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Research Article

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR AND MEDIA EXPOSURE OF THE TRIBAL ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

Information seeking behavior of the adolescent girls was studied according to the intents in various fields of information and sources of information. The intent for information, area wise was tabulated. The percentage of exposure to each media and their frequency were tabulated. Results revealed most of the respondents (44.2%) were seeking the information for getting complete picture i.e intent 1 in almost all the areas, followed by intent 3 for getting a clearer picture (25.9%). A considerable sample (15.5%) existed for intent 2 to get a changed picture. But intent for verified picture and getting a position in picture i.e intent 4 and 5 existed at a negligible level. With regard to sources of information, the adolescent girls were seeking information through interaction more than any other sources. Newspaper as major reading source of information in print media and can be concluded from the use of electronic media that the respondents had access to TV and radio and were able to seek information using it for general knowledge, entertainment, to understand politics and rituals, to know about food and sexual relationships and to some extent menstrual health.

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INTRODUCTION

The areas of information that the Adolescent girls would like to access information for a specific purpose through interactions, reading, listening and viewing, was operationalised as information seeking behavior. Based on the theory of information intents, Erin (2008), identified five information intents in information seekers, which manifest some kind of change to knowledge structures. They are getting a complete picture, getting a changed picture, getting a clearer picture, getting a verified picture and getting a position in a picture. Intent 1: Getting a complete picture – the seeker initiates a search with the desire to add new information to an already constructed idea; to link together thoughts or ideas; to remember; to build a more expansive vocabulary in a specific knowledge area. Intent 2: Getting a changed picture – the information seeker makes changes to their ideas based upon the information found. Intent 3: Getting a clearer picture – the seeker identifies correlations between ideas and views these ideas with greater definition and understanding. Intent 4: Getting a verified picture – the individual seeks to relieve existing doubt about an idea. Intent 5: Getting a position in a picture – the seeker is able to formulate a viewpoint or opinion. The type of media like print, electronic or new media and frequency of being exposed to such media was operationalised as media exposure.

Russello (2013) and Vonderen and Kinnally (2012) explained media exposure as an effective tool to attain positive behavioral change, because it is conceptually satisfying the individuals to change their behavior. Shah *et al.* (2012) was also in agreement with them by reporting the positive relationship between media exposure and cognitive dissonance.

Verma *et al.* (2011) recommended to inform the girls well in advance about the menstruation, physiological process involved, and its importance to help the girls to accept changes that occur during puberty positively. Moreover, hygiene during menstruation will be maintained, thereby reproductive tract infections can be prevented.

Singh *et al.* (1999) reported that adolescent girls preferred parents and friends apart from doctors and faith healers to seek information in case of menstrual problems. Subhash *et al.* (2011) found mothers are major source of information about menstruation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Experimental research design was adopted and Adilabad District (Telngana State, India) was purposively selected for the study because tribes are densely populated compared to other districts of the state. Out of 52 Tribal Ashram schools in 7 revenue division of the district, four schools from 3 revenue divisions were selected randomly. Hence respondents were

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studying 7th, 8th and 9th classes. Using sequential random sampling technique, a sample of 120 adolescent girls @ 30 from each school, was selected. Schedule was used. Statistical tools of Mean scores, Percentages were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information seeking behavior

It was operationally defined as purposive seeking of information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the present study Erin's (2008) five information intents were considered for the study i.e., getting a complete picture (intent 1), getting a changed picture (intent 2), getting a clearer picture (intent 3), getting a verified picture (intent 4), and getting a position in a picture (intent 5), to understand the information seeking behavior of the sample. Accordingly, what sort of information, with what intent and how the respondents were seeking was studied by means of an interview schedule. Table 1 shows the intent of respondents for seeking information in various fields.

Table 1 Information seeking intent of the respondents
n = 120

S.No.	Area	Intent 1	Intent 2	Intent 3	Intent 4	Intent 5
1	General knowledge	88.3	3.3	8.3	0.0	0.0
2	Entertainment	40.8	15.8	40.8	0.8	1.7
3	Relationships	50.8	18.3	17.5	6.7	6.7
4	Menstrual health	35.0	15.8	27.5	20.0	1.7
5	Sexual relationships	47.5	10.8	20.0	5.0	16.7
6	Politics	24.2	25.0	26.7	20.0	4.2
7	Diseases	36.7	19.2	21.7	22.5	0.0
8	Food	31.7	23.3	38.3	3.3	3.3
9	Nature	40.8	19.2	30.8	5.8	3.3
10	Fashion	43.3	15.8	28.3	7.5	5.0
11	Rituals	46.7	4.2	25.0	13.3	10.8
Mean score		44.2	15.5	25.9	9.5	4.8

Most of the respondents (44.2%) were seeking the information for getting complete picture i.e intent 1 in almost all the areas, followed by intent 3 for getting a clearer picture (25.9%). A considerable sample (15.5%) existed for intent 2 to get a changed picture. But intent for verified picture and getting a position in picture i.e intent 4 and 5 existed at a negligible level.

According to Erin (2008), the information seekers with intent 1 initiates a search with a desire to add new information to an already constructed idea; to link together thoughts or ideas; to remember; to build a more expansive vocabulary in a specific knowledge area. The information seeking process in case of intent 2 seekers is to make changes to their ideas based upon the information found. For getting a clearer picture i.e., intent 3, the seeker identifies correlations between ideas and views; these ideas with greater definition and understanding. With regard to intent 4, the individual seeks information to relieve existing doubt about an idea, while getting a position in picture intent 5 is to formulate a viewpoint or opinion. The age of adolescence is productive. They are trying to explore more to their mind and body to the physical and psychological changes and to insist social change.

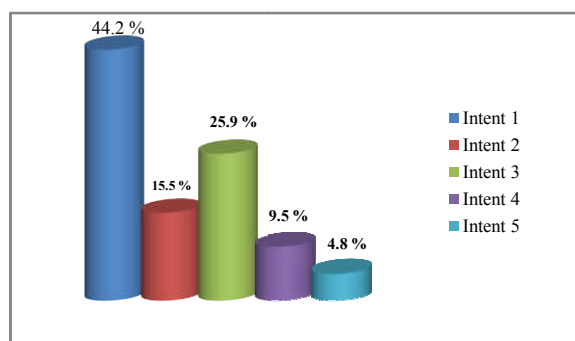


Figure 1 Intents of information seeking

The mean scores of preferences for different areas of information were varying. Intent 1 (44.2%) was high preference selected by the respondents followed by intent 3 (25.9%), intent 2, intent 4 and intent 5. Based on these mean scores, the areas were categorized as highly, moderately and somewhat preferred in the order of priority and tabulated.

With regard to sources of information, the adolescent girls were seeking information through interaction more than any other sources. Among the other sources, were the reading of literature and usage of audio visual aids. They were not finding the meeting or gathering of forums as sources of information.

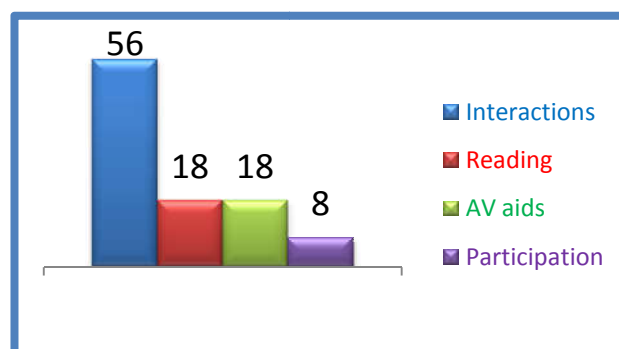


Figure 2 Sources for information seeking

The individuals with whom they were interacting, comprised of friends, parents and grandparents, teachers, siblings etc. Interaction preference in percentages information area wise were tabulated below.

Mothers, teachers and friends were the major interaction categories, through whom the respondents were seeking information. Friends were giving information in the areas of entertainment, sexual relationships and fashion.

Table 2 Media exposure of the respondents

S.No	Media	Exposure %	Frequency %		
			Daily	Weekly	Monthly
1	Viewing TV	99.2	8	76	16
2	Books	91.7	92	8	0
3	Reading news paper	88.3	62	33	5
4	Reading magazines	75.0	11	82	7
5	Mobiles	35.0	10	57	33
6	CD's	30.8	0	59	41
7	Listening to radio	27.5	6	88	6
8	Dramas and street play	23.3	0	11	89
9	Folders/Pamphlets	18.3	0	9	91
10	Computers	3.3	0	75	25
11	Browsing internet	2.5	0	67	33

They were mostly interacting with teachers to seek information on general knowledge, politics, nature and rituals. Mothers were interacted with to seek information on relationships, menstrual health, diseases and food. In case of menstrual health and disease related information, health workers fall under second category. Fathers occupy second category of sources of information to seek information regarding relationship and politics. This data leads to a conclusion that the adolescent girls interact with those who are in affinity geographically and emotionally.

sources. In fact, more and more information materials are being produced every year by health and child welfare departments. But those materials might not reaching the targets. Audio visual aids inclusive of new media like internet and mobiles were also considered as the sources of information in the present study. It can be concluded from the following table 5 the respondents had access to TV and radio and were able to seek information using it for general knowledge, entertainment, to understand politics and rituals, to know about food and sexual relationships and to some extent menstrual health.

Table 3 Interaction preferences of the respondents to seek information

n=120

Area	Friends	Teachers	Mother	Father	Grand mother	Grand Father	Siblings	Health workers	Neighbors
General knowledge	26.7	77.8	19.7	18.1	7.9	9.4	3.9	6.3	8.6
Entertainment	69.4	29.5	6.9	5.2	3.5	5.2	0.0	0.0	1.7
Relationships	16.4	6.8	61.5	57.4	50.5	39.6	6.8	0.0	0.0
Menstrual health	53.6	45.6	67.5	17.9	39.7	4.0	11.9	47.6	6.0
Sexual relationships	64.3	30.7	32.2	16.1	10.2	4.4	13.2	5.8	7.3
Politics	17.2	46.0	20.1	40.2	8.6	14.4	5.7	8.6	8.6
Diseases	37.9	47.3	66.3	45.5	36.0	34.1	5.7	41.7	5.7
Food	17.5	26.3	59.2	19.7	32.9	11.0	2.2	15.4	0.0
Nature	51.0	59.5	34.0	32.3	27.2	25.5	8.5	6.8	11.9
Fashion	51.3	27.2	38.5	16.0	17.6	3.2	11.2	4.8	4.8
Rituals	46.1	59.5	56.5	44.6	41.7	29.8	11.9	1.5	6.0
Mean	41.0	41.5	42.0	28.5	25.1	16.4	7.4	12.6	5.5

Singh *et al.* (1999) reported that adolescent girls preferred parents and friends apart from doctors and faith healers to seek information in case of menstrual problems. Subhash *et al.* (2011) found mothers are major source of information about menstruation.

Dipali *et al.* (2009), conducted a community-based interventional study with 217 school going adolescent girls of Kalamboli, Navi- Mumbai, Maharashtra, on knowledge regarding menstruation, menstrual hygiene and sources of information, taking into account the health implications and prevailing socio-cultural and economic factors.

The sample of the present study had similar preferences. This means, to empower adolescent girls with ARH knowledge, she as an individually and the individuals in proximity to her are also to be covered. Gubhaju (2002) more or less was also of the same opinion as he identified inadequate access to correct productive health information, peer pressure and inadequate access to youth friendly health services etc., as some of the factors that lead to risky behavior among adolescents in general, particularly among unmarried adolescents.

The other sources of information, though less compared to interactions, were reading newspapers, books, magazines and folders. The data was tabulated in Table 4

Table 4 Extent of use of print media by the respondents as source information

n= 120

S.No	Area	News Papers	Books	Magazines	Folders
1	General knowledge	74.7	49.5	4.7	3.1
2	Entertainment	57.3	34.7	1.7	0.0
3	Relationships	19.1	24.6	0.0	2.7
4	Menstrual health	35.7	21.8	6.0	2.0
5	Sexual relationships	32.2	17.5	7.3	2.9
6	Politics	54.6	31.6	2.9	2.9
7	Diseases	41.7	41.7	1.9	1.9
8	Food	54.8	24.1	2.2	0.0
9	Nature	28.9	35.7	0.0	10.2
10	Fashion	46.5	14.4	3.2	0.0
11	Rituals	32.7	17.9	1.5	4.5

Newspaper as major reading source of information followed by books is evident from the above data. It is appreciable that the adolescent girls had access to news paper and possessed newspaper reading habit. Magazines and folders could not be

Table 5 Extent of use of electronic media by the respondents as source of information

n= 120

S.No	Area	Radio	TV	Internet	Mobiles
1	General knowledge	35.4	68.4	8.6	18.1
2	Entertainment	27.8	66.0	1.7	6.9
3	Relationships	8.2	27.3	0.0	2.7
4	Menstrual health	7.9	35.7	0.0	6.0
5	Sexual relationships	5.8	48.2	0.0	5.8
6	Politics	14.4	63.2	5.7	5.7
7	Diseases	17.0	47.3	0.0	1.9
8	Food	13.2	59.2	0.0	2.2
9	Nature	13.6	34.0	0.0	8.5
10	Fashion	4.8	54.5	4.8	1.6
11	Rituals	16.4	61.0	3.0	4.5

They reported significant increase in knowledge and practices after intervention. With regard to sources of information, the respondents felt TV advertisement on sanitary napkins was the only informative source of information for hygienic menstrual practices; which they could not watch along with other family members. It was emphasised on the inclusion of safe hygiene and sanitary practices in the school curricula as well as greater communication between student and lady teachers and between daughters and mothers.

The present study also revealed that participation was also a means for seeking information, but mostly group discussions. The following table 6, presents the percent of adolescent girls seeking information through group discussions.

Table 6 Extent of use of participation by the respondents as source of information

S.No	Area	n= 120		
		Seminar	Group Discussion	Training Programs
1	General knowledge	3.1	56.6	18.9
2	Entertainment	0.0	50.3	0.0
3	Relationships	0.0	16.4	1.4
4	Menstrual health	0.0	21.8	0.0
5	Sexual relationships	0.0	29.2	0.0
6	Politics	0.0	20.1	0.0
7	Diseases	0.0	11.4	5.7
8	Food	2.2	21.9	0.0
9	Nature	1.7	10.2	3.4
10	Fashion	1.6	24.0	3.2
11	Rituals	1.5	29.8	1.5

Group discussions were mostly with friends and occasionally with teachers to get information with regard to general knowledge and entertainment. Table 6. confirms this situation as it also revealed that teachers were contacted mostly (77.8%) of general knowledge and friends (69.4%) for entertainment information. An atmosphere can be created in the school and encouraged to share information with regard to ARH issues through group discussions.

Media exposure

Media exposure was operationally defined as the type of media like print, electronic or new media and frequency of being exposed to such media by the respondents. In the present study, the media exposure of the adolescent girls was studied in terms of most usually available media and how frequently they utilise them.

The degree of utility of media depends on the availability as well as pervasiveness of media. All of the traditional mass media still have great influence over human lives. Books once were supremely influential because they came first before newspapers, magazines, radio or television.

Newspapers and magazines became great influencers after they were developed. Sound recordings and film were still influential. Radio and then television were very influential. As the 20th century closed, TV exposed to untold numbers of images of advertising and marketing, suffering and relief, sexuality and violence, celebrity, and much more.

Results indicated exposure to all sorts of media, but extent and frequency varied. Exposure to TV and books (other than class text books) was higher (99.2% & 91.7% respectively), followed by newspaper (88.3%) and magazines (75.0%). Mobile phones and CDs were also in use, but by around 1/3rd of the respondents. While exposure to books and newspaper was daily, TV and magazines was weekly. In spite of wider vicinity, radio was listened once in a week. Traditional media like dramas and street play was reported once in a month, might be when they go home. Loads of information materials like pamphlets and folders are being printed on various issues; but the results are evident showing their minimum use. Exposure to computers and internet was very low, might be due to inadequate access.

In the present study, the respondents have a limited exposure, i.e., weekly exposure to TV and wide exposure to print

materials like news paper and, books and magazines. As media exposure environment was existing, measures may need to be taken for the supply of adequate and required ARH information regularly news papers and TV to satisfy the information needs on ARH.

CONCLUSION

From the above study it can be concluded that most of the respondents (44.2%) were seeking the information for getting complete picture i.e intent 1 in almost all the areas, followed by intent 3 for getting a clearer picture (25.9%). A considerable sample (15.5%) existed for intent 2 to get a changed picture. But intent for verified picture and getting a position in picture i.e intent 4 and 5 existed at a negligible level. The mean scores of preferences for different areas of information were varying. Intent 1 (44.2%) was high preference selected by the respondents followed by intent 3 (25.9%), intent 2, intent 4 and intent 5.

Newspaper as major reading source of information followed by books is evident from the data. It is appreciable that the adolescent girls had access to news paper and possessed newspaper reading habit. Magazines and folders could not be sources. Audio visual aids inclusive of new media like internet and mobiles were also considered as the sources of information in the present study. It can be concluded that the respondents had access to TV and radio and were able to seek information using it for general knowledge, entertainment, to understand politics and rituals, to know about food and sexual relationships and to some extent menstrual health. Group discussions were mostly with friends and occasionally with teachers to get information with regard to general knowledge and entertainment. Exposure to TV and books (other than class text books) was higher (99.2% & 91.7% respectively), followed by newspaper (88.3%) and magazines (75.0%). Mobile phones and CDs were also in use, but by around 1/3rd of the respondents. While exposure to books and newspaper was daily, TV and magazines was weekly. In spite of wider vicinity, radio was listened once in a week. Traditional media like dramas and street play was reported once in a month, might be when they go home. Loads of information materials like pamphlets and folders are being printed on various issues; but the results are evident showing their minimum use. Exposure to computers and internet was very low, might be due to inadequate access.

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