



MEDIA LITERACY, WOMEN AND HEALTH AWARENESS: A RESEARCH STUDY

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1.1 Abstract

Communicating health related issues has become one of the essential parts of human life. It plays a significant role in our daily life processes. The process of communication is not only important in our daily life matters but it has also become an essential need to survive in the society. Today directly or indirectly, media plays the most important role in communicating information around the world. Media is the reflection of our society and it depicts what and how society works. Media, either it is print, electronic or the web is the only medium that helps in making people informed. Media covers a wide dimension of our society in which health is an important aspect to look upon. The researcher has focussed on the knowledge, behavior, and attitude of the rural women towards several health issues. The main objectives of the research work is to determine the knowledge of health-related issues among the rural women of Lucknow district, to understand the importance of health communication in rural areas and to examine the reach and access of communication in the rural areas.

Media literacy helps to inform, encourage, motivate and promote people about the information related to health issues. And the steps taken to make people aware of the health-related issues is known as health communication. The researcher has focussed on the knowledge, behavior, and attitude of the rural women towards several health issues. The main objectives of the research work is to determine the knowledge of health-related issues among the rural women of Lucknow district, to understand the importance of health communication in rural areas and to examine the reach and access of communication in the rural areas. The researcher prepared interview schedule for the collection of primary data. Focus group interview was also conducted which helped the researcher to collect some important views of the rural women. The interview schedule was prepared to keep the nutritional status of the rural women and communication reach on the subject of health issue in mind like malnutrition. The researcher has included both close ended and open ended questions in the interview schedule. It includes questions related to their knowledge of health-related problems. The researcher collected the secondary data with the help of various sources. The secondary includes the facts and important information from previous research works, books, journals, blogs, websites (sites of Ministry and other sites), article and newspapers. The researcher has analyzed the data and presented it with the help of tables, graphical presentation of data. The researcher has included both close ended and open ended questions in the interview schedule.

Keywords: Health Awareness, Women, Malnutrition, Media Access, Media Literacy.

1.2 Health Communication

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹ In this fast paced world, human race faces physical, social, physiological and mental changes daily. There are lots of health related issues that directly or indirectly, affect our body and mind. Last few decades are the proof of how health issues have taken a strong place in everybody's life both in urban and rural areas.

Worldwide, death and illnesses are highest among poor women, particularly among women in developing countries (Davis, 1962).² The condition of our country in terms of health is still very poor in various parts of our

¹WHO.(n.d.).*World Health Organization*.Retrieved April30,2017, from /www.who.int: <http://www.who.int/about/mission/en/>

² Davis, K. (1962). *urbanization in India-past and future*. India's Urban Future. Berkley: University of California Press.



country. There are many issues related to rural health that is swept under the carpet. Some health problems like extreme weakness, headaches are neglected initially but as time passes it takes a big shape. Hence, as communication regarding current happenings around the world is important in the same way dissemination of health-related issues is a must. In this busy lifestyle, it is essential to communicate information related to good health practices.

Ashley Montagu and Floyd Matson (1979) says that communication is the name we give to the countless ways that humans have of keeping in touch- not just words and music, pictures and print, nods and becks, postures and plumages; to every move that catches someone's eye and every sound that resonates upon another's ear.³

1.2 Meaning and Definition

Today in this fast moving world health problems have become one of the major issues in several parts of our country. Various water and airborne disease are affecting the human race in a wider extent. It is a very crucial time-period to acknowledge people about the basic guidelines associated with the concept of good health and hygiene. Health communication helps in encouraging and promoting people about the information related to health issues. It makes people aware of the facts associated with the health issues. Health communication equips people with the knowledge of good health facilities that makes both body and mind healthy. Health communication not only promotes people about good health but it also encourages the population on how to maintain hygienic health condition in and around our family and environment. It has come up with the concept of practicing communication for encouraging and promoting information related to health issues.

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define Health Communication as the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health (CDC, 2011).⁴

Health Communication is a multifaceted and multidisciplinary field of research, theory, and practice. It is concerned with reaching different populations and groups to exchange health-related information and ideas and methods in order to influence, engage, empower, and support individuals, communities, health care professionals, patients, policy makers, organisers, special groups and the public, so that they will champion, introduce, adopt or sustain a health or social behaviour, practice or policy that will ultimately improve individual, community and public health outcomes (Schivao, 2014).⁵

Richard K. Thomas in his book 'Health Communication' says that Health communication encompasses the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) with regard to health and healthcare. The field represents the interface between communication and health and is increasingly recognized as a necessary element for improving both personal and public health. Health communication can contribute to all aspects of disease prevention and health promotion.⁶

"Healthy People 2010: Objectives for Improving Health" has explained that for health communication to contribute to the improvement of personal and community health during the first decade of the 21st century,

³ Montagu, A., & Matson, F. (1979). *The Human Connection*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill.

⁴ CDC. (2011, May 10). *Centres for Disease Control and Prevention*. Retrieved February 23, 2017, from www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/healthbasics/whatishc.html

⁵ Schivao, R. (2014). *Health Communication: From Theory to Practice*. Jossey Bass.

⁶ Thomas, R. K. (2006). Health Communication. In R. K. Thomas, *Health Communication*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2006.



stakeholders, including health professionals, researchers, public officials, and the lay public, must collaborate on a range of activities. These activities include (1) initiatives to build a robust health information system that provides equitable access, (2) development of high-quality, audience-appropriate information and support services for specific health problems and health-related decisions for all segments of the population, especially underserved persons, (3) training of health professionals in the science of communication and the use of communication technologies, (4) evaluation of interventions, and (5) promotion of a critical understanding and practice of effective health communication (People, 2010).⁷

1.3. Characteristics of Effective Health Communication Program “Healthy People 2010: Objectives for Improving Health” has prescribed health content that includes following attributes of the effective health communication program. (People, 2010)⁸

- **Accuracy:** The content is valid and without errors of fact, interpretation, or judgment.
- **Availability:** The content (whether targeted message or other information) is delivered or placed where the audience can access it. Placement varies according to the audience, message complexity, and purpose, ranging from interpersonal and social networks to billboards and mass transit signs to prime-time TV or radio, to public kiosks (print or electronic), to the Internet.
- **Balance:** Where appropriate, the content presents the benefits and risks of potential actions or recognizes different and valid perspectives on the issue.
- **Consistency:** The content remains internally consistent over time and also is consistent with information from other sources (the latter is a problem when other widely available content is not accurate or reliable).
- **Cultural Competence:** The design, implementation, and evaluation process that accounts for special issues for select population groups (for example, ethnic, racial, and linguistic) and also educational levels and disability.
- **Evidence-based:** Relevant scientific evidence that has undergone comprehensive review and rigorous analysis to formulate practice guidelines, performance measures, review criteria, and technology assessments for tele-health applications.
- **Reach:** The content gets to or is available to the largest possible number of people in the target population.
- **Reliability:** The source of the content is credible, and the content itself is kept up to date.
- **Repetition:** The delivery of/access to the content is continued or repeated over time, both to reinforce the impact with a given audience and to reach new generations.
- **Timeliness:** The content is provided or available when the audience is most receptive to, or in need of, the specific information.
- **Understand ability:** The reading or language level and format (including multimedia) are appropriate for the specific audience.

1.4 Components Required for Effective Public Health Program Implementation

Public health program implementation faces many barriers at the time of implementation process. There are various problems that affect the efficiency of health programs. Lack of funding source, limit workforce, cultural and social norms that affect the health behavior, low health literacy among people leads to the failure of health program implementation.

⁷People, H. (2010). *healthypeople.gov*. Retrieved May 7, 2017, from [www.healthypeople.gov: http://www.healthypeople.gov/2010/Document/pdf/Volume1/11HealthCom.pdf](http://www.healthypeople.gov/2010/Document/pdf/Volume1/11HealthCom.pdf)

⁸People, H. (2010). *healthypeople.gov*. Retrieved May 7, 2017, from [www.healthypeople.gov: http://www.healthypeople.gov/2010/Document/pdf/Volume1/11HealthCom.pdf](http://www.healthypeople.gov/2010/Document/pdf/Volume1/11HealthCom.pdf)



According to Thomas R. Frieden(2014), public health programs succeed and survive if organizations and coalitions address 6 key areas.(1) Innovation to develop the evidence base for action; (2) a technical package of a limited number of high-priority, evidence-based interventions that together will have a major impact; (3) effective performance management, especially through rigorous, real-time monitoring, evaluation, and program improvement; (4) partnerships and coalitions with public- and private-sector organizations; (5) communication of accurate and timely information to the health care community, decision-makers, and the public to effect behavior change and engage civil society; and (6) political commitment to obtain resources and support for effective action.⁹

1.3 Health Communication and Rural Women

Health Communication has come up with the concept of practicing communication for promoting information related to health issues. It helps in making people more aware of the concepts of health issues, its precautions, and cure. Rural women of our country face various health issues that are related to nutritional problems. The problem due to low nutritional eating habits leads to malnutrition and anemia. The problem during menstruation period, pregnancy, and delivery of the child is very prevalent in the rural areas. Women from rural areas are not aware of the role of media related to their health issues. Health related issues among rural women are increasing in a very high rate day by day and this is the best time to look into the problem. The research study has focussed on the nutritional status of the rural women, the daily health issues from which they suffer.

1.3.1 Health Problems of Rural Women

Due to low education, economic problem, family pressure, shyness, and ignorance sometimes a minor health related problem result into a big one. It has also been observed that most of the rural women prefer home remedies and other superstitious beliefs as compared to medical facilities available. Rural women are not much conscious about their physique and other health issues as compared to the urban area which leads to the sign of early old age. They perform a regular plain food eating habit which lacks essential carbohydrates, vitamins, proteins, and minerals. Women face many health-related problems like a problem at the time of menstruation, pregnancy, and delivery. In the rural part of our country, women are not much aware of the schemes and other important health policies by the government due to low media reach and access. If we take a look at the rural India especially the women out there, we find that most of them are still struggling with basic health problems. Following are the common health problems that are faced by the rural women and some schemes that should be known to them for their better care.

1.3.1.1 Malnutrition- As per Census 2011, the total population of India is 1,210.19 million comprising 586.47 million (i.e. about 48%) females.¹⁰ This means nearly half of the population of the country are women. Also, Women and children together constitute 67.7% of the country's population, as per 2011 Census.¹¹ Studies have found that malnutrition is a most common disease among women of both urban and rural areas.

Most of the rural women do heavy field works and thus, their energy requirement is high. But their daily intake of food is not accordingly. As a result, malnutrition is quite common among them. Malnutrition not only deteriorates their apparent health but it also leads to a weak immune system in the long run, and make them more prone to infections. Tuberculosis, which is widely prevalent in our country, is also more common among malnourished

⁹ Frieden, T. R. (2014). Six Components Necessary for Effective Public Health Program Implementation. *American Journal of Public Health* .

¹⁰ Census. (2011). *Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner*. Retrieved April 20, 2016, from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>: <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-Common/Archive.html>

¹¹ Ibid.



individuals. They should be made aware of the importance of good health and a balanced diet. The lack of essential minerals and vitamins further leads to problems like weakness, dizziness, feeling of uneasy and nausea.

1.3.1.2 Anaemia- Anaemia is also widely prevalent among the women in rural areas and sadly, it happens to be one of the most ignored problems too. Women in rural areas do not go for a regular health check-up and hence, anaemia remains underground in them for a long time. Even in general, the iron requirement of an adult female is more than an adult male. The requirement increases further during pregnancy. The government of India has taken many initiatives in this regard. Free Iron and Folic acid supplements are being given through Anganwadi workers to pregnant women. Even the adolescent girls are being supplied iron tablets under Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation Scheme (WIFS). More and more women should be made aware of these programs so that they can avail the benefits.

1.3.1.3 Infections in the perennial region and pelvic inflammatory diseases- The rural women often face the problem of leucorrhoea (white discharge from the vagina). These are due to unhygienic practices like 'not using proper sanitary napkins'. The government of India has started "FREE DAYS" scheme under NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) under which sanitary napkins are sold to adolescent girls by ASHA workers. But, just providing them is not enough; we must also make them understand the importance of personal hygiene.

1.3.1.4 Maternal Mortality Ratio-If we take a look at the pregnant women of rural areas we find that in many villages of India, women still give birth at home instead of hospitals. Due to improper antenatal check-ups and perinatal care, the Maternal Mortality ratio is very high. Under NRHM scheme, "Janani Suraksha Yojna" (JSY) and "Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram"(JSSK) has been started to provide better facilities to pregnant women. Cash incentives are being given and services including transport, diet, drugs, diagnostics and caesarean section are being provided free of cost in order to increase safe hospital deliveries.

1.3.1.5 Septic abortion- Septic abortion is also more common in village women. This can be reduced by educating rural women about proper contraceptive practices and encouraging them to go for "Medical Termination of Pregnancy" (MTP) if there is a need.

1.3.1.6 Filaria-The poor economic condition in rural families makes rural women more helpless. Joint pain, Filaria, swelling in legs, weakness are some of the common health problems among the rural women. Due to the lower economic condition of the family, most of the women pass through this health problem without any proper treatment.

1.3.1.7 Vision and Eye problem-Another problem that is prevalent in rural areas is the problem of vision and another eye problem like redness of eyes, itching in eyes, pain and watery eyes among the women of 40-65 years of age.

1.4 Importance of Health Communication and Rural Women

Women are affected by various health problems in different stages of her complete life cycle. Starting from childhood, teenage, adolescent, pregnancy, and delivery of the child to old age she faces various reproductive problems which lead to weakness and anaemia. The problem of malnutrition is very common in our country, especially among children and women. In the research study also the researcher has focussed on the problem of malnutrition which is the most common problem among the women of rural as well as in urban areas. The problem of weakness, faint, dizziness and mental pressure due to household chores is often experienced by rural women of our country Another health problem that is common among the village women is the problem of back pain, pain in legs and hands. Due to the extensive workload of children and other family member's women often feel pain in body parts. Calcium deficiency in the body is the cause of pain in body parts that leads to the problem of Arthritis. No doubt our country is reaching skies in terms of social, economic and other areas of development but when it comes to the media reach in rural parts of our country the picture is still not the same. Especially the women population of our society is not aware of their health problems, its prevention, and cure. The lifestyle of women in rural areas is very different as compared to urban area. The facilities that have been available to the



urban women are not similar to that of the rural women of our country. Even today a large part of our village do not have good electricity and water facility due to which village women are facing problems related to cooking and other household chores. According to National Commission of women (NCW), there are some important issues that have been taken by the commission. Some important issues include gender and law enforcement, the impact of displacement of women, sexual harassment at workplace, women in detention, anti-attack movement, issues concerning prostitution, political empowerment of women, and technological empowerment of women in agriculture.¹²

Although, many initiatives have been taken by the government even then the rural women of India continue to suffer from many such basic health problems. So, in addition to providing them better health facilities, we must also give importance to health education and create proper awareness among them. K. Parkavi (2011) did a study on 'Media and Women in India', he found that the role of media is not only limited to information providers but by gradually shaping public opinion, personal beliefs and even people's self-perception, media influences the process of socialization and shapes ideology and thinking also.¹³ The health awareness among rural women can prove to be a major help in this regard. As we all know that directly or indirectly, media plays a very important role in the development of society. Media covers the broad aspects of information, entertainment, and education. Along with providing information related to the world, it is also a responsibility of media to disseminate information related to proper health facilities.

1.5 Role of Media in Health Communication

Today in this fast moving world communication has become one of the basic necessities of human life. The importance of communication can be observed from a simple instance from our daily life processes like a single beep on our phone makes us alert. Communication has taken an important place in our life. Even the morning tea is incomplete without a newspaper. The human race cannot live without communicating with their belongings like family and friends. The main functions of media include information, education, and entertainment. The myriad of information provided by media is accessed according to the interests and needs of the audience. Media covers a wide range of categories on which regular flow of information is a must. Communication-related to various health problems, precautions, preventive measures and practices for good health is an important part of the society.

1.5.1 Media: The Informer, Educator, and Entertainer

The importance of communication is not limited to any field or area. It helps in making people aware of various sections of development like health, political, economical, cultural, rural, educational etc. A brief explanation of different sections covered by media has been described below.

1.5.1.1 The role of media in health development-Media plays a very important role in information and education purposes in the field of health. The various mediums of communication include print, electronic and web media which helps in making people aware about different diseases. Media plays a crucial role in the spread of information related to precautions and other preventive measures and practices of diseases. Various communication methods include live coverage of workshops, exhibitions or events by different electronic media. Video and audio shots help in making a better understanding of the present condition related to a specific disease. Information related to different air and water borne diseases like Cholera, Typhoid, Tuberculosis,

¹² NCW. (n.d.). *National Commission for Women*. Retrieved May 2, 2017, from [ncw.nic.in: http://ncw.nic.in/frmRes_Imp_issues.aspx](http://ncw.nic.in/frmRes_Imp_issues.aspx)

¹³ Parkavi, K. (2011). Media and Woman Health in India. *International Journal of Research - GRANTHAALAYAH*, 41-44.



Viral gastroenteritis etc are provided. Outdoor publicity is also done for the communication of various diseases.

1.5.2 Media and Society

Media and society are closely related to each other. The extensive impact of media on society can easily be seen these days. Media reflects our society, how it works and what it constitutes. Media not only focuses on the major problems but it also covers problems related to daily life. With the advancement in technological area, our society has also observed the expansion in the thoughts and ideas of people. The rapid expansion of technologies has made life fast moving and advance both in thinking and acting.

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Media play a very important role in the dissemination of information and making people aware of the current happenings around the world. Today, the reach and access of media have also increased at a very high rate. There are various forms of media that help to inform, educate and entertain our society. Media can be in print form that is through newspapers, books, magazines etc. Media includes an electronic form for spreading information which is one of the most used media of mass communication. With the help of radio and TV, listeners and viewers not only get updated but it also creates an understanding of current happenings. Radio being an audio medium helps in disseminating information to every nook and corner of our country. Radio has also played a vital role in creating a platform for imagination. The reach of this audio medium is not only limited to urban areas but it has covered a wide range even to the remote areas of our country. The people living in rural parts of the country are getting more benefits from the audio medium of mass communication.

The history of Television in India in the field of education speaks about some of the important projects. Some of the Major educational projects in India include SITE, IGNOU- Doordarshan Telecast, Gyan-Darshan Educational Channel, other educational channels by MHRD etc.

Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) (1975)-This project, one of the largest techno-social experiments in human communication, was commissioned for the villagers and their Primary School going children of selected 2330 villages in six states of India. It started on August 1, 1975, for a period of one year in six states Rajasthan, Karnataka, Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. IGNOU- Doordarshan Telecast (1991)-The IGNOU-Doordarshan telecast programs, designed mainly for Distance Learners started in May 1991. Gyan-Darshan Educational Channel (2000)-Ministry of Human Resource Development, Information & Broadcasting, the Prasar Bharti and IGNOU launched Gyan Darshan (GD) jointly on 26th January 2000 as the exclusive Educational TV Channel of India (Vyas, Sharma, & Kumar, 2002).¹⁵

Other avatars of educational television include Open Telecast, Telecast with print support, Telecast with print and feedback, Group Telecasts, Edutainment, and Teletext.¹⁶

Media serve multiple purposes like information, education, and entertainment. But at the same time, it plays a very important role in building an opinion on various issues of the world. Media has a diverse effect on the audience. It helps in influencing ideas and thoughts of the viewers on a myriad of social and political issues. Both print and electronic media have a crucial impact on perception building. Today social media is also playing a vital role in affecting the perception of people on different burning issues. No doubt, posts, comments, photos, videos from different websites have made this medium of communication as one of the fastest and most accessible

¹⁴ Parkavi, K. (2011). Media and Woman Health in India. *International Journal of Research - GRANTHAALAYAH* , 41-44.

¹⁵ Vyas, R. V., Sharma, R. C., & Kumar, A. (2002). Educational Television in India. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* .

¹⁶ Ibid.



sources of information but on the other side many times it has resulted in provoking people. Thus, it is important for the audience to give a serious concern over the information source.

1.5.3 Media and Health

The role of media is not limited to a specific section. It covers the diverse section of our society. Various sections like social, political, economical, sports, health, lifestyle, fashion etc. are covered by different print, electronic and web media. Media provide a window to the current issues. It acts as a powerful tool in making people aware of every important news and thus plays a crucial role in developing perception and opinion on a particular issue or event. Today health has become an important interest area as well as the need for readers and viewers. People want to have updated information related to several health issues, symptoms or signs of disease, its precaution, measures to control, good health practices etc. A brief description of the role of different forms of media on health has been explained below.

1.6 Health Literacy

WHO defines health literacy as the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health. Health literacy means more than being able to read pamphlets and successfully make appointments. By improving people's access to health information and their capacity to use it effectively, health literacy is critical to empowerment.¹⁷

Defined this way, Health Literacy goes beyond a narrow concept of health education and individual behaviour-oriented communication and addresses the environmental, political and social factors that determine health. Health education, in this more comprehensive understanding, aims to influence not only individual lifestyle decisions but also raises awareness of the determinants of health and encourages individual and collective actions which may lead to a modification of these determinants. Health education is achieved, therefore, through methods that go beyond information diffusion and entail interaction, participation and critical analysis. Such health education leads to health literacy, leading to personal and social benefit, such as by enabling effective community action, and by contributing to the development of social capital.¹⁸

Health literacy is clearly dependent upon levels of fundamental literacy and associated cognitive development. Individuals with undeveloped skills in reading and writing will not only have less exposure to traditional health education, but also less developed skills to act upon the information received. For these reasons, strategies to promote health literacy will remain inextricably tied to more general strategies to promote literacy (Nutbeam, 2000).¹⁹

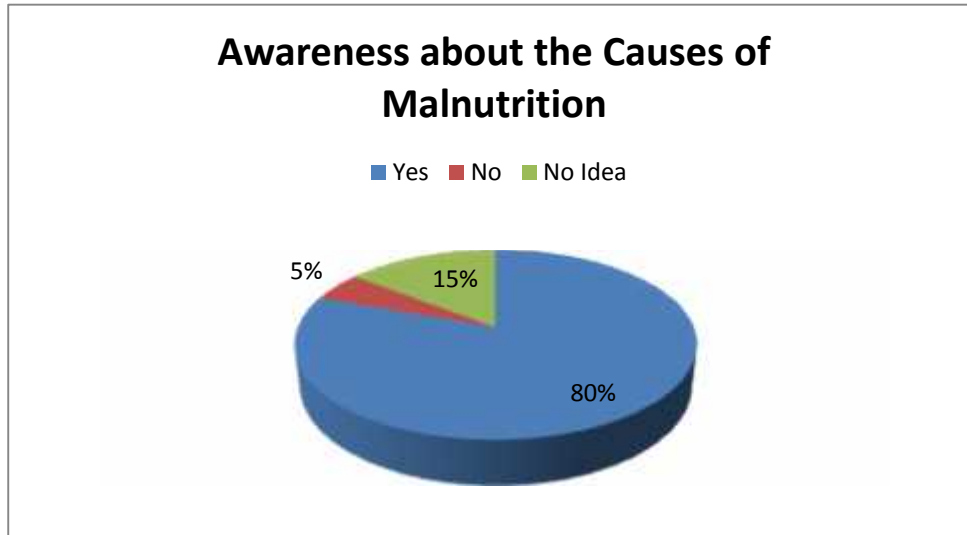
Thus, one can say that 'Health literacy' is related to empowerment. It provides knowledge regarding the best access to the communication methods. It helps to motivate people for media use in getting better health information time to time.

Table 1. Awareness about the Causes of Malnutrition

Sl. No.	Awareness about the cause of Malnutrition	Rural Women (N)	Percentage (%)
1.	Yes	161	80.50
2.	No	10	5
3.	No Idea	29	14.50
	Total	200	100



The above table shows that the majority of female respondents were aware of malnutrition and other health-related issues of women. This shows that the rural women have good knowledge about the different causes of malnutrition.

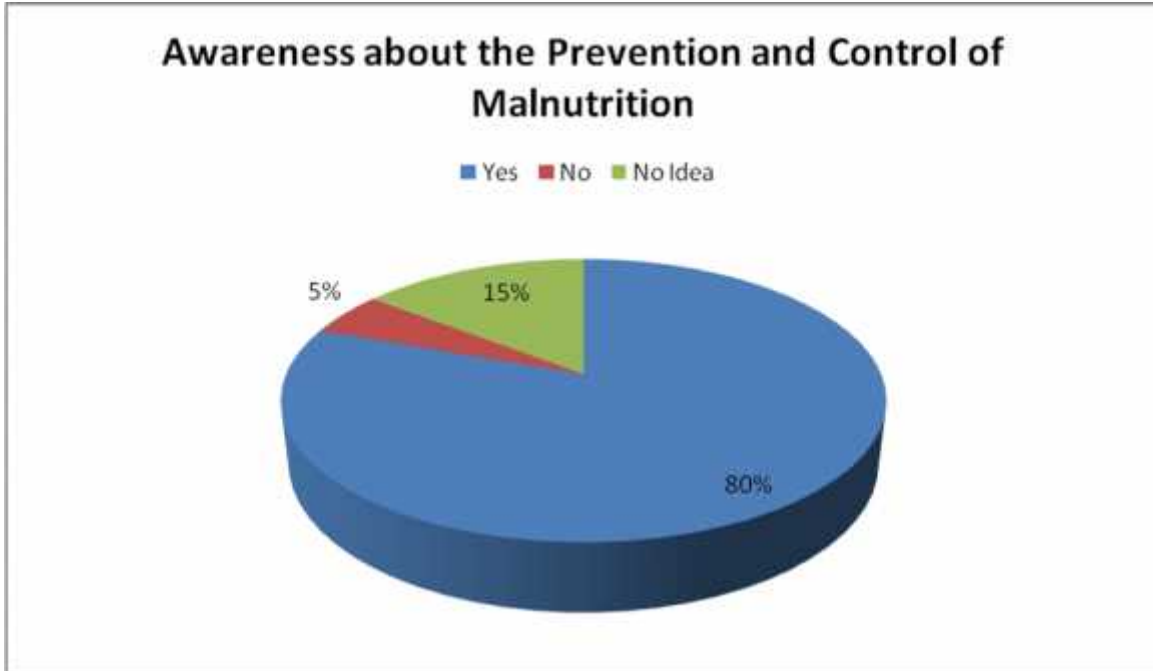


Graph No.-1

Table 2: Awareness about the Prevention and Control of Malnutrition

Sl. No.	Awareness about the prevention and control of Malnutrition	Rural Women (N)	Percentage (%)
1.	Yes	161	80.50
2.	No	10	5
3.	No Idea	29	14.50
	Total	200	100

The above table shows that the majority of female respondents were aware of malnutrition and other health-related issues of women. While a considerable number of respondents (5%) do not know about the prevention and control of malnutrition.



Graph No.-2

Table 3: Problem of Malnutrition

Sl. No.	Problem of Malnutrition	Rural Women (N)	Percentage (%)
1.	Yes	153	76.50
2.	No	27	13.50
3.	No Idea	20	10
	Total	200	100

Table 6.9 shows that majority of the female respondents have suffered from malnutrition at different stages of their lives. It was also found that 5% of the respondents have not faced the problem of malnutrition.



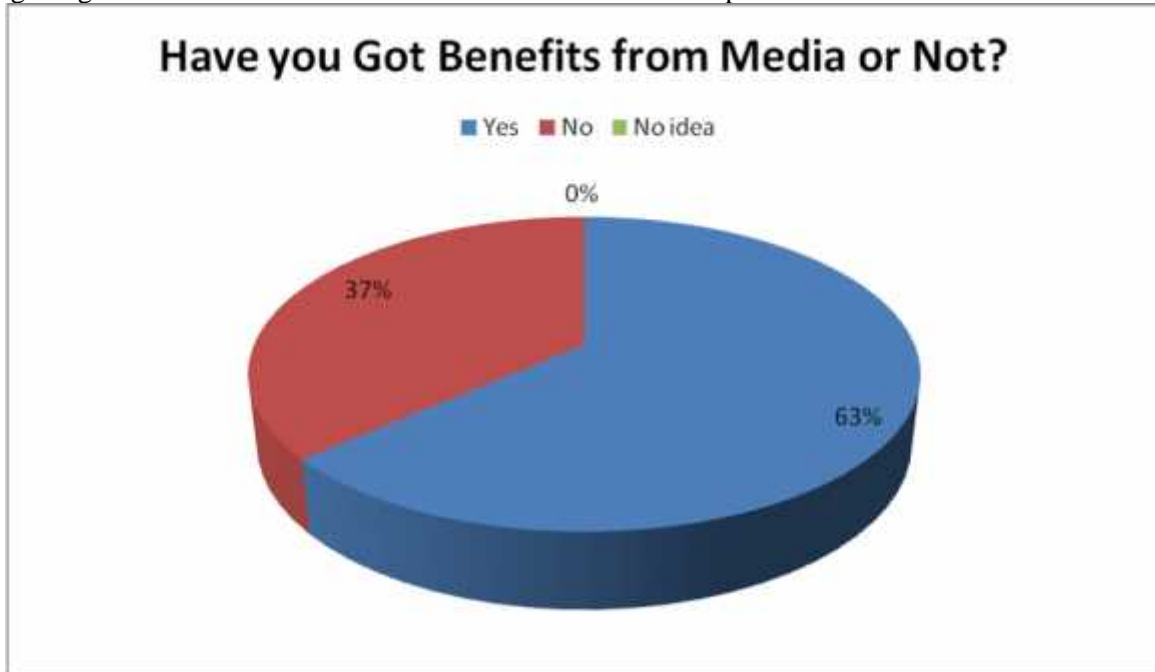
Graph No.-3



Table 4: Benefit from Media

Sl. No.	Benefit from Media	Rural Women (N)	Percentage (%)
1.	Yes	127	63.50
2.	No	73	36.50
3.	No Idea	0	0
	Total	200	100

Table 6.13.i) shows that majority of female respondents feel that the source of media they use is beneficial for them in getting information about the world. While the rest of the respondents don't feel media beneficial.



Graph No.-4

1.11 Research Findings

Findings reveal that the majority of female respondents feel that the source of media they use is beneficial for them in getting information about the world. The majority of the respondents said that the media they use either it is print, electronic or the web provides them up-to-date information about the world. Some respondents said that with the help of media only they get to know about the government schemes for farmers, old age, women, and students. When the researcher asked about the effectiveness of media in the field of health she found that 60.50% feel that media is playing a crucial role in communicating information related to health related issues. This shows that the women in rural areas understand the importance of media in the field of health. The researcher has also conducted focus group interview for in-depth analysis of the research study. For this, the researcher has segmented the entire population into three groups. The three groups constitute of three different categories of the rural population. The first category of the first group includes working women, the second one includes housewives and the third group includes female students. Each group includes two representatives from the category taken. The first group of the focused group interview was working women of the village. The second group includes housewives. The third group includes female students. The researcher has confined the number of people in focus group interview and has selected only six respondents. The selection of six respondents has been done just to have a firsthand experience and to make the research work more elaborative. The researcher has asked five questions for having a better understanding of the knowledge of rural women on malnutrition. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents are not aware of the concept of 'Health Communication'.



This shows that the term 'Health Communication' is not known by more than half of the rural women respondents. When the researcher asked the respondent to throw some light on the concept of 'Health Communication' the respondents explained it in a brief manner. They said that health communication helps to inform, encourage, promote and motivate them on health related issues. The respondents also said that information related to water and airborne disease is disseminated continuously through small documentaries. The researcher also found that majority of the rural women is literate. While some percentage of women can only write that too they can give their signatures only and the rest of the respondents can neither read nor write. It was found that more than half of the respondents use Television for getting information related to current happenings. It was very surprising for the researcher that though the majority of the respondents said that they find media source useful but even then 60% of female respondents use word-of-mouth for getting information related to control and prevention of malnutrition. It was also a surprise for the researcher that though more than half of the respondents were aware of the causes and prevention of malnutrition even then 77% of the respondents were suffering from different signs of malnutrition. The researcher found that the only 14% of the respondents take interest in health-related programs and they watch and hear programs weekly or monthly. While maximum female respondents said that they love watching daily soaps and rarely watch any program related to health. The researcher found that 60.50% feel that media is playing a crucial role in communicating information related to health related issues. This shows that the women in rural areas understand the importance of media in the field of health.

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