



## Information Seeking Behaviors of Rural women in Kachchh Region

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### INTRODUCTION:

The society has established different types of public and private institutions to meet the needs of women. Public library has played a vital role for common and ordinary people. In the information era, the librarian's role is converted to information officer, occupying an important place in modern society as an agent of information. Public Library is open for all and has a key role in collecting, arranging and exploiting information readily available to its users.

Thus Public Library is one of the social institutes which look after the educational, cultural, recreational, and informational needs of the society. People require information for their self-development; it plays an important role in our economic, social and political development. It helps women to make decisions and meet their needs relating to health care, Employment, Housing, Transportations, and to empower them in their day-to-day life.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the different types of needs of information of the women and which types of duty of public library for fulfillment of needs.

In Kutch region, women living in rural remote areas are under the poverty line. Besides poverty, the rural households are also faced with problems of illiteracy. In rural areas, women tend to be primary seekers of information. A housewife is also expected to know something on health matters, children education and their family economic. The questions that need to be answered are the followings.

- What is the need of women?
- What is the useful source of information?
- What are their information seeking behaviors?

### Objective of the study:

- To identify the information needs of rural women.
- To identify the source of information.
- To know how rural women use information.
- To identify factors that pose a barrier to the access of information by rural women.

### Methodology:

A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. Questionnaires were the main instrument used for data collection while oral interview was used to clarify some questions. Also, assistance was given in the interviewing of the illiterate rural women using the Kutchi language during the data collection. The researcher was fortunate to view rural women in their natural habitat, working in their working place, their farms, and some other performing household chores. After collection of data, its tabulation and analysis will be done by using MS Excel.

**Result and Data analysis**

**Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (Rural Women) by Age**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 30	24	24.49%
31-40	40	40.82%
41-50	18	18.37%
51-60	13	13.27%
60+	03	03.06%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 shows the demographic information about the ages of the respondents. The result however revealed that among the 98 respondents, 40.82% of them are 31-40 years of age, 24.49% of the respondents are below 30 years of age, 18.37% of the respondents are between ages of 41-50 years, those who are 51-60 years are 13.27% while 3.06% of the respondents are 61 years of age and above.

**Table 2: Level of Education of respondents**

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Non Formal education</b>	24	24.49%
Primary	21	21.43%
Secondary	43	43.88%
Tertiary	10	10.20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 indicates the level of education of the respondents. The result shows that majority of the Women have secondary school education with 43.88% of them admitting that they are secondary School certificate holder, 24.49% of the respondents have non- formal education, 21.43% of the Respondents have primary school education while only 10.20% of the respondents have tertiary Education.

**Table 3: Information needs of Respondents**

Information Needs	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Occupation (Farming, Sewing, Trading etc.	83	84.69%
Child care & family Relationships	63	64.29%
Health Related	55	56.12%
Procedures for performing tasks	42	42.86%
Housekeeping and household maintenance	32	32.65%
	24	24.49%
About education & schooling	10	10.20%
Government Policies/ Politics	20	20.41%

Table 3 Shows that the information needs of rural women in the top rank is occupational related with 84.69% of respondents, child care and family relationship with 64.29% of respondents, health related information needs with 56.12% of respondents, information on procedures of performing tasks with 42.86% of respondents, information on housekeeping and household maintenance with 32.65% of respondent, information on education and schooling with 24.49% of respondents and information on government policies/ politics with 10.20% of respondents.

**Table 4: Sources of Information of Respondents**

Sources of Information	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Friends and Family Members	93	94.90%
Age Group	73	74.49%
Health Workers	72	73.47%
Television/ Radio	58	59.18%
Tamples	43	43.88%
Village, Drums & Town criers & Whistling.	32	32.65%
Internet	23	23.47%
Library	21	21.43%

**Table 4** clearly indicates that the major source of information for the respondents is friends and family members with 94.90% of the respondents attesting to that, another 74.49% of the respondents indicated age groups as their source of information, 74% of the respondents specified health workers as their information source, 59.18% of the respondents denotes television and radio as their information source, churches and mosques with 43.88% of respondents, Village, Drums & Town criers & Whistling with 33% of respondents, internet with 2.47% of respondents while library 21.43% of respondents.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Certain conclusions can be drawn from the study that the rural women from Kutch regions knows the importance of information as majority of the rural women use family members, friends and relatives as their major source of information whenever they have a need. They use the information they get to understand their occupation better, as farming is the major source of livelihood for the rural women in the studied communities. One of the major barriers militating against access to information by rural women in Kutch is lack of adequate library resources. Many rural areas in Kutch lacks standard library services to meet the needs of the citizenry of that area, some areas have no library at all serving the areas; this is a major barrier to the accessibility of information by rural women.

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations were made:

- Public Libraries (staff) should go closer to the rural women and educate them on the services they provide that can meet some of their needs.
- The government should formulate rural women centered policies; this will enhance their standard of living in Kutch.
- Libraries should purchase books in the local language of the rural communities so that the illiterate's rural women can also be a beneficiary of library services.
- Libraries should collaborate with media houses and other government information agencies in order to package and disseminate the right information that meet the needs of the rural women in different localities.
- Community outreach programmers should equally be organized and used to disseminate information that would aid the socio-economic, political and general enlightenment of the rural women.
- Family members, friends and relatives who are the major source of information to the rural women must always strive to disseminate the right information to them.
- The local government should equally organize adult education programme for the rural women as this will enhance their information utilization capacity
- The rural women should be encouraged to use electronic gadgets as this can help in their

Recreational readings, as all newspapers published in Kutch are online.

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