



## Extent of Exposure to Selected Electronic Media by Garo Farm Women in West Garo Hills of Meghalaya

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### ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to analyze the use of radio and television programmes by farm women in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. A total 100 respondents were selected from two blocks consisting four villages randomly for study. Data were collected by using pretested interview schedule through interview method. Farm women preferred 'News in Garo' which ranked 1<sup>st</sup> followed by 'Mother's milk is best for baby' ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 'Government welfare scheme' ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> from radio programmes. Among from television programmes farm women preferred 'Self help group programme' which ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by 'Orange cultivation in Garo Hills' ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 'Mango grafting' ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>. Farm women often faced problems in gathering information from radio and television as they do not get time due to overloaded home activities. Inconvenience of time and electricity problem were the other major constraints faced by them.

**Key words:** Radio, Television, Preferences and Problems.

### INTRODUCTION

Meghalaya also known as 'the abode of clouds' which is rich in natural resources and it is predominantly inhabited by the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos. The West Garo Hills is located in the western part of Meghalaya which is one of the largest districts of the State. West Garo Hills is predominantly inhabited by the Garos, belonging to matrilineal society. Tura is the administrative headquarter of the districts which have total geographical area of 3677 sq. Km. The population of West Garo Hills is 643,291 of

which male and female were 324,159 and 319,132 respectively (according to 2011 census). Agriculture is the major occupation practiced by people of West Garo Hills district. Farm women play a significant role in domestic chores as well as agriculture development.

Mass media are the channels of mass communication and aimed to inform, educate and influence people to understand and obtain new ideas and technologies in order to improve the living standard.

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It brings social change and helps to upgrade the nation in developmental aspects. Radio is an audio-medium for broadcasting programmes, which reach large number of population from various sections of society. It has certain unique advantages for development communication which acts as catalytic agent for rural development. It reaches large number of people with less formal education and lower socio economic group. It can reach even when there is no electricity and covers huge distance<sup>3</sup>. Television is an audio-visual aid which is popular and effective means of information, communication, entertainment and instruction. It is ideal medium to convey information to illiterate and literate in urban and rural areas and reached at shortest time. Television has greatly influenced on lives of an individual, shaped the personalities of women and develop awareness about their rights and privileges<sup>2</sup>.

Television and radio play an important role in dissemination of farm information, upgrade their social status and improve knowledge level. Media covers wide range of population and act as important tool to spread awareness and plays a vital role to empower women in different aspects<sup>1</sup>. Media has a potential to reach wide population which helps in empowering women by disseminating information, educating them and helps them to participate in decision making process<sup>5</sup>. Exposure to mass media helps women to get information and other new ideas including farming very quickly and also the tribal women who are uneducated get the message from television as they mostly used television and radio for gathering information<sup>4</sup>. However no systematic study has been conducted so far on utilization of messages from radio and television by the Garo community so far. In this circumstance a research study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To assess socio-economic status of Garo farm women in the study area.
2. To identify the preferences of farm women in obtaining farm information from radio and television programmes.
3. To ascertain the problems faced by farm women in obtaining required information from these selected electronic media.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research study was conducted in Meghalaya state of West Garo Hills district. Two blocks i.e Rongram and Gambegre block were selected by using random sampling method. The villages taken for the study were Eden Bari and Masumatagre from Rongram block and Ronggatagre and Rongbilbangre from Gambegre block. Total 100 respondents were taken i.e 25 respondents from each village. Collection of data is done by using pretested semi-structured interview schedule through interview method. The data collected from the respondents was scored, tabulated and analyzed by using suitable statistical tools such as mean, percentage, frequency distribution and Spearman rank correlation. All the statistical analyses have been done by using statistical software like SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 16.0 and MS-Excel spreadsheet.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that age of the respondents majority (47.00%) belonged to 25-37 years of age group, followed by (33.00%) were in 38-49 years of age group and only (20.00%) of them were 50-60 years. Maximum (97.00%) of the respondents were married and only (3.00%) were widow. Regarding the occupation maximum (91.00) of the respondents engaged in farming, and about (83.00%) practiced agriculture as their source of income. Majority (91.00%) had mobile phone, (78.00%) of the respondents had television and only (30.00%) had radio in their home.

Table 2 revealed that the preferences of radio programmes by farm women 'News in Garo' ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 'Mother's milk' is best for baby ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, 'Government welfare scheme' ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, 'Cash crop cultivation to prevent soil erosion' ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, 'Nutrition – key to development' ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, 'Disaster management on earthquake' ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, 'Disaster management on soil erosion' ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, 'Disaster management on flood' ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, 'Concept of family planning/small family norm' ranked 9<sup>th</sup>, 'Soil and land preparation

for horticulture crops' ranked 10<sup>th</sup>. The probable reason for maximum preference for News programme in Garo language might be that majority of them studied up to middle school level and the language is their mother

tongue. Moreover due to the better education they were also curious to know the government welfare schemes as well as health related aspects.

**Table 1: Distribution of farm women according to their socio-economic status:**

n=100

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	25-37 years	47	47.00
		38-49 years	33	33.00
		50-60 years	20	20.00
2.	Occupation	Housewife	3	3.00
		Farming	91	91.00
		Wage Earner	6	6.00
3.	Education	Read and Write	7	7.00
		Primary	38	38.00
		Middle school	45	45.00
		High school	10	10.00
4.	Marital status	Married	97	97.00
		Widow	3	3.00
5.	Size of the family	Small (2-4)	18	18.00
		Medium (5-8)	69	69.00
		Large (9 & above)	13	13.00
6.	Type of the family	Nuclear	88	88.00
		Joint	12	12.00
7.	Annual income	Rs. 50,000-Rs.100,000	21	21.00
		Rs.100,000-Rs.1.50,000	35	35.00
		Rs.1,50,000-Rs.2,00,000	40	40.00
		Above Rs.2,00,000	4	4.00
8.	Source of income	Agriculture	83	83.00
		Livestock	10	10.00
		Wages and salary	7	7.00
9.	Land holding	Below 1 hectare	38	38.00
		1.1 to 2 hectare	58	58.00
		2.1 to 4 hectare	4	4.00
10.	Possession of mass media material	Radio	30	30.00
		Television	78	78.00
		Mobile phone	91	91.00
		Computer	1	1.00
11.	Reared animals	Yes	98	98.00
		No	2	2.00
12.	Type of animals reared	Cow	82	82.00
		Goat	15	15.00
		Pig	86	86.00
		Chicken	90	90.00

The data from the table 3 shows that farm women preferred 'Self help group programme' from television programmes ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by 'Orange cultivation in Garo Hills' ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, 'Mango grafting' ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, 'Integrated farming system' ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, 'Tomato cultivation' ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, 'Arts & crafts' ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, 'Health and nutrition' ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, 'Tuber crops' ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, 'Health and family welfare' ranked 9<sup>th</sup>, 'Healthy lifestyle' ranked 10<sup>th</sup>. The probable reason for

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high preference for television programmes on self help groups followed by orange cultivation and mango grafting might be that the intensive interventions of the governmental and non-governmental agencies have already created good results of technology dissemination through self help groups in Garo Hills community. The market demand for cash crops like orange and mango also might be another attraction of the Garo women for the television programmes on such topics.

Table 4 clearly indicates that problems faced by farm women were ‘Do not get time due to overloaded home activities’ ranked 1<sup>st</sup> followed by ‘Inconvenience of time’ ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, ‘Electricity problem’ ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, ‘Information is not timely’ ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, ‘Language problem’ ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, ‘Too much technical’ ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, ‘Lack of signals’ ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, ‘Too lengthy of the programme’ ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, ‘Boring’ ranked 9<sup>th</sup>, ‘Costly to buy Radio and Television sets’ ranked 10<sup>th</sup>, ‘Too much commercial breaks’ ranked 11<sup>th</sup>, ‘Lack of knowledge of Radio and Television programmes’ ranked 12<sup>th</sup>. The most important

constraints for farm women respondents in obtaining information from radio and television was due to lack of time because of over loaded household chores. Though there is a matrilineal society making women as the household head, it does not leave them from familial duties and responsibilities and still keeping them busy. Moreover the remoteness of rural areas in West Garo Hills create occasional electricity supply problems and the limitations of Tura All India Radio and Television stations also add to constraints of time inconveniences.

**Table 2: Distribution of farm women according to their preferences of radio programmes:**

Sl.No.	Radio programmes	Most prefer	Prefer	Moderately prefer	Less prefer	Do not prefer	Mean	Ranking
1	News in Garo	58	42	-	-	-	4.58	I
2	Mother's milk is best for baby	48	52	-	-	-	4.48	II
3	Government welfare scheme	38	62	-	-	-	4.38	III
4	Cash crop cultivation to prevent soil erosion	36	64	-	-	-	4.36	IV
5	Nutrition – key to development	35	65	-	-	-	4.35	V
6	Disaster management on earthquake	37	48	15	-	-	4.22	VI
7	Disaster management on soil erosion	32	57	11	-	-	4.21	VII
8	Disaster management on flood	25	61	13	-	-	4.13	VIII
9	Concept of family planning/small family norm	14	76	10	-	-	4.04	IX
10	Soil and land preparation for horticulture crops	-	86	14	-	-	3.86	X

**Table 3: Distribution of farm women according to their preferences of television programmes:**

Sl.No.	Television programmes	Most prefer	Prefer	Moderately prefer	Less prefer	Do not prefer	Mean	Ranking
1.	Self help group	39	61	-	-	-	4.39	I
2.	Orange cultivation in Garo Hills	36	64	-	-	-	4.36	II
3.	Mango grafting	34	65	1	-	-	4.33	III
4.	Integrated farming system	31	69	-	-	-	4.31	IV
5.	Tomato cultivation	28	71	1	-	-	4.27	V
6.	Arts & crafts	26	73	1	-	-	4.25	VI
7.	Health and nutrition	24	76	-	-	-	4.24	VII
8.	Tuber crops	23	76	1	-	-	4.22	VIII
9.	Health and family welfare	21	79	-	-	-	4.21	IX
10.	Healthy lifestyle	20	80	-	-	-	4.20	X

**Table 4: Distribution of farm women according to their problems faced in obtaining information from radio and television:**

Sl.No.	Questions	Yes	No	Mean	Ranking
1	Do not get time due to overloaded home activities	95	5	1.95	I
2	Inconvenience of time	91	9	1.91	II
3	Electricity problem	75	25	1.75	III
4	Information is not timely	44	56	1.44	IV
5	Language problem	42	58	1.42	V
6	Too much technical	39	61	1.39	VI
7	Lack of signals	37	63	1.37	VII
8	Too lengthy of the programme	35	65	1.35	VIII
9	Boring	31	69	1.31	IX
10	Costly to buy Radio and Television sets	15	85	1.15	X
11	Too much commercial breaks	13	87	1.13	XI
12	Lack of knowledge of Radio and Television programmes	12	88	1.12	XII

### CONCLUSION

Television and radio play an important role in the lives of farm women it shows as the major source of information regarding farming for both literate and illiterate women. It gives a positive impact on lives of farm women leading progressively towards rural development.

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