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Media advertisements and rural young girls: an evaluation study in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Rapid socio-economic and technological changes have created new challenges for rural extension systems, particularly in reaching rural youth with relevant and practical information. Given the limited extension personnel–clientele ratio (1:1000; Chandra, 2001), mass media advertisements may serve as an alternative channel for disseminating useful information and creating awareness among rural girls. The present study was conducted in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh to assess rural girls' preferences, satisfaction and willingness to apply the information communicated through media advertisements. Data were collected from 80 rural girls aged 16–24 years through personal interviews and analysed using frequency and percentage. The findings revealed that most respondents showed interest in viewing and listening to media advertisements. A considerable proportion expressed satisfaction with the content and demonstrated a willingness to apply the information gained in their day-to-day lives. The findings indicate the potential of media advertisements as an information and awareness-building tool for rural girls. It is recommended that advertisements should incorporate relevant themes such as agriculture, animal husbandry, health and hygiene, and other issues pertinent to adolescent and young women. Since advertisements generally provide limited information on practical procedures, they should be supplemented with need-based training and follow-up extension support to facilitate the effective application of knowledge. Furthermore, the development of culturally appropriate, folk-based advertisements in local languages may enhance the interest, comprehension and learning of rural girls.

Keywords: Rural girls, Media advertisements, Information dissemination, Satisfaction, Knowledge application, Arunachal Pradesh

Introduction

Communication has been an integral part of human society since its earliest stages of development. From primitive forms such as stone carvings, symbols, gestures and pictorial representations, human communication has evolved into sophisticated systems of language, print, electronic and digital media. With rapid advances in information and communication technologies, the present era is characterised by unprecedented access to information, transforming the world into an increasingly interconnected global community.

Mass media—including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, traditional media and emerging information technologies—play an important role in disseminating information, creating awareness and influencing perceptions and behavioural decisions. Among these, advertising is an important communication mechanism for presenting information about products, services, technologies and innovations to a large audience within a relatively short period. Well-designed advertisements can attract attention, generate awareness and provide basic information that may facilitate the initial stages of the innovation-decision process. Their capacity to reach large audiences at comparatively low cost also makes them potentially useful for extension and development communication.

The role of communication is particularly relevant in rural areas, where conventional extension systems often face limitations in terms of human resources, geographical accessibility and timely dissemination of information. Media-based communication can complement interpersonal extension approaches by providing rural communities with information on agriculture, animal husbandry, health, nutrition, education and other aspects of everyday life.

Rural girls constitute an important segment of the rural population and represent the future generation of women who will contribute substantially to household management, agriculture, livestock care, health and nutrition, and community development. Access to relevant and reliable information at an early stage can therefore contribute to their knowledge development and informed decision-making. Media advertisements, when appropriately designed, can provide exposure to information related to agriculture, animal husbandry, health and hygiene, maternal and child care, nutrition and other areas of practical importance.

However, exposure to an advertisement does not necessarily ensure adequate understanding or application of the information communicated. Therefore, it is important to examine rural girls' exposure to media advertisements, their interest and satisfaction with such advertisements, and their willingness to use the information

gained in their daily lives. Such an assessment can help identify the potential of advertisements as a supplementary communication channel for rural youth.

Against this background, the present study was undertaken in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh to assess the role of media advertisements in information dissemination among rural girls. The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

Specific Objectives

1. To study the advertisement viewing habits of rural girls.
2. To measure the satisfaction level of rural girls about the media advertisements.
3. To determine the extent of knowledge exercise gained through advertisements.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh to assess the exposure, perception and usefulness of media advertisements among rural young girls. The district was selected purposively considering the geographical setting, accessibility and the time and resource constraints of the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the investigation. Four villages, namely Hayuliang, Metengliang, Kabhito and Walong, were selected randomly from the selected district, and 20 rural young girls in the age group of 16–24 years were randomly selected from each village, constituting a total sample of 80 respondents. A structured interview schedule was developed in accordance with the objectives of the study to obtain information regarding respondents' exposure to different forms of media advertisements, frequency of viewing or listening, level of interest, perceived usefulness, satisfaction with advertisement content and willingness to apply the information received through advertisements. The schedule was pre-tested among rural young girls from nearby villages who were regularly exposed to mass-media advertisements, and necessary modifications were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance and sequence of the questions. The finalised interview schedule was administered personally to all 80 respondents during September–October 2016. The level of satisfaction towards media advertisements was assessed using structured statements covering aspects such as attractiveness of presentation, clarity of information, relevance of content, usefulness, ease of understanding and perceived applicability. The collected data were scrutinised, coded and tabulated, and analysed primarily using frequency and percentage to describe the respondents' exposure, interest, satisfaction and willingness to apply the information communicated through media advertisements.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Frequency distribution of young girls viewing advertisements.

S. No	Viewing Habit	F	percent-age
1.	Daily	33	41.25
2.	Occasionally	42	52.50
3.	Rarely	5	6.25
Total		80	100.00

f = frequency

Table 1 presents the distribution of rural young girls according to their frequency of viewing advertisements. The findings indicate that **52.50 per cent** of the respondents viewed advertisements occasionally, followed by **41.25 per cent** who viewed them daily, while only **6.25 per cent** reported viewing advertisements rarely. Thus, **93.75 per cent** of

the respondents were exposed to advertisements either daily or occasionally. The relatively high level of exposure indicates that advertisements constituted a familiar source of information among the sampled rural young girls. Although occasional viewing was more prevalent than daily viewing, the combined exposure suggests considerable reach of mass-media advertisements among rural youth. From an extension perspective, this level of exposure provides an opportunity to use advertisements as a supplementary channel for disseminating concise and relevant information on agriculture, animal husbandry, health, hygiene, nutrition and other issues affecting rural families. However, frequent exposure alone does not necessarily imply adequate comprehension or behavioural change; therefore, the quality, relevance and clarity of the information communicated through advertisements remain important considerations.

Table 2. Need satisfaction in relation to advertisements.

S. No	Need satisfaction	f	percent-age
1.	Disagree	9	11.25
2.	Satisfaction	54	67.50
3.	Highly Satisfaction	17	21.25
Total		80	100.00

f = frequency

Table 2 shows the respondents' perceived satisfaction with the information communicated through advertisements. The majority (67.50%) reported being satisfied with the information, while 21.25 per cent expressed a high level of satisfaction. Only 11.25 per cent of the respondents reported dissatisfaction. Thus, 88.75 per cent of the respondents expressed either satisfaction or high satisfaction with the advertisements. This finding suggests that advertisements were generally able to address at least some of the information needs and expectations of the respondents. The relatively high satisfaction level may be attributed to the attractive presentation, simple communication format and accessibility of advertisements through commonly available mass-media channels. Nevertheless, satisfaction should be interpreted as a perception of the respondents and should not be equated directly with the accuracy, completeness or practical usefulness of the information provided. For extension communication, advertisements may therefore be more effective when they provide clear, credible and locally relevant messages and are supported by appropriate interpersonal extension or training mechanisms.

Table 3. Willingness to exercise the knowledge gained through advertisements.

S. No	Willingness	f	Percentage
1.	Willingness to exercise the knowledge	68	85.00
2.	Unwillingness to exercise the knowledge	12	15.00
Total		80	100.00

f = frequency

Table 3 presents the respondents' willingness to apply the knowledge obtained through advertisements in their day-to-day lives. A substantial majority (85.00%) expressed willingness to apply the knowledge gained, whereas 15.00 per cent were unwilling to do so. The high level of willingness indicates that advertisements had the potential not only to attract the attention of rural young girls but also to stimulate interest in using the information communicated through them. This finding is particularly relevant for extension communication because willingness to apply information represents an important intermediate stage between information exposure and actual behavioural change.

However, willingness does not necessarily translate into actual adoption or sustained practice. Factors such as availability of resources, affordability, social environment, perceived benefits, credibility of the information and access to further guidance may influence subsequent application. Therefore, media advertisements may be considered a useful entry point for creating awareness and generating interest, while detailed training, demonstrations and follow-up extension support may be required to facilitate actual application of the knowledge. Out of total respondent girls, 85 per cent rural young girls were found ready to exercise or utilize the knowledge gained from advertisements in their life, while only 12 girls informants i.e. 15 per cent were found not interested in exercising the knowledge gained from the advertisements. It is clearly evident from the table that majority of sampled respondents were found ready to exercise the knowledge gained from advertisements.

Conclusion

The findings from Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh, particularly the selected villages of Hayuliang and Manchal blocks, indicate that adoption of improved apiary practices was associated with farmers' knowledge, mass-media exposure, extension contact and social participation, while landholding showed no significant association. Accordingly, extension programmes should focus on practical training, field demonstrations and regular advisories, with priority to low-adoption practices such as seasonal hive management and bee-toxicity management. A measurable implementation approach may include at least two hands-on training programmes and two field demonstrations per village annually, regular mobile/ICT-based advisories, and formation or strengthening of beekeeper groups in each selected village. Progress may be assessed through pre- and post-training knowledge scores, adoption scores, number of farmers adopting targeted practices, and frequency of extension contact, with an annual review to identify remaining gaps. This approach would provide a practical

mechanism for strengthening knowledge and extension access and improving adoption of recommended apiary practices in Anjaw district.

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