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Knowledge and possession of mobile phone by rural women: An impact study

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Abstract

Mobile is very essential tool in day today life. It strengthens the relationship with other members. It also helps during emergency situation but in rural India majority of women do not use mobile phones or they do not know how to use mobile. Also this is not just a matter of owning a mobile device but a matter of freedom and empowerment. Hence this study was conducted at Sulla village to find out the knowledge level and possession of mobile phone by rural women. This was carried out with the sample size of 70 rural women. The results indicated that, 77.1 percent of women use their own mobile with Airtel network. During pre test more than half percent of rural women (54.30%) had medium level of knowledge and after training programme, majority of the women were found to be in the high knowledge category (94.30%). The study also finds out that the main reason for owning a mobile phone was to contact family members (98.50%). Out of total variables, age and extension contact exhibited significant relationship with knowledge towards usage of mobile.

Keywords: Mobile, knowledge, opinion, rural women, training, empowerment

Introduction

“Information Communication Technology” concentrates on these three words: Information, Communication and Technology; to promote information via communication with the help of technology (Deshpande and Sambhe, 2015) [1]. A mobile phone is a small portable radiotelephone. It can be used to communicate over long distances without wires. In the 1950s through 1970s mobile phones were large and heavy. In the late 20th century technology improved so people could carry their phones easily. A mobile phone is a wireless handheld device that allows users to make calls and send text messages, among other features. These connect people and provide them with information that is useful in their daily lives. Mobile phones have revolutionized our society and changed the way we communicate and interact. The advent of mobile communication has changed the traditional forms of communicating with people. When personal computers and internet facilities are still out of reach for common people of Indian villages, mobile phone has come in the way to make it a reality. The wireless, cheaper and easy to use technology has become intensively popular and widely accepted globally. More than one third of the world’s population has access to mobile phones in developed, developing and under developed countries (Karigar, P. A., 2017) [2].

In India, less than 46% of women own and use a mobile phone according to the fourth National Family Health Survey (NFHS) dated 2015-16. This has had the effect of limiting independence for many women, as well as access to opportunities. Also women own and use mobile phones at lower rates than men due to barrier such as cost, network, quality and coverage, security and harassment, technical literacy and confidence. There is lot of difference in mobile usage between women from the urban and rural sections of the country. Hence the present study was designed to know the knowledge level and possession of mobile phones by rural women.

Objectives of the study

1. To know the socio-personal characteristics of the rural women
2. To study the ownership and possession of mobile phone by rural women
3. To find out the knowledge level of the rural women with regard to mobile usage
4. To identify the reasons and benefits from owning a mobile phone
5. To study the relationship between independent and dependent variables

Methodology

The study was conducted in Sulla village, Hubli Taluk, Dharwad district of Karnataka state during 2017-18. Total 70 rural women were selected for the study based on the criteria of

functionally literate, can read and write and access to mobile phone. Keeping in view the objective and variables of the study, a structured interview schedule was prepared and data was collected from rural women. The statistical tools like frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data. Class interval was used for classification of respondents in to various categories. Correlation was employed to know the relationship between dependent and independent variables. 't' test was used to find out the difference between pre and post test.

Results and Discussion

The results in the Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their profile
n=70

Sl No.	Characteristics/ Attributes	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young (18-35yrs.)	58	82.9
		Middle (36-50 yrs.)	11	15.7
		Upper middle (50 yrs. and above)	01	1.4
2.	Education	Illiterate	00	0
		Primary	09	12.8
		Middle	18	25.7
		High School	30	42.9
		Degree	13	18.6
3.	Marital status	Married	51	72.9
		Unmarried	18	25.7
		Widow	01	1.4
4.	Family size	Small (1-3)	15	21.4
		Medium (3-5)	30	42.9
		Large (more than 5)	25	35.7
5.	Type of family	Nuclear	42	60.0
		Joint	28	40.0
6.	Land holding	Small	46	65.7
		Big	05	7.2
		No land	19	27.1
7.	Occupation	Farming	23	32.9
		Service	00	0
		Farm allied	05	7.1
		Business	03	4.3
		Daily wage earner	05	7.1
		At home	34	48.6
8.	Extension contact	Low (0-4)	37	52.8
		Medium (5-8)	31	44.3
		High (9-12)	2	2.9
9.	Mass media participation	Low (0-10)	56	80.0
		Medium (11-21)	10	14.3
		High (22-32)	4	5.7
10.	Cosmopolitaness	Low (0-2)	36	51.4
		Medium (3-5)	27	38.6
		High (6-8)	7	10.0

Age: It could be observed that, 82.9 percent of the women belonged to young age group (18-35 yr) where as 15.7 percent of them belonged to middle age group (36-50 yr) and only 1.4 percent of them belonged to upper middle group (50 yr and above).

Education: It was noticed that, 42.9 percent of women were educated up to high school followed by middle (25.70%). 18.6 percent of women were graduates. 12.8 percent of them were educated up to primary and none of them were illiterates.

Marital status: It is evident from the Table 1 that, majority of the women were married (72.90%) followed by unmarried (25.70%) and widow (1.40%).

Family size: It was indicated that, 42.9 percent of women belonged to medium family (3-5 members), 35.7 percent of them belonged to large family (more than 5) and 21.4 percent were from small family (1-3 members).

Type of family: It was noticed that, 60 percent of women were from nuclear family followed by joint family (40.00%).

Land holding: The Table 1 shows that, majority of the women belonged to small land holding category (65.70%) followed by no land (27.10%) and big land holding category (7.10%).

Occupation: The data in the Table 1 revealed that, majority of the women (48.60%) were at home followed by farming (32.90%). Equal number of women (7.10%) were daily wage earners and doing farm allied activities. Only 4.3 percent had their main occupation as business.

Extension contact: It is evident from the Table 1 that, majority of the women belonged to low extension contact level (52.80%) followed by medium (44.30%) and high (2.9%) extension contact level.

Mass media exposure: The results indicated that, 80 percent of the women belonged to low mass media exposure category followed by medium (14.30%) and high (5.70%) mass media exposure category.

Cosmopolitaness: It was noticed that, more than half percent of the women (51.40%) belonged to low Cosmopolitaness category followed by medium (38.60%) and only 10 percent of them belonged to high Cosmopolitaness category.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to ownership and possession of mobile phone n=70

Sl. No.	Particular	F	%
1.	Possession of mobile		
	Self	54	77.1
	Husband	07	10.0
	Son	00	0
	Other family member	09	12.9
2.	Service provider for mobile phone		
	Airtel	34	48.6
	Idea	25	35.7
	BSNL	03	4.3
	Any other	08	11.4
3.	Reasons for owning particular network		
	Good network	55	78.6
	Low call rate	15	21.4
	Any other	00	0.0
4.	Refill amount (in Rupees)/month		
	Minimum refill amount (5-150)	59	84.2
	Medium refill amount (151-300)	09	12.9
	Maximum refill amount (>300)	02	2.9
5.	Internet facility		
	Yes	08	11.4
	No	62	88.6

Possession of mobile

The results in the Table 2 indicated that, 77.1 percent of women use their own mobile followed by other family

member (12.90%) and husband (10.00%). None of the women use their son mobile. Now a day's communication is very important and women also want independent life. Hence majority of rural women possess own mobile. The findings are consistent with the findings of Balasubramanian *et al.* (2010) [3].

Service provider for mobile phone

It also shows that majority of them use Airtel network (48.60%) followed by Idea (35.70%) and other (11.40%). Least percent of them use BSNL network (4.30%).

Reasons for owning particular network

Table 2 revealed that, majority of the women use particular SIM for the reason of good network (78.60%) followed by low call rate (21.40%).

Refill amount (in Rupees)/month

It also noticed that, more number of women (84.20%) belonged to minimum refill amount category which was between Rs. 5-150, followed by 12.9 percent belonged to medium refill amount which was Rs. 151-300 and remaining 2.9 percent belonged to maximum refill amount category which was more than Rs.300. The findings of the study were in line with the findings of Karigar, P. A., (2017) [2]. The reason behind this may be rural women spend money for only call rate pack and message pack.

Internet facility

The Table also indicated that, 11.40 percent of women access to internet facility where 88.60 percent of them do not have access to internet facility. The reason behind this is, most of the women possess ordinary phones (unlike android phones) which are not suitable for internet service. Also they opine that the internet packages are costly. The women are not aware of the other facilities and benefits that they can get from mobiles. Hence they have not felt the need of having internet service.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to knowledge level of rural women about mobile usage n=70

SI. No.	Mobile usage	Pre-test		Post-test	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Low (0-9)	27	38.6	00	0.0
2.	Medium (10-18)	38	54.3	04	5.7
3.	High (19-27)	05	7.1	66	94.3

The data in table 3 shows the percentage of women in the low, medium and high knowledge categories before and after the training programme. During pre test more than half percent of rural women (54.30%) had medium level of knowledge followed by low (38.60%) and high (7.10%) knowledge level. During post test i.e. after training programme it was interesting to note that majority of the women were found to be in the high knowledge category (94.30%) and medium knowledge category (5.70%). None of the women belong to low knowledge category. This might be because of participation in training programme and also trained women knew the different features available in the mobile phone such as calculator, radio, recording, Bluetooth, WhatsApp, speed dialing, calendar.

Data in Table 4 points out that, to contact family members was the main reason for owning a mobile phone as expressed by 98.5 percent of rural women. The findings of the study

were in line with the findings of Maqsood, L. (2008) [1] and Sylveste, G. (2016). 51.50 percent of them wanted a mobile for their use followed by games/movies/songs (43.90%) and to send messages (34.80%). The main reason for this is to communicate messages to the other family members and get more connected with their family, relatives and friends. Social networking (7.60%), to access internet (4.50%), everybody around you already had one with them (1.50%) were found to be other reasons for owning a mobile phone. Most of the women are educated up to high school level. They belong to low extension contact category, low mass media participation category and low cosmopolitaness category. Hence majority of the women are at home and they does not require mobile for social networking like WhatsApp, Facebook etc.

Table 4: Percent distribution of respondents according to their reasons for owning a mobile phone n=66

SI. No.	Statements	F	%
1.	Contact family members	65	98.5
2.	To send messages	23	34.8
3.	Social networking(WhatsApp, Facebook)	05	7.6
4.	To access internet(For information	03	4.5
5.	Games/ movies/ songs	29	43.9
6.	Everybody around you already had one with them	01	1.5
7.	You wanted a mobile for your use	34	51.5
8.	Somebody asked you to get one for yourself	00	0
9.	Any other please specify	01	1.5

*multiple responses possible

Table 5: Percent distribution of respondents according benefit from owning a mobile phone n=70

SI. No.	Statements	F	%
1.	I feel safer	42	59.2
2.	I feel more connected with friends and family	69	97.2
3.	I feel more independent	50	70.4
4.	I have increased my income or business opportunities	17	76.1
5.	Any other please specify	13	18.3

*multiple responses possible

The results in the Table 5 revealed that, 97.2 percent of women opined that by owning mobile they feel more connected with friends and family because communicating with family and friends is a core activity of everyday life followed by increased income or business opportunities (76.10%) where 70.4 percent them feel more independent followed by safer (59.20%). This may be because of they are in any awful situation or they lost address they can call or send messages to their family members. They can also share location to the other members. 18.3 percent of women feel that mobile helps them during emergency, scare situations, ill effects etc.

Table 6: Comparison between knowledge gain towards usage of mobile

Mean pre-test	Mean post-test	Gain in knowledge	t test
10.23	21.15	10.92	14.49**

Table 6 indicated that, mean of pre test was 10.23 and mean of post test was 21.15. Gain in knowledge found to be 10.92. It was also showed highly significant association between pre-test and post-test. This may be because of training and guidance given to the trainees have played prime role in learning new aspects of mobile usage.

Table 7: Correlation between personal and socio-economic variables of the respondents with gain in knowledge towards usage of mobile
n=70

Sl. No.	Variables	Gain in knowledge
1.	Age	0.625**
2.	Education	-0.448**
4.	Family size	-0.035
5.	Land holding	0.105
6.	Occupation	0.099
7.	Extension contact	0.348**
8.	Mass media exposure	-0.443**
9.	Cosmopolitaness	-0.249*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

A data from Table 7 shows that, age and extension contact exhibited positive and significant relationship with knowledge towards usage of mobile. This may be because of majority of the women are from young age group which helps them to learn quickly. Also more number of women belongs to low extension contact category so that they will get more time to attend such trainings. It also shows that education, mass media exposure and cosmopolitaness exhibited negative but significant relationship with knowledge towards usage of mobile. Majority of the women are educated up to high school level and belong to low mass media exposure and cosmopolitaness category. Also most of the women are married and they are at home so during their leisure time they started to learn different aspects of mobile usage. Because of these reasons, it has shown significant relationship with knowledge towards usage of mobile.

Other variables *viz* family size, land holding and occupation were found to be non significant relationship with knowledge towards usage of mobile.

Conclusion

It was observed that the overall knowledge of rural women regarding mobile phone was increased after attending training programme. Majority of the women own mobile with no internet facility. They want mobile to contact family members, playing games and listening songs. And also by using mobile they feel more connected with family and friends.

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