were similar with those of Nanjappa *et al.* (1998) and Amaresh Kumar (2000).

Preferences of home science information in newspaper by the women readers:

Preference of home science topics such as diet and nutrition, child development, family resource management, welfare programmes etc. that the readers wished to be published in newspapers was collected from non-working and working women and presented in Table 2 and discussed accordingly.

Majority of the respondents mentioned their preference as first to diet and nutrition (51.66%), second to family resource management (42.50%), third to welfare programmes (40.00%) and fourth to child development (35.83%).

Table 1: Opinion of the women readers about home science information published in dailies (n=120)

Sr. No.	Dimension	Categories	Distribution of respondents		Total
			Non-working (n=60)	Working (n=60)	
1.	Readability	Easy	29 (24.17)	25 (20.83)	54 (45.00)
		Readable	30 (25.00)	35 (29.17)	65 (54.17)
		Difficult	1 (0.83)	-	1 (0.83)
2.	Adequacy	More adequate	17 (14.17)	11 (9.16)	28 (23.33)
		Adequate	37 (30.83)	36 (30.00)	73 (60.83)
		Inadequate	6 (5.00)	13 (10.83)	19 (15.83)
3.	Clarity	Clear	50 (41.67)	46 (38.34)	96 (80.00)
		Not clear	9 (7.50)	10 (8.33)	19 (15.83)
		Confusing	1 (0.83)	4 (3.33)	5 (4.17)
4.	Practicality	All are practical	14 (11.67)	13 (10.83)	27 (22.50)
		Some are practical	46 (38.34)	47 (39.17)	93 (77.50)
		Not practical	-	-	-
5.	Timeliness	Timely	45 (37.50)	40 (33.33)	85 (70.83)
		Not timely	15 (12.50)	20 (16.67)	35 (29.17)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Sr. No.	Topic of home science information	Distribution of respondents		Total	Rank
		Non-working (n=60)	Working (n=60)		
1.	Diet and nutrition	31 (25.83)	31 (25.83)	62 (51.66)	I
2.	Family resource management	26 (21.67)	25 (20.83)	51 (42.50)	II
3.	Welfare programme	23 (19.17)	25 (20.83)	48 (40.00)	III
4.	Child development	21 (17.50)	22 (18.33)	43 (35.83)	IV
5.	Women empowerment and related success stories	13 (10.83)	11 (9.17)	24 (20.00)	V
6.	Clothing and textile	9 (7.50)	11 (9.17)	20 (16.67)	VI
7.	Any other	4 (3.33)	4 (3.33)	8 (6.66)	VII

Note : Multiple responses are possible
Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

The least preferred category was 'any other' (6.66 %). The any other category included information regarding medicinal plants, water purification, exercise, personality development, women related legal aspects, career opportunities etc.

Nowadays people are very much conscious about their diet and nutrition which ultimately contributes to their health and fitness. This may be the probable reason due to which it diet and nutrition was given first preference.

It is very much essential to use available resources efficiently such as time, energy, electricity and money. People should be made aware to use the resources carefully such as water, electricity, fuels to avoid future scarcity. Hence, family resource management topic was given second preference by respondents.

During these days government is implementing various welfare and developmental programmes to tackle the problems such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment etc. People should be aware of these programmes which are meant for them. Thus, respondents gave third preference to welfare programmes.

Child development is very much important issue for

developing good future citizens. Women readers want proper and supporting knowledge about wise parenting and child upbringing practices. Thus they gave fourth preference to child development.

Suggestions of women readers for improving coverage of home science information:

Table 3 presents the data on suggestions of women readers for improving coverage of home science information. Majority of the women readers (83.33%) suggested that home science information be published on special supplement. Nearly 66 per cent wanted more information on a particular topic. Local and familiar language was suggested by 59.17 per cent and articles with more number of illustrations were requested by 58.33 per cent.

Comparison of the two categories of women readers showed that almost equal number of non-working and working women readers suggested publication of home science information on special supplement and of practical utility (17.50% each). Majority of the non-working women suggested more information on particular topic (40.00%),

Sr. No.	Suggestions of respondents	Distribution of respondents		Total
		Non working (n=60)	Working (n=60)	
1.	Publication of home science information on special supplement	49 (40.83)	51 (42.50)	100 (83.33)
2.	More information on particular topic	48 (40.00)	31 (25.83)	79 (65.83)
3.	Use of more local and familiar language	42 (35.00)	29 (24.17)	71 (59.17)
4.	Articles with more number of illustrations	39 (32.50)	31 (25.83)	70 (58.33)
5.	Publication of more practical utility	21 (17.50)	21 (17.50)	42 (35.00)
6.	Regular publication of home science related articles	16 (13.33)	19 (15.83)	35 (29.17)
7.	Improved quality of home science articles	12 (10.00)	24 (20.00)	36 (30.00)
8.	Articles by subject matter specialists	13 (10.83)	33 (27.50)	46 (38.33)
9.	Publication of information applicable to all socio-economic strata	11 (9.17)	22 (18.33)	33 (27.50)
10.	Any other	8 (6.67)	4 (3.33)	12 (10.00)

Note : 1. Multiple responses are possible
2. Parenthesis indicate percentage

use of more local and familiar language (35.00%) and articles with more number of illustrations (32.50%) than working women (25.83, 24.17 and 25.83 % respectively).

Very less number of respondents suggested publication of foreign home science information, attractive competitions, awards and rewards through newspapers which were included under 'any other' category.

Majority of the women readers suggested to publish home science information on special supplement, because they want to give special importance to the home science subject. Most of the respondents suggested to publish more information on particular topic, since they might have felt that additional information they require on certain topics. More than half of the respondents suggested the use of more local and familiar languages because they may not feel comfortable with technical language published in dailies. The other suggestion 'articles with more number of illustrations' might be because of respondents' eagerness to know the practical use of the information and illustrations which make information more attractive and lively. The findings are in line with the results of Nanjappa *et al.* (1998) and Amaresh Kumar (2000).

Conclusion:

On the whole, it can be inferred that, majority of the women readers opined that the home science information

published was readable, adequate, clear and timely. More than half of the respondents mentioned their preference as first to diet and nutrition (51.66%), second to family resource management (42.50%), third to welfare programmes (40.00%) and fourth to child development (35.83%). Most of the women readers suggested to publish home science information on special supplement (83.33%) followed by more information on particular topic (65.83%), use of more local and familiar language (59.17%) and articles with more number of illustrations (58.33%).

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