

THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA ON WOMEN'S HEALTH EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF WORKING AND LITERATE WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract

The role of the media in promoting health education is of paramount importance. Health information is available on a wide range of media outlets; in the modern era, gender equality has been achieved, and as a result, the media is constantly disseminating health information relating to both genders. This study seeks to evaluate the efficacy of women's health education. The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of the media on women's health knowledge and media consumption across various age groups. This survey research methodology seeks to determine the influence of media on women's health education. The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions and was created by a researcher utilizing the Google form. This questionnaire has been circulated to different universities in India. This research's target audience included all females working and studying in academic institutions and universities. The sample size of this research is more than 450 females in the educational field, of which only 405 correctly filled the form without any barrier. This research has demonstrated the significance of media in enhancing women's health education, and research specifically works on working and literate women. Media plays an integral role in health communication interventions. Similarly, by providing women with extensive information about health conditions, the media will support them in their day-to-day medical practices.

Keywords: Women's Health, Media Integration, Health Communication, Media Education, Health Literacy, and Survey Research.

INTRODUCTION

Human life depends on good health, which cannot be disregarded. Humanity today is highly cognizant of and concerned with its health. Therefore, most communication channels are actively moving in the same direction. Health communication aims to change people's attitudes and knowledge about various health-related concerns. Its primary goal is to raise public awareness of health issues. The flow of various health-related news through the media goes on continuously. The media proves effective in keeping us aware of these issues. Despite having a higher life expectancy than males, women typically experience more illnesses and stress than men in most civilizations. It is known that women occasionally have issues with reproduction. Both the menopause and the reproductive periods may experience these issues. (Akn A & Mhçokur S, 2010). In today's technologically advanced era, media has produced a variety of sites for learning about health issues that impact women. As a result of the abundance of sources available to us for news on various topics, we are no longer only dependent on a small number of sources. In this way, health information is getting out there more and more. Media plays a vital role in timely educating people on health issues. In this modern time, where changes are coming in our food, drink, and lifestyle with time, in the same way, many changes are taking place in our bodies. So, this way, human beings are getting surrounded by diseases. Especially women can be seen to

be victims of many physical and mental disorders. The need for women to stay informed about all facets of health is imperative. Women were dependent on numerous media outlets as a result of this. Consequently, media accountability for women's health education becomes increasingly important. In our daily lives, we frequently use and depend on the media. Reporting for the core of the media in any culture concerns the account and dissemination of incidents in any specified place. The media plays a massive role in women's health education. One person's media consumption may differ from another's. Their consumption rate can be attributed to various factors, including their literacy degree, interests, needs, and prior decisions. All of these elements have an impact on how frequently they use media. Although most educated women rely on the press for health-related news, the media's role in educating women about various health issues is crucial.

The media significantly influences the acquisition of knowledge and the transformation of that knowledge into behavior. Nowadays, health information can be found from health professionals and through the media, organizations, and other unofficial sources, like the regular connection with family, friends, and co-workers who offer informal forums for discussing health issues. Hence, the prominence of media in promoting women's health cannot be defined in a few words. The role of media in making women aware is invertible. However, it may depend on each woman's literacy level and background because people use media based on their beliefs and prior knowledge. This study will work on the importance of media and its usage among women and reveal their consumption of various media platforms for their health needs.

Health Education in Media

Obtaining health information by responding to a health need or question can be considered a knowledge-gathering process (Mukherjee. A. & Bawden. D., 2012). Understanding how to spread knowledge about health and sickness care procedures, as well as joint disease prevention, and carry out appropriate and timely medical directives, prescription drugs, and ultimately, the capacity to read and use materials utilizing services for rehabilitation and insurance. (Haryana, 2008). Health status, the motivations behind searching out health information, and the search engines and media outlets used (Anker et al., 2011). There is a growing variety of health information available to the general people. They frequently ask for more healthcare literature or departmental written materials to enhance the knowledge given during the office session. Direct conversations with doctors and other healthcare providers are frequently reinforced with information from various forms of media, including brochures, the Internet, etc. Media are a leading source of health information for the general public and health professionals, and their choice of coverage can ultimately drive public policy and healthcare decisions (Bomlitz & Brezis, 2008). It was observed that television and radio were more trustworthy providers of health-related information. In contrast to health-related shows, 83.1% of people said news programs on television were more noteworthy (Yilmazel et al., 2013). However, most research indicates that the internet is a trustworthy third source for health information rather than doctors or government health regulations. (Hesse, 2005). However, regarding Indian media, the dependability of these sources in our nation may have risen due to television and radio programming that was both leisure-focused and featured people who were experts on diseases. Television news programs on health and disease also extensively covered the new therapeutic approaches. The internet was the most popular media source for applying health information, while TV/radio was the more dependable media source

among participants, according to the current generation and lifestyle. Additionally, we thought television news programs were more impressive than health-related shows. Using media sources relating to health, it was shown that there was a strong correlation between people's ages and health diseases. Since one of the most significant barriers to healthy development is their application in a society that is safe, understanding, and developed, ready for cooperation and dedication in implementing these programs, the development of health services in society is caused by calm and social discipline in addition to the economic satisfaction of the need for these programs (Qadri et al. et al., 2009)

The lack of health education is a global problem, and the organization's statement emphasizes its crucial part in identifying health disparities in wealthy and developing nations. Studies by the Centre for Health Care Strategies of America demonstrate that those with poor health literacy are less likely to offer the written and verbal guidance health experts provide to comprehend and take action. So, keep it lower health condition. The most common are hospitalization rates and doctors lacking self-care abilities, receiving less preventive care, and incurring additional medical expenses (Reisi.M et al., 2011). Maternal mortality reduction has been a global public health challenge for decades and is still a priority on most global development agendas, including Objective 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-3) (World Health Organization, 2015). There is no denying that the media, in all of its manifestations, serves as a solid link to health education. Because the power of media cannot be predicted, there is an unimaginable complementarity between health education and media platforms. The ability of the media to disseminate any information quickly is limitless. In this approach, it is simple to assess the importance of health education in the media platforms sector and how well it is expanding in this area.

Role of Media in Promotions of Women's Health

Mass media is an essential tool for health promotion, whether related to the national or local state level; it has immersive power to dismiss the negative thoughts about health issues in people's minds and create awareness about health dimensions (Wakefield et al., 2017). In developing countries, the World Health Television channel has had a more firm impact on the health status of the people; this channel helps access critical health information in developing nations (Connell et al., 2004). The individual needs care and attention to grow up with a healthy body and mind to contribute to this society's development. This care and habit can only be available in an organized society and in a family setting capable of providing for its members' needs from birth so they can become strong and take responsibility for themselves. In life. Due to their responsibilities, employment, or occupations, women are exposed to various health issues, such as anemia, which affects them more frequently than males (because of the menstrual cycle) and puts them in danger of dying during childbirth, among other issues. Given established medical risk factors, patients who do not know or are underrated cannot be anticipated. Must adhere to customizable guidelines, assess and evaluate design performance literacy as an effective means of transferring information to persons with limited writing and comprehension abilities, which are crucial for the healthcare system to ensure that these people can comprehend and carry out medical orders. In such a way, the media plays a significant role in educating the public about health education in the public. According to the study, most pregnant women in Esfahan who receive care from health centers are not media or health literate, and only a tiny percentage are. The outcomes revealed the association

between significantly positive health literacy and media literacy. Due to poor health, understanding of health messages can be hindered by literacy, and pregnant ladies are also a crucial group who require care. Information on health for utilizing and understanding medical injunctions is essential that they are in good enough health literacy. Oral, written, and electronic media are all forms of the most significant means of transferring health information (Akbarinejad et al., 2007)

Numerous factors, such as reproductive patterns, impact women's health and the health of their families, communities, and themselves. The first things that come to mind are education, employment, gender roles, the number of children, the elderly, and frequent very early deliveries. (Women and media policy document, 2008). Issues relating to women's health can be divided into two categories. First, access to health services is correlated with how much they can be used, as are women's health concerns, illness risks, and other current services for and by women. Problems with women's health generally, particularly the danger of diseases harming public health. One of the most significant is the mass media. The items we frequently use that play specific roles in daily life are the mass media. The media significantly influences the acquisition of knowledge and the transformation of that knowledge into behavior. TV is one of the more appealing and accessible forms of mass communication. (Guler Ç, 2006). The Nigerian government and other governments worldwide have used communication campaigns to reach the public and influence their engagement in desired health behaviors to address various maternal health challenges. To reach out to the public and encourage them to engage in desirable healthy behaviors, numerous governments have turned to the employment of communication campaigns through the media (Amoo et al., 2020; Bhattacharyya, 2020; Lariscy, 2020). Exposure to a topic in the media can increase knowledge and conviction about it and reinforce existing attitudes (Calvert, 2011; Khan & Ali, 2017). According to (Amoo et al., 2020), "the mass media play vital roles in every society as they shape culture, influence politics, affect people's attitudes, play important roles by raising concerns in health, especially as it relates to women and children, as well as in the contemporary business world." enables women to get knowledge on necessary healthcare and new advancements in health issues, and makes women aware of the necessity for introductory maternity and child healthcare. According to (Odukoya et al., 2018), valuable and relevant knowledge can change lives. However, the study by (Kamau et al., 2019) suggested that pregnant women had acceptable exposure to the media because most of them were found to have the highest degree of maternal health information from brochures, which fall within the print division of the media. While pregnant women's common understanding or lack of information on maternal health continues to hinder societal health and development, increasing maternal health awareness among pregnant women improves their compliance with maternal health recommendations. The audience members who become more emotionally and psychologically involved with media personalities, both real celebrities and fictional characters, are likelier to adopt the health beliefs and behavior modeled by those characters (Brown, 2012). According to numerous research, there is a connection between women's exposure to the media and knowledge about maternal health (Ghosh, 2006). Some say this "enables women to acquire information regarding vital healthcare and latest breakthroughs in health issues and makes them aware of the necessity for fundamental maternity and child healthcare." The valuable and pertinent knowledge is potent and transformative (Odukoya et al., 2018). Exposure becomes essential to avoid being left behind in a constantly developing society based on mass

media's information transmission and teaching roles. Despite being created to address varied information demands, the mass media are not all-powerful in knowledge development, acquisition, or distribution. Incredible significance is given to media in the area of women's health education. One person's media consumption may differ from another's. Their consumption rate can be attributed to various factors, including their literacy degree, interests, needs, and prior decisions. All of these elements have an impact on how frequently they use media. Although most educated women rely on the media for health-related news, the media's role in educating women about various health issues is crucial.

The relationship between Health and Literacy Level

Healthful behaviors are more likely to be learned by those with higher levels of education. Patients with more excellent education may be better equipped to comprehend their medical needs, adhere to recommendations, speak up for themselves and their families, and efficiently interact with medical professionals. Higher educated individuals are more likely to learn about health and health hazards, which enhances their literacy and helps them understand often tricky topics vital to their well-being. Campaigns for health education are more likely to be accepted by those with more excellent education. Education, vital skills, and self-advocacy may result in more accurate health attitudes and information, leading to healthier lifestyle choices. Education enhances abilities like reading and writing, forms valuable routines, and may even boost mental capacity. Therefore, those with higher levels of education could be better equipped to comprehend health-related concerns and adhere to treatment recommendations (Goldman & Smith, 2002). Education may profoundly change children's and young people's lives and environment. According to UNESCO, safe, content, and healthy students are the foundation of inclusive and transformational education. Since healthy individuals can better study and finish their education, children and young people who obtain high-quality education are also more likely to be healthy (UNESCO, 2020). The high levels of self-reported health and low levels of illness, mortality, and disability indicate that those with higher levels of education enjoy better health. Thus, there is a correlation between low educational attainment and self-reported lousy health, a shorter life expectancy, and a worse chance of recovering from illness.

Health and education both form an interlinked relationship. People in the higher education system tend to be up-to-date with healthy knowledge and programs. People with more education can acquire a variety of talents and characteristics (such as learned effectiveness, cognitive and problem-solving skills, and personal control) that make them more likely to have better health outcomes, which eventually adds to human capital. The researcher will elaborate on the importance of education in health literacy programs by media in their theoretical framework section and try to establish the point using diffusion of innovation theory.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the role of health communication in the development process is imperative to this study. The main focus of this study is to evaluate the involvement of media in the process of the upgradation of health literacy among women. The theoretical support for this study is anchored on the Diffusion of innovation and uses and gratification theories among literate women. Both theories are suitable for this

study and will reveal the importance of media in literacy upgradation among literate women.

1. Diffusion of Innovation Theory- Innovation is defined by Rogers (2003) as "an idea, practice, or project that is seen as a novel by an individual or other unit of adoption," while "diffusion" is defined as "the process in which an innovation is conveyed through certain channels over time among the members of a social system." The innovation-decision process has five stages: information, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Depending on how soon they accept the invention, people in any society would belong to one of the various adopter groups. Innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards are the different adopter classifications (Rogers, 2003). The whole concept of diffusion is based on innovation transmission. Evert Rogers built this theory in 1962. This notion is based on how individuals integrate new concepts into their social networks. Mass media and interpersonal communication channels are included in the innovation diffusion theory. This theory holds that people embrace innovations and ideas based on their preferences, interests, and needs. This idea is most applicable in this situation since women learn and adopt things based on their educational backgrounds and adaption to group membership. Due to their educational backgrounds, educated women are significantly more aware of health issues than less educated women. Their degree of literacy makes it easier for them to occasionally choose a reliable source from which to learn about different health issues. Literate women depend on the media far more for their health-related requirements and quarries. They use many media applications to understand information regarding their various health conditions. This makes applying the diffusion of innovation theory the most appropriate in this case to assess media consumption among women to stay current on various health issues and concerns. Educated women are more likely to use digital media platforms and understand their messages. From the theory mentioned above, it is clear that people adapt to their behavior of adoption, which also depends on their related group association. It is noticeable that more educated women are more concerned about their health issues and concerns.
2. Uses and gratification Theory- The authors of the theory are identified as Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz. The Uses and Gratifications Theory was fully described in their 1974 publication, "The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Insights on Gratifications Research." The way we use media is driven and purposeful. Even if it is just out of habit or for enjoyment, people always have a reason for consuming media: benefits and satisfaction. The use of media by people to meet their needs is explained by communication theory. The primary function of media for people is to satisfy their needs. Through media, which they also use for interpersonal interactions, people can learn, engage, relax, become aware of their surroundings, escape, and find entertainment. The Uses and Gratification theory explores how the media affects people's lives. It discusses how individuals use the media to further their own wants and experience satisfaction when those needs are met. In other words, the approach emphasizes what media users do with them rather than what media subjects users to. This idea takes a user-centered perspective. Even for interpersonal communication, people turn to the media for ideas for topics to talk about. They use the media to expand their knowledge and exposure to the world outside their visual field. As a result, the application of this theory to the idea of this

paper is appropriate. Literate women are significantly better equipped to choose from various media outlets and perspectives to collect news or information about the health industry. They employed various media and health-related applications to make them aware of what was happening around them globally. They employed the media according to their needs and wants. Consequently, the uses and gratification theory can also explain this research.

The theories of uses and gratification and the diffusion of innovation can apply to this research area. Both theories use audience-centered approaches to contextualize their research and explain how literate women use media. According to one study, a statistically significant correlation exists between participants' educational levels and the channel they watch at home (Koparan, N, 2007). As a result, there is a co-related link between women's health education and the media. The way these women used the media depended on their pre-existing knowledge and areas of interest.

Research Questions

- To identify the importance of media in women's health education
- To highlight the reliability of the media for women's health literacy.
- To define the media's role as a timely resource for information on different health topics.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of the media on women's perceptions of their health and treatment. The study's target demographic will be graduates, postgraduates, research scholars, clerks, professionals, and teachers in various age groups. This study uses a questionnaire to conduct genuine research within the universe of literate women of different educational backgrounds.

Moreover, the sample will be more than 450 women, who will get the actual data about their consumption and patterns of health news from the media. However, out of 450 respondents, 405 women participants correctly filled out the questionnaire without any technical barriers. This research study also seeks to analyze the role of media in the everyday consumption of women's health demands and concerns, as this researcher read numerous research publications and papers on this subject before performing their survey research.

The researcher followed two steps while she conducted this study. First, the researcher read numerous publications to gain background knowledge about the issue. Then, they surveyed literate women to examine how they used media to meet their health requirements. The results of this study will demonstrate how the media affects women of various ages.

This study attempts to quantify how the media affects and influences the health knowledge and beliefs of women of different ages. During the first stages of the research, the researcher came up with two hypotheses to test the outcomes of this study- (1) **Null Hypothesis:** Women consider the media responsible for keeping their healthy lives and increasing their literacy level about health issues. (2) **Alternate Hypothesis:** Media is not responsible for keeping women's health healthier.

A "Survey by Questionnaire" is the research technique used to test the proposed hypothesis. Fifty women are chosen randomly from a range of ages but must have a degree. A Google Forms-made online survey was distributed to the participants to perform this study. The survey provides questions regarding the respondent's actions, effects, preferences, and use of different platforms to stay informed about health issues. This study investigates how mass media impacted women's perceptions and decision-making processes about their health. The main objective of this study is to show how women use different health-related news sites, applications, and media. This study's primary goal is understanding how literate women's lifestyles relate to their interaction with health-based media.

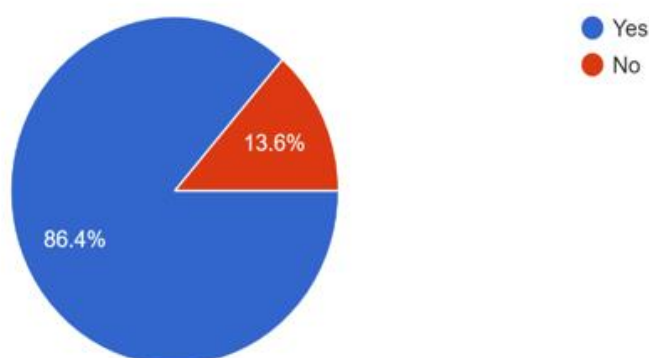
This study hypothesizes that all women utilize the media to learn about health-related issues, regardless of their educational attainment, and that women's educational attainments greatly influence the usage and consumption of mass media. The procedure of the study- - A Google form was used to produce the questionnaire, and the URL to the Google form was sent to the participants via WhatsApp groups, Google groups, and personal accounts. The questionnaire was filled out with their implied consent without the use of force.

The questionnaire included instructions on how to complete it and a summary of the survey's goals. The preliminary design questionnaire consists of 18 questions. A questionnaire with roughly ten items and a nominal scale was utilized to collect the responses from the participants. However, several questions focus on categories linked to using and consuming health material across various media platforms. However, the importance of literacy level may also affect health education programs in media. This key point is also to elaborate with the help of the section in the introduction part and the theoretical framework.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Pie Chart - 1

Do you use media to get news related to Health care and cures?
405 responses



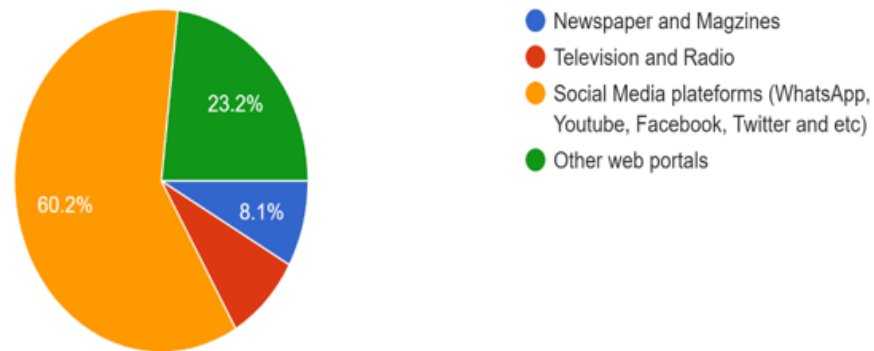
The dependency of educated women on media for their health needs and demands is shown in pie chart 1 (upper). This pie chart shows that 86.4% of women strongly agree with embracing media use to fill their information gap. Only 13.6% of respondents said they disagreed with this. Even some people assert that they consume too much media.

This highlights how women are reliant on the media for their requirements in the medical field.

Pie Chart - 2

Which media platform is most used by you for seeking information related to health?

405 responses

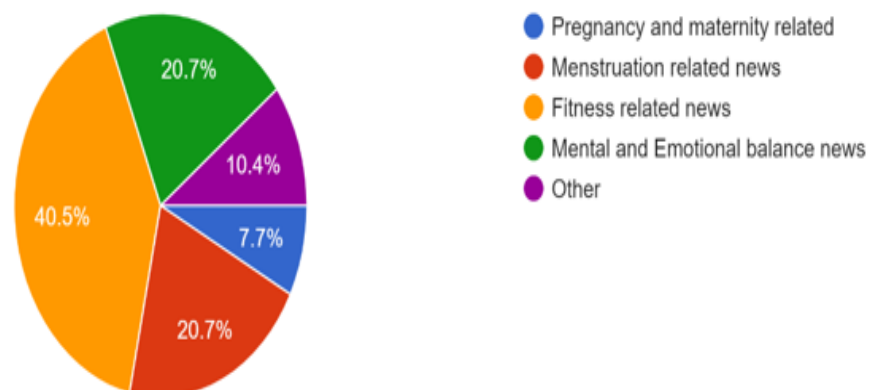


Pie chart 2 tries to disclose the specific media platform mainly used by women for their health-related queries. As in this pie chart, 60.2% of women use social media platforms, 23.2% use other web portals, and the remaining women prefer to use newspapers, magazines, and television media. This means that much of the population uses social media for health-related needs.

Pie Chart - 3

Which kind of health news is most of the time shown by the media?

405 responses



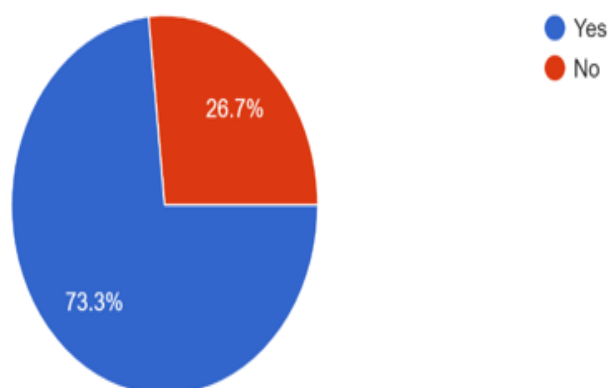
Under pie chart 3, we know which news the media prioritizes and which can be seen more. Fitness-related issues receive more attention, with a percentage of about 40.5%. After that, mental and emotional balance is shown by about 20.7% of media. Apart from this, other main news is significantly related to women. For example, 7.7% of the news is related to pregnancy and maternity, and 20.7% of the information is related to menstruation, seen through the media. Apart from all the above, the media also tries to show various information on health issues through various platforms.

Based on the above figures, we can say that the media has a vital role in educating women on various issues related to them.

Pie Chart - 4

Do you get updates on issues of health from various forms of media from time to time?

405 responses

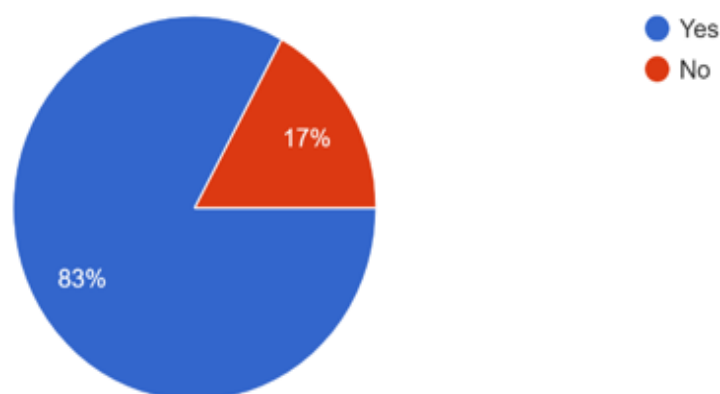


Pie chart 4 shows that the media is a critically responsible body that can update people from time to time on various issues related to health. Approx. 73.3% of women agree that media plays a significant role in updating us occasionally. Only 26.7% are denied the same status.

Pie Chart - 5

Is media helpful to give answers to your queries related to health?

405 responses

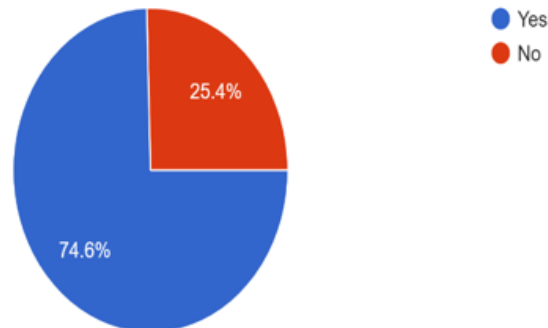


Pie chart 5- clarifies that 83% of women accept the importance of media in making their healthy lifestyle. With this, they agree that the media is a responsible body that can be essential in resolving all problems related to women's health education. However, only 17% denied it with the same statement.

Pie Chart - 6

Are the Expert views and interviews shown in media responsible for your developing health literacy?

405 responses



Pie chart 6- shows people's acceptance of media consumption during the pandemic times for treatment. Women have accepted their media usage in the form of expert views and health experts' interviews for their recovery process. The result was that they had learned a thing or two about their views in this critical period. According to this pie chart, 74.6% are using media talk shows in their healthy lifestyle. At the same time, there was a much-reduced number of females, approx. 25.4% did not take media usage into account.

It is evident from the charts above 4,5, and 6 that many women have taken advantage of the media in this epidemic period. **In this case, the Null hypothesis is confirmed. It has been shown that women consider media a responsible body for keeping their health healthier and increasing health literacy.**

FINDINGS

From the abovementioned work, we got an idea about the importance of media in women's lives. Media is playing a significant role in enhancing and upgrading women's lifestyles. In this way, media can be a reliable source for women to get health updates occasionally. This research proves the importance of media in women's lives. With the help of the media, women are updating themselves occasionally. They use various media platforms based on their choices, implying the theory of uses and gratification here. On the other hand, women's educational background can play a significant role in their media consumption patterns. In this case, every woman can not be equally literate; each uses media based on their prior knowledge, and it depends on their educational qualification. More educated women can easily access all media platforms rather than less literature. In such a way, the diffusion of innovation theory is also applicable here.

CONCLUSION

A healthy woman has the energy and strength to carry out her daily chores, her family and society's numerous duties, and build relationships with others. Therefore, a woman's health impacts every aspect of her life. So, providing better health services and error-free health information to women is necessary. The media plays a vital role in doing so. With the help of the media, she can update herself on various health-

related issues. Through this paper, the importance of media in women's lives is well established. Media is a central tool for women to upgrade their health information.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Women's educational background also helps them occasionally update themselves on various health concerns. A well-educated woman has prior knowledge about health concerns and is more aware. She knows which media platform and how she can access media to get health information. Education is also essential for women's health and media usage. So, the role of education in media usage needs to be evaluated. In this way, a researcher is advised to research the issue of educational background and their impact on media usage.

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