

## **Awareness of Diet Related Diseases in Women of Rural Indian Society through Mass Media- A Study Based on Rural Women of Bihar**

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### **Abstract**

In India, the delivery of relevant health information to rural women is still recognized as a large challenge. Seeing the increasing popularity of different Mass Media in rural India, there is an urgent need to know the present & future impact of Mass Media as an effective tool to disseminate health related information among women. This Research Paper is based on the studies related to awareness of diet related diseases in rural women through Mass Media. A questionnaire was prepared to know the exposure of rural women to different Mass Media & their knowledge regarding diet related diseases through Mass Media. Some very common questions regarding diet related diseases like obesity, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease & osteoporosis were asked to 300 women from the five villages of Bihar. Answers were analyzed, assessed & statistically calculated. Some astonishing results were seen showing very less knowledge of diet related disease among rural women through different Mass Media like T.V., Radio, News Papers, Magazines & Internet though rural women were found very much exposed to some popular Mass Media like Television & Radio. Following are the different steps related to this Research Paper:-

**PURPOSE:** This study aims at knowing the role & impact of Mass Media in spreading awareness regarding diet related diseases in women of rural Indian society. What is the present scenario & what may be the possibilities in near future to create positive atmosphere to make women more aware of these types of diseases so that they can

improve their life style for better living & balanced growth of society.

**DESIGN:** A cross-sectional epidemiological descriptive study based on sample taken from five villages of Bihar.

**SUBJECTS:** A total of 300 subjects were included in the study .

**METHODS:** Questionnaire based survey followed by simple statistical calculations.

**CONCLUSIONS:** High prevalence of diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, heart disease & high blood pressure in the women of rural areas of Bihar. Substantial increase in body fat, generalized and regional obesity in middle aged females showing their least awareness about diet related diseases through popular Mass Media like Television, Radio, Newspaper, Magazines, Internet & Social Media, needing immediate attention in terms of prevention and health education through Mass Media.

## 1. Introduction

Type II diabetes, obesity and heart disease have been traditionally considered as diseases of affluence. High prevalence of malnutrition in people belonging to low socio-economic strata in villages led to the assumption that obesity and diabetes will not be a crucial problem in them. But several lifestyle alterations in villagers like changes from their traditional penurious eating habits; exposure to severe stress; decreased physical activity; and increase in smoking, tobacco chewing specially in rural women have become main reason to be vulnerable to diet related diseases. Unfortunately, this population has not been researched in detail. A few studies from the developed countries indicate that the prevalence of established risk factors including obesity and diabetes mellitus are higher among men and women with low level of education as a measure of socio-economic status. A recent study from the UK records that type 2 diabetes is inversely related to socio-economic strata. In this study, the prevalence of diabetes in the least deprived quintile was 13.4 per thousand persons (95% CI 11.4415.36), compared to 17.22 (95% CI 13.8417.11) in the most deprived.

However, in developing countries, mainly in rural areas & specially in women poverty and scarcity of food is greater, awareness of diseases non-existent, and it appears that these diseases may be equally prevalent in rural women. The social structure is also one of the reasons to make women careless towards their health.

Questionnaire was the instruments for data collection Which was having questions related to following diseases- Diabetes-A disorder of the metabolism causing excessive thirst due to less secretion of Insulin from pancreas. In this disease blood glucose level increases.

Heart Disease-An umbrella term for a variety of different diseases affecting the heart. It is the leading cause of death in most of the countries.

Obesity- Condition of being grossly overweight. Obesity is defined as a disease by the World Health Organization (WHO). It increases the risk of a number of other chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease (CVD), hypertension, type 2 diabetes, dyslipidaemia, and some cancers. Increasing evidence suggests that obesity has become a global epidemic. Both industrialized countries and developing countries have been affected. In recent years, obesity has been recognized as a primary public health concern in many countries. Obesity is a leading cause of preventable death, second only to smoking. Epidemiologists find that women are more prone to obesity and are at risk for a series of lifestyle diseases. Till now, lifestyle diseases were related to urban areas and cities where people were on high-fat diet and low exercise regimen. Now, epidemiologists say, rural areas are rapidly changing as every type of diet related disease are being common there also. Doctors say it's important to bring down the incidence of obesity as it can lead to a variety of problems, including cardiac diseases.

During study it was observed that obesity is one of the risk factors for early onset of diseases even in rural areas. Studies have shown that Indians have diabetes and heart diseases when they are in their 20s and 30s while most of the people in the West are at risk when they turn 60. One of the most important reasons for this is obesity which has become common in rural women also.

High blood pressure-A chronic medical condition in which the blood pressure is elevated. Lots of different diseases are associated with this.

Osteoporosis-Condition in which the bones become brittle and fragile from loss of tissue, typically as a result of hormonal changes, or deficiency of calcium or vitamin D.

Mass Media like T.V., Radio, News Paper, Magazine & Internet are becoming popular among rural women; That is why this study examine that through these Mass Media what percentage of women are becoming aware of diet related diseases.

## **2. Methodology**

Seeing the astonishing popularity of Mass Media among rural women a questionnaire based survey was done in five villages (Madhuban, Tetariya, Madurapur, Barmaniya & Phulwariya) of Bihar to know the role of Media in spreading awareness regarding diet related diseases.

Descriptive survey was done for the study. Five (5) villages of East Champaran were randomly selected. Assuming the whole women population as a Universe three hundred (300) women were randomly selected as sample size from the five villages.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to know the facts related to above diet related diseases.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

**Table 1**

<b>Educational qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
No formal education	56	18.67
Primary school certificate	76	25.33
Intermediate	68	22.67
B.A/B.Sc.	58	19.33
M.A. and above	42	14
Total	300	100

Table I shows that majority 76(25.33%) of the respondents hold Primary school certificate. It could be deduced from this analysis that majority of the rural women in East Champaran are having School Education only.

**Table II:** Occupation/employment status of the respondents.

<b>Employment status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Unemployed	171	57
Self Employed	69	23
Employed by government/other organizations/individuals	60	20
Total	300	100

Table II shows the distribution of respondents by employment status. 171(57%) are unemployed, 69(23%) are Self employed, while 60(20%) are employed by government/other organizations. From this analysis, it could be deduced that in East Champaran percentage of unemployed women is more. self employed are more than Government employed.

**Table III:** Availability of Mass Media.

<b>Available Media</b>	<b>Agree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Undecided</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Radio	271	90.33	21	7	8	2.67	300	100
News Paper	119	39.67	172	57.33	9	3	300	100
Television	242	80.67	56	18.67	2	0.67	300	100
Magazine	85	28.33	175	58.33	40	13.33	300	100
Internet	53	17.67	192	64	55	18.33	300	100

Table III shows that the radio, television, news paper, magazine and computer are available for use by the respondents. Although there is a little evidence of the availability of other Mass Media such as Internet. This implies the type of Mass Media which are available for majority of rural women.

These findings ensure that new technologies, such as computers and the Internet are reaching to the villages of Bihar but old medium of communication such as radio & television as well as news paper are having comparatively good reach among rural women.

**Table IV:** Women's awareness of diet related diseases through available Media.

Diet Related Diseases	T.V.	Radio	News Paper	Magazine	Internet	Aware through other means	Not Aware	Total
Diabetes-Type-II	4%	7%	2%	1%	0%	8%	78%	100
Osteoporosis	5%	8%	1%	0%	1%	5%	80%	100
High Blood Pressure	3%	4%	0.5%	0%	0%	9%	83.5%	100
Heart Disease	10%	10%	3.5%	1.5%	0.5%	10%	64.5%	100
Obesity	8%	8.5%	2.5%	1.5%	0.5%	12%	67%	100

In table IV, it could be seen that women's awareness of most of the diet related diseases is least through Internet and most through Electronic Media . Radio is more popular among rural women as electricity is not needed for it. As far as awareness of heart disease is concern T.V. & Radio both are having same percentage. This credit goes to the commercials of different types of cooking oil which continuously talk about decreasing the risk of heart disease by using that particular type of cooking oil.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that a big percentage of rural women are not aware of diet related diseases The percentage of women who are aware, their source is some thing else than Media.

Recommendations were however made in order to empower the rural women keeping in mind the importance & role of Media.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- (1) Mass Media such as Newspaper, Magazine, Radio, Television, and Internet should be made available in the rural communities for women's use in rural areas of Bihar.
- (2) Doordarshan, AIR and other popular media should make programs & advertisements to make rural women aware of diet related diseases.
- (3) The cost of accessing/using the information & communication technologies should be subsidized or reduced. For example, the cost of Internet charges should be subsidized to a minimum or affordable price.
- (4) Cyber café should be established in the villages that lack such.
- (5) Electricity should be restored to enable women making maximum use of the facilities available
- (6) Schemes & programs related to Basic Education & Adult Education should be implemented effectively.
- (7) There is an urgent need to make Mass Media more responsible & accountable to the society as it is not only fourth pillar of democracy but it is a necessary tool for social change.

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