

Newspaper reading habit of non-working and working women

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted during 2007-08 in urban area of Parabhani district of Maharashtra state to know the newspaper reading habit of non-working and working women. The findings revealed that almost cent per cent of the women readers were subscribers of newspapers and majority of the women readers were reading one newspaper (71.67%) followed by two newspapers (26.67%). Most of the respondents read the newspaper partially (42.50%) and were spending 20-40 minutes (53.33%). About 55 per cent of the respondents did not preserve the old issues. Almost equal percentage of respondents were having low (35.00 %) and medium (34.17 %) reading habit index followed by high reading habit index (30.83 %). Domestic/beauty tips and recipes were the categories read by almost cent per cent of the women readers followed by news items (95.00%). Equal percentage of respondent read feature articles and success stories (91.67% each).

KEY WORDS : Reading habit, Reading habit index, News items, Feature articles, Editorials

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INTRODUCTION

Self-study in education is of paramount importance. Reading literature is an important part of self-study. Some are good readers and some are poor readers. Print media is one of the captivating media that plays a remarkable role by means of sending an incident or happening from one spot to other spot of the country within a stipulated period. Among mass media, newspaper, magazines, weekly, etc. are commonly media for dissemination of news and current events. Newspaper has the ability to reach a large number of people simultaneously and quickly. It is a powerful medium of public opinion and social change is supposed to reflect the activity of society especially those related to woman. Since women are equal partners in development, the influence of newspapers on them has acquired added interest.

Hence, the present study was carried out with the objective to know the reading habit of both non-working and working women respondents.

METHODS

The study was conducted in the urban area of Parabhani 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. To develop newspaper reading habit index the procedure developed by Amaresh Kumar (2000) was followed, which was slightly modified to suit the present study. 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:

Distribution of respondents according to basic dimensions of newspaper reading habit:

Table 1 presents the data about the reading habit of women readers regarding home science information. Here basic dimension of reading habit viz., subscription, readership, extent of reading and amount of time spent are discussed. The data indicated that almost cent per cent of the women readers were subscribers of

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newspapers (99.17%).

Since most of the respondents were well educated and belonged to middle income category followed by high income category, almost all were able to purchase newspaper. Another reason behind it is as the selected area is urban so, newspaper is easily accessible mass medium for the women readers.

The data about readership of newspapers revealed that majority of the women readers were reading one newspaper (71.67%) followed by two newspapers (26.67%) and three newspapers (1.66%). More number of non-working (38.33%) and working women (33.34%) read only one newspaper. About 12 to 15 per cent of them read two newspapers, whereas, reading three newspapers was found to be almost nil.

The women readers may be reading one newspaper whichever they are subscribing. They might have neither felt essential nor got time to read another newspaper. Those women readers who were reading two newspapers either may be subscribing two newspapers or reading at their work places, offices, neighbour's house or friend's house.

Considering the extent of reading of the newspaper by women readers for home science information, it was observed that 42.50 per cent of the respondents read the newspaper partially, 35.83 per cent of them read specific items and only 21.67 per cent women readers read all the items. More number of women belonging to both the categories of working (21.67%) and non-working (20.83%) read the articles partially.

The women readers may not feel necessary or they may not be interested to read all the newspaper items related to home science. These observation are in line with the observation of Madhu Bala (2005).

In respect of the amount of time spent daily on

reading newspaper for home science information, it was noticed that, more than half of the respondents (53.33%) had spent 20 to 40 minutes, whereas 29.17 per cent respondents spent less than 20 minutes and 17.50 per cent of them spent more than 40 minutes in reading newspaper. More number of women belonging to both the categories non-working (27.50%) and working (25.83%) were spending 20-40 minutes in reading newspapers.

They might have felt that the duration was sufficient to read the limited home science information in the daily/dailies. Similar results were obtained by Kulkarni (1997), Amaresh Kumar (2000) and Madhu Bala (2005).

Preserving and re-reading habit of old issues by the women respondents:

Table 2 shows the preserving and re-reading habit of old newspaper issues related to home science by the working and non-working women respondents.

It was found that 54.17 per cent of the women readers did not preserve the old issues, while 45.83 per cent of them were used to preserve old issues of newspaper. Percentage of non-working women (29.17) was more in preserving old issues when compared to working women readers (16.67).

Out of the total respondents preserving old issues, 50.00 per cent re-read the old issues occasionally followed by regularly (30.91%) and rarely (18.18%). Non-working women readers re-reading preserved old issues were more than working women under all categories *i.e.*, regularly (18.18%), occasionally (32.73%) and rarely (12.73%). When compared between two categories of readers, more number of non-working women (32.73%) were in the habit of re-reading the preserved issues occasionally.

It could be concluded that more number of non-working women readers were preserving and re-reading

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to basic dimensions of newspaper reading habit (n=120)				
Dimensions	Categories	Distribution of respondents		Total
		Non-working (n=60)	Working (n=60)	
Subscription	Yes	60 (50.00)	59 (49.17)	119 (99.17)
	No	-	01 (0.83)	01 (0.83)
Readership of newspapers	Reading one newspaper	46 (38.33)	40 (33.34)	86 (71.67)
	Reading two newspapers	14 (11.67)	18 (15.00)	32 (26.67)
	Reading three newspapers	-	2 (1.66)	2 (1.66)
	Reading four newspapers	-	-	-
Extent of reading	Completely	12 (10.00)	14 (11.67)	26 (21.67)
	Partially	25 (20.83)	26 (21.67)	51 (42.50)
	Specific items	23 (19.17)	20 (16.67)	43 (35.83)
Amount of time spent	> 40 minutes	09 (7.50)	12 (10.00)	21 (17.50)
	20-40 minutes	33 (27.50)	31 (25.83)	64 (53.33)
	< 20 minutes	18 (15.00)	17 (14.17)	35 (29.17)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 2 : Preserving and re-reading habit of old issues by the women respondents

Dimension	Categories	Distribution of respondents		Total
		Non-working (n=60)	Working (n=60)	
Preservation of old issues of newspaper (N=120)	Yes	35 (29.17)	20 (16.67)	55 (45.83)
	No	25 (20.83)	40 (33.33)	65 (54.17)
Frequency of re-reading preserved issues (N'=55)*	Regularly	10 (18.18)	7 (12.73)	17 (30.91)
	Occasionally	18 (32.73)	10 (18.18)	28 (50.91)
	Rarely	7 (12.73)	3 (5.45)	10 (18.18)

* - Only the respondents preserving old issues were considered

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

the old issues. The women readers who were not preserving old newspaper issues, either they may not be interested or it may not be necessary for them to preserve old issues.

Among the women readers who were preserving the old issues, majority of them were re-reading them occasionally. They would have not felt the need of the old issues for referring home science information published in newspaper regularly. The findings are similar to those of Amaresh Kumar (2000).

Reading habit index of non-working and working women:

Reading habit index of non-working and working women is explained in Table 3. It was observed that almost equal percentage of respondents were having low (35.00%) and medium (34.17 %) reading habit index followed by high reading habit index (30.83%).

Approximately equal number of non-working and working women were having medium reading habit index with 17.50 and 16.67 per cent, respectively. Comparison between non-working and working women showed that working women were more in having low reading habit index (19.17 %), whereas, non-working women were more in having high reading habit index (16.67 %).

Possible reason for this trend may be based on the analysis of Table 1 *i.e.* in case of extent of reading majority of the respondents read the newspaper partially (42.50%) followed by specific items (35.83%) and completely (21.67%). With regard to amount of time spent, most of the respondents spent 20 to 40 minutes (53.33%) followed by less than 20 minutes (29.17%) and more than 40 minutes (17.50%) for reading home science information (Table 1). From Table 2 it was observed that more number

of respondents were not preserving old newspaper issues related to home science. Among those who were preserving the old newspaper issues of home science, half of them were re-reading the old issues occasionally (Table 2).

Thus, with respect to the dimensions extent of reading, amount of time spent, preserving and re-reading habit, maximum respondents came under low or medium category. Because of these reasons, majority of the respondents were having low and medium reading habit index followed by high reading habit index.

Reading habit of women respondents according to categories of home science articles read:

Table 4 depicts the reading habit of women respondents according to categories of home science articles read.

Domestic/beauty tips and recipes were the categories read by almost cent per cent of the women followed by news items (95.00%). Equal percentage of respondents read feature articles and success stories (91.67% each). Respondents belonging to both non-working and working categories, in reading domestic/beauty tips, recipes, feature articles and success stories were almost equal in number. Working women reading news items (49.17%) were more than non-working women (45.83%). Editorial category was read by 54.17 per cent of women which was the least read category by both non-working and working respondents.

The immediate practicality of the domestic/beauty tips and recipes might be realized by most of the women readers. Thus, it might be favoured by almost all readers. This also would have given them opportunity to try new things. News items usually give important information about current affairs regarding home science issues. It

Table 3: Reading habit index of non-working and working women (n=120)

Dependent variable	Categories	Distribution of respondents		Total
		Non-working (n=60)	Working (n=60)	
Reading habit index	Low	19 (15.83)	23 (19.17)	42 (35.00)
	Medium	21 (17.50)	20 (16.67)	41 (34.17)
	High	20 (16.67)	17 (14.17)	37 (30.83)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 4 : Reading habit of women respondents according to categories of home science articles read (n=120)

Sr. No.	Categories of home science articles	Items read					
		Yes			No		
		NW (n=60)	W (n=60)	Total	NW (n=60)	W (n=60)	Total
1.	News items	55 (45.83)	59 (49.17)	114 (95.00)	4 (4.17)	1 (0.83)	6 (5.00)
2.	Feature articles	56 (46.67)	54 (45.00)	110 (91.67)	4 (3.33)	6 (5.00)	10 (8.33)
3.	Editorials	29 (24.17)	36 (30.00)	65 (54.17)	31 (25.83)	24 (20.00)	55 (45.83)
4.	Letters to editor and question and answer	32 (26.66)	41 (34.71)	73 (60.83)	28 (23.33)	19 (15.83)	47 (39.17)
5.	Domestic/beauty tips	60 (50.00)	59 (49.17)	119 (99.17)	-	1 (0.83)	1 (0.83)
6.	Recipes	60 (50.00)	58 (48.33)	118 (98.33)	-	2 (1.67)	2 (1.67)
7.	Book reviews	39 (32.50)	45 (37.50)	84 (70.00)	21 (17.50)	15 (12.50)	36 (30.00)
8.	Success stories	56 (46.67)	54 (45.00)	110 (91.67)	4 (3.33)	6 (5.00)	10 (8.33)

Note : 1. Parenthesis indicate percentage 2. NW – Non-working 3.W–Working

could be the reason for many of the respondents to read such type of news items. The editorial category was read by least number of respondents. The probable reason behind it may be that first of all editorials were published with less than five per cent frequency. Some topics of editorials may not be of the interest of the respondents or readers may want refreshment and reaction through reading. Due to these reasons, they may dislike this type of presentation style.

Regularity of reading habit of categories of home science articles by non-working (NW) and working (W) women respondents:

The regularity of reading habit of the different

categories of home science articles by non-working (NW) and working (W) women respondents has been presented in Table 5 and discussed accordingly.

The categories domestic/beauty tips and recipes were regularly read by maximum (about 91%) and almost equal number of women readers followed by news items (78.94%), feature articles (71.81%) and success stories (50.91%). The editorial category was regularly read by least number of respondents (20.00%). The women readers were occasionally reading letters to editor with maximum percentage (49.32). This was followed by book reviews (46.43 %) and editorials (43.07%). Many of the women readers were rarely reading the category editorials (36.92%) followed by book reviews (23.81%).

Table 5: Regularity of reading habit of categories of home science articles by non-working (NW) and working (W) women respondents (n=120)

Sr. No.	Categories of home science articles	Regularity of reading									Total
		Regularly			Occasionally			Rarely			
		NW	W	Total	NW	W	Total	NW	W	Total	
1.	News items	38 (33.33)	52 (45.61)	90 (78.94)	15 (13.15)	7 (6.14)	22 (19.30)	2 (1.75)	-	2 (1.75)	114 (100)
2.	Feature articles	40 (36.36)	39 (35.45)	79 (71.81)	14 (12.73)	14 (12.73)	28 (25.46)	2 (1.82)	1 (0.91)	3 (2.73)	110 (100)
3.	Editorials	4 (6.15)	9 (13.85)	13 (20.00)	12 (18.46)	16 (24.61)	28 (43.07)	13 (20.00)	11 (16.92)	24 (36.92)	65 (100)
4.	Letters to editor and question and answer	14 (19.18)	10 (13.70)	24 (32.88)	14 (19.18)	22 (30.14)	36 (49.32)	4 (5.48)	9 (12.33)	13 (17.81)	73 (100)
5.	Domestic/beauty tips	55 (56.22)	53 (44.54)	108 (90.76)	5 (4.20)	5 (4.20)	10 (8.40)	-	1 (0.84)	1 (0.84)	119 (100)
6.	Recipes	58 (49.15)	49 (41.52)	107 (90.67)	2 (1.70)	8 (6.78)	10 (8.47)	-	1 (0.85)	1 (0.85)	118 (100)
7.	Book reviews	10 (11.90)	15 (17.86)	25 (29.76)	18 (21.43)	21 (25.00)	39 (46.43)	11 (13.09)	9 (10.71)	20 (23.81)	84 (100)
8.	Success stories	29 (26.36)	27 (24.55)	56 (50.91)	18 (16.36)	20 (18.18)	38 (34.55)	9 (8.18)	7 (6.36)	16 (14.54)	110 (100)

1. Respondents reading the specific category home science articles were considered
2. Multiple responses are possible
3. Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Domestic/beauty tips and recipes might have felt immediately practical by majority of the women readers. This may be the possible reason behind reading domestic/beauty tips and recipes regularly by majority of the women. Letters to editor are opinion given by readers about information published in newspapers. Women readers may be interested to know views, opinion and perceptions of other readers, about home science information published in newspapers. This could be the reason for reading letters to editor occasionally by many of the readers. Editorials may be felt difficult to comprehend by majority of the women readers or they may not be interested to read such serious issues. Because of which nearly one third of the respondents might have read it rarely.

Conclusion:

Overall, the findings revealed that almost cent per cent of the women readers were subscribers of newspapers and majority of the women readers were reading one newspaper (71.67%) followed by two newspapers (26.67%). Most of the respondents read the newspaper partially (42.50%) and were spending 20-40 minutes (53.33%). About 55 per cent of the respondents did not preserve the old issues. Almost equal percentage of respondents were having low (35.00 %) and medium (34.17 %) reading habit index followed by high reading habit index (30.83 %). Domestic/beauty tips and recipes

were the categories read by almost cent per cent of the women readers followed by news items (95.00%). Equal percentage of respondent read feature articles and success stories (91.67% each). Out of eight categories, majority of the women readers were regularly reading domestic/beauty tips and recipes, occasionally reading letters to editor and rarely reading editorials.

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