
Investigating the Effects of Mass Media on Rural Women (Case Study: Kharaji Village, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Iran)

Ayda Alahdini Vandi¹, Ali Hajinejad², Aboozar Paydar³

M.A. Student in Geography and Rural Planning, University of Sistan and **Baluchistan**

Abstract

Today, mass media, having entered the heart of the families, are able to highly affect all aspects of the life of family members. Rural women as one group of the consumers of the mass media programs are affected in different ways. This is a descriptive-analytical study enjoying an applicable nature aiming to explain the effects of mass media on rural women using a case study in Kharaji village, Iran. This study was conducted on all rural women above 15 (N=255), 131 of which were selected using Cochran's formula. Data were analyzed through factor analysis using the statistical package of SPSS. Results of the analysis showed that six identified factors accounted for a total of 82.6% of the variance of the effects of mass media on rural women in Kharaji. The six factors identified are as follows in order of importance: social capital (18.923), cultural capital (16.692), empowerment (15.606), consumerism (14.774), fashionism (9.403) and local customs (7.202).

Key words: Mass media, Rural Development, Rural Women, Kharaji.

1. Introduction

What is today called “social reality” being the base of humans' conscious behaviors is mostly created through mass media. In other words, today's media are dominant sources of the definitions of social realities for society members and consequently guide social behaviors (Farhangi and RoshandelArbatani, 2004: 2007). From the viewpoints of commentators, mass media are basic factors to achieve the comprehensive development (Karampour, 2011: 43). Therefore, mass media are not only the instruments and factors of development, but also the purposes and indicators of development.

Generally, the extensive use of mass media in development programs has been the focus of attention of developing countries. In addition, understanding the role of mass media in national development, developing countries have particularly paid attention to the contribution and place of the media in development programs. These countries concluded that the development as a process of change and movement from the current situation to the desirable situation requires fundamental changes in human behaviors and attitudes. Communication is one of the most important factors in this change and movement, among which the mass media are its most important reason (Gholipour and RoshandelArbatani, 2006: 139).

Achieving the real development is impossible without using the great reservoir of half of the society, i.e. women. In others words, women's participation and the way they play role in

economic structures are one of the indices of national reconstruction and social development (Pasban, 2006: 159). However, there are serious limitations, especially in rural areas regarding the use of information and communication technologies in most Third-World countries. Generally, considering the use of mass media by villagers, few studies are conducted on the use of mass media (Serino and Stevens, 2011: 366).

Statistics and figures show that there is not yet a desirable and acceptable balance regarding the fair participation of women, especially rural women to develop and show their creativities and talents due to various cultural, social and economic reasons in Iran. However, reviewing different studies shows that women, especially in rural areas play an important role in rural production (Sarookhani, 2002: 26).

Considering the important role of the media in developing the societies and accepting the fact that women make half of the society's intellectual potential alongside men, this study mainly aims to investigate the effects of the mass media on rural women using a case study in women in Kharaji located in Western Kiare Rural District in ChaharMahal and Bakhtiari.

2. Review of Literature

Considering the mass media and their significant importance in the societies, various studies are conducted at home and abroad. However, considering the effect of the mass media on rural women, few studies have been conducted so far. The most important studies conducted in this field are as follows.

Results of a study conducted by Jabbarloe Shabestari (2001) entitled "The Especial Role of Internet in Developing Iranian Villages" showed that the use of internet is a valuable opportunity to eliminate the gap between urban and rural areas and consequently develop the Iranian villages. Findings of a study conducted by Sam Aram (2007) aiming to evaluate the use of the press by Iranian villagers and its role in rural development showed that the level of education, type of job and level of communication with the city have the greatest effect on the use of the press by villagers and consequently provide the conditions for rural development.

Shakibazadeh (2007) conducted a study on the creation and the effect of the messages in the mass media on health. The results showed that considering some points such as clarifying the purpose of the program and paying attention to the audiences and their needs, the mass media can promote the society's health and guarantee achieving the above-mentioned goal. Findings of a study conducted by Akhtarshahr (2007) aiming to evaluate the role of the mass media in religious socialization showed that the mass media can positively affect the individuals' socialization and serve as effective instruments to promote the sublime human values and nurture the moral virtues.

RahmaniFazli and Boozari (2009) conducted a study on achieving the sustainable rural development using the mass media. The results showed that the mass media slightly increased the economic awareness of the villagers in Qazvin (Iran), although they enjoyed relatively suitable infrastructures and had access to the media.

Findings of a study conducted by Kazemzadeh and Koochi (2010) aiming to investigate the role of modern mass media in cultural development of the human society showed that the media can improve and accelerate national and local development.

Findings of a study conducted by Hajinejad and AladdinVandi (2013) aiming to investigate the role of the mass media in social aspects of life of rural women in Kharaji showed that among twenty five study variables, three variables of the effect of the media on increasing the public knowledge and awareness, the effect of the media on informing the villagers of day issues and

the effect of the media on increasing the level of education were mostly affected by the mass media.

Findings of a study (Dahal, 2013) entitled “Power, Empowering Women in Nepal using Radio and Media” showed that the media played an important role in various processes of social changes in Nepal's women.

3. Method

This is a descriptive-analytical study enjoying an applicable nature. Data were collected using two documentary and field methods. This study was conducted on all rural women above 15 years of age (N=255) in Kharaji. Considering time and financial limitations, 131 women were selected using Cochran's formula. Main research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire, the (face) validity of which was approved by the university professors. A pilot study was conducted outside the scope of study using 30 questionnaires to evaluate the questionnaire reliability. Cronbach's alpha was estimated 0.861 using the statistical package of SPSS and indicated high reliability and validity of the research instrument. It should be noted that the study variables were in the range of five point Likert scale (very low=1, low= 2, average= 3, high=4 and very high= 5), and exploratory factor analysis was used to analyze the statistics.

4. Findings

Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Findings of the study on the level of education of respondents showed that 18, 25, 34, 13 and 10 percent were illiterate, had a degree from literacy movement organization and primary school, a degree from middle and high school, diploma and academic degree, respectively. Findings on job status showed that 35, 40, 15 and 10 percent of respondents were unemployed, housekeepers, holders of a part-time job and holders of government jobs, respectively. In addition, findings on the use of the mass media showed that 100, 44,5, 60, 13, 83 and 95 percent of respondents had access to television, satellite, publications, radio, internet, mobile and phone, respectively.

Identifying the most important effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji using factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was used to investigate the internal correlation, classify the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji in terms of some limited factors and determine the value of the variance explained by all factors. The purpose was to achieve the dimensions latently exist in the collection of items. In this study investigating the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji, KMO was estimated equal to 0.716 indicating the suitable status of data for factor analysis. Bartlett's value was estimated equal to 3038.182 being significant at the confidence level of 99%.

Determining the Numbers and Factors

In order to determine the numbers and factors in this study, some factors were accepted, the special values of which were higher than 1. Therefore, six factors with special values higher than

1 were extracted. Table (1) shows the number of extracted factors, their special values, percentage variance of all factors and cumulative frequency of the factors' percentage variance.

Special Value: It indicates the portion of each factor towards the total variables' variances and the higher it is, the more important and effective the factor will be. Findings presented in Table (1) show that the six identified factors explain a total of 82.6% of the total variance of the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji and the first to the sixth factors explain 18.923, 16.606, 14.774, 9.403 and 7.202 percent of the variance of the dependent variable, respectively.

Table1 –Factors extracted regarding the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji

Factor	Special Value	Percentage Variance of Special Value	Cumulative Percentage of Variance
First	7.857	18.923	18.923
Second	2.922	16.692	35.615
Third	1.824	15.606	51.221
Fourth	1.431	14.774	65.995
Fifth	1.318	9.403	75.398
Sixth	1.167	7.202	82.600

Factor Rotation: Verimax method was used for factor rotation in this study. In this stage, variables with factor loadings higher than 0.50 were considered significant and are presented in Table 2.

Nominating Factors

First factor: Results presented in Table 2 show that the first factor includes the variables (N=11) of the effect of the mass media on trust among family members, trust the domestic product, trust the authorities, relationships among family members, relationships with neighbors, relationships with relatives, participation in group works, attending public rural meetings, attending religious ceremonies, cooperation with women in neighboring villages and sense of sodality with rural women explaining a total of 18.923% of the variance of the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji. Considering the fact that all of the above-mentioned factors somehow explain the variables of social capital, the first factor was called social capital.

Second factor: The second factor explaining 16.692% of the variance of the dependent variable includes 9 variables of the effect of the mass media on women's tendency towards education, tendency towards academic education, family health status, string the ningthe Persian language, participation in training classes, reading books and newspapers, physical and financial participation in constructing the cultural buildings in the village, lack of teaching the local dialect to the children and teaching the Persian language to them, and familiarity with the life style of other rural women. Considering the fact that all of the above-mentioned factors somehow indicate the cultural effects of the mass media on rural women, the second factor was called cultural.

Third factor: Results presented in Table 2 show that the third factor includes the variables of the effect of the mass media on learning skills such as cooking, needlework and sewing, general information, how to behave the husband and other family members, familiarity with non-Persian

languages, decision-making ability and awareness of personal rights. Explaining 15.606% of the variance of the dependent variable, the 8 above-mentioned variables indicate the effect of the mass media on the skills and abilities of rural women. Therefore, the third factor was called empowerment.

Fourth factor: This factor includes 6 variables of the effect of the mass media on overusing cosmetics, buying luxury and unnecessary goods, discarding not too old equipments, overusing the energy resources (gas and electric), overusing water and using unnecessary clothing explaining a total of 14.774% of the variance of the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji .The above-mentioned variables indicate the effect of the mass media on the abuse of equipment and facilities. Therefore, the fourth factor was called consumerism.

Fifth factor: Results presented in Table 2 show that the fifth factor includes the variables of the effect of the mass media on women's tendency towards using the clothing advertised in the media, using the foods advertised in the media, tendency towards unnecessary trips and tendency towards annually changing furniture explaining 9.403% of the variance of the dependent variable. Considering the fact that the above-mentioned variables indicate the tendency of rural women in Kharaji towards using unnecessary updated facilities and equipment advertised in the media, the fifth factor was called fashionism.

Sixth factor: Results presented in Table 2 show that the sixth factor includes the variables of using local clothing, using local languages and participating in ancient festivals. The above-mentioned variables explaining 7.202% of the variance of the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji indicate the effects of the media on local customs of rural women under study. Therefore, the sixth factor was called local customs.

Table2: Nominating factors, rotated factor coefficients of the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji

Factor	Component	Factor Loading
Social Capital (18.923)	Trust among family members	0.834
	Trust the domestic products	0.675
	Relationships among family members	0.726
	Cooperation with women in neighboring villages	0.617
	Sense of solidarity with the rural women	0.719
	Attending religious ceremonies	0.663
	Attending public rural meetings	0.628
	Participation in group works	0.731
	Relationships with relatives	0.807
	Relations with neighbors	0.713
	Trust in authorities	0.758
Cultural (16.692)	Tendency towards academic education	0.765
	Tendency towards education	0.721
	Family health status	0.769
	Strengthening the Persian language	0.685

	Reading books and newspapers	0.781
	Familiarity with the life style of other rural women	0.733
	Lack of teaching the local dialect to the children and teaching the Persian language to them	0.694
	Participation in training classes	0.763
	physical and financial participation in constructing the cultural buildings in the village	0.680
Empowerment (15.606)	Learning cooking	0.707
	Awareness of personal rights	0.736
	Decision-making ability	0.702
	General Information	0.669
	How to behave the husband and other family members	0.521
	Familiarity with non-Persian languages	0.595
	Learning needlework	0.672
	Learning sewing	0.654
Consumerism (14.774)	Overusing cosmetics	0.596
	Using unnecessary clothing	0.603
	Overusing water	0.565
	Overusing the energy resources (gas and electric)	0.611
	Discarding not too old equipment	0.576
	Buying luxury and unnecessary goods	0.523
Fashions (9.403)	Using the clothing advertised in the media	0.572
	Tendency towards annually changing furniture	0.561
	Tendency towards unnecessary trips	0.516
	Women's tendency towards using the foods advertised in the media	0.529
Local Customs (7.202)	Using local clothing	0.556
	Using local languages	0.519
	Participating in the ancient festivals	0.502

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Considering their various programs, the mass media entering the families highly affect the consumers. These effects are variously reflected in the heart of the families. Selecting the rural women in Kharaji as the statistical population, this study aims to identify the effects of the mass media on rural women. Results of the study showed that the effects of the mass media on study rural women are summarized in six main factors. Theses 6 identified factors explained a total of 82.600% of the variance of the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji. These factors are as follows in order of importance: social capital, cultural capital, empowerment, consumerism, fashions and local customs. Considering the social capital as the most important - factor identified regarding the effects of the mass media on rural women in Kharaji, it can be said that the programs provided by the media should be produced and broadcasted to strengthen the social capital since this factor plays an important role in developing sustainability in rural communities and lack of attention to this issue weakens the social capital as one of the most

important bases of rural development. Cultural factor is the second factor identified regarding the effects of the mass media on study rural women. Considering this factor, it can be said that the mass media can strengthen and weaken the cultural variables of the rural women. Therefore, it is recommended to provide the cultural packages offered by the mass media to strengthen the cultural variables of the rural women. Considering other identified factors and the effects of the media on rural women, it is recommended to provide programs suitable for the society and take careful measures to provide, codify and broadcast the programs provided by the mass media.

References

- 1) Akhtarshahr, Ali (2007). "Mass Media and Their Role in Religious Socialism," *Marefat*, Volume 16, No. 123, pp: 101-117.
- 2) Dahal S (2013). "Power, empowerment and community radio: Media by and for women in Nepal," *Women's Studies International Forum*, Volume 40, Pages 44–55.
- 3) Farhangi, Ali Akbar, RoshandelArbatani, Taher, Barghi, Michael (2004). "Attitudes towards Theoretical Bases of Management of Media Organizations," *Knowledge of Management*, V. 17, No. 66, 85-114.
- 4) Gholipour, Arian, RoshandelArbatani, Taher (2006). "Development-centered Media Agencies, Rural Development Base, Investigating and Explaining the Relationship between the Consistency of Provincial Television Programs and Rural Development in Ardebil," *Village and Development*, V. 9, No. 4, pp: 137-176.
- 5) Hajinejad, Ali and Aladdin Vandi, Aida (1392). "A Study of the Role of Mass Media in Social Aspects of Life of Rural Women (Case Study: Kharaji Located in Kiar County)," *Journal of Human Sciences*, V. 5, No. 30.
- 6) JabbarlooShabestari, Bahram. (2001). "The Special Role of Internet in Developing the Iranian Villages," Conference on the Role of Information Technology in Employment, pp: 585-594.
- 7) Karampour, Shokoofe (2011). "The Role of Mass Media in Cultural Development of Societies," National Conference on Cultural Industry and its Role in Sustainable Development, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, March 7 and 8.
- 8) Kazemzadeh, Moosa and Koochi, Kamal (2010). "The Role of Modern Mass Media in Cultural Development, Barriers and Solutions," *Cultural Research Letter*, V. 12, No. 12, pp: 183-212.
- 9) Pasban, Fatemeh (2006). "Economic and Social Factors Affecting the Employment of Rural Women in Iran (1968 to 2004)," *Agricultural Economics and Development*, V. 14, No. 53, pp: 153-176.
- 10) RahmaniFazli, Abdulreza and Boozari, Sima (2009). "Achieving the Sustainable rural Development Emphasizing the Central Role of the Mass Media. Case Study: Villages in Qazvin, Geography and Development," No. 14, pp: 101-120.
- 11) Sam Ara, Ezzatollah (2007). "Villagers' Access to the Press and Its Role in Rural Development, Village and Development," V. 10, No. 1, pp: 177-216.
- 12) Sarookhani, Bagher (2002). *Sociology of Communication*, Tehran: Information.
- 13) Serino, S. R., Stevens, MalkatWelzi (2011). *Development Communication in the Third World*, Translated by Shaban AliBahrapour. Cultural and Social Studies Publications, Tehran.
- 14) Shakibazadeh, Elham (2007). "Production and Effect of Messages in the Mass Media with an Approach to Health, Research and Assessment Issues," No. 49, pp: 9-28.