CHAPTER – III

INFORMATION SUPPORT TO ECONOMICALLY WEAKER WOMEN: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature review is very imperative that the researcher reviews the literature not only to compare the results with the previous results and to present new and perhaps with unique dimensions. This chapter presents the literature that has been reviewed in relation to the information support to economically weaker women. The information needs of economically weaker women are discussed in the present chapter. The information needs and seeking of information of economically weaker women as well as the information available to them are examined.

The primary purpose of the literature review has been to identify research studies that could potentially inform the development of the main qualitative and quantitative research components of the current study i.e. the state wide survey of 1,800 economically weaker women of Karnataka state are being identified. It forms only a small part of the overall project, the key purpose is to provide a sound basis for the empirical research. The primary focus of the review was to identify the research conducted in the last ten years on women’s information and help-seeking behaviour in relation to support information. The literature reviewed is detailed in two sections – Worldwide and Indian. Again under each section it is further divided into subsections.

3.2 WORLD LITERATURE

3.2.1 Rural Community

Harande [1] observes that rural areas of Nigeria are still not developed and the quality of life of people in the rural areas continues to deteriorate throughout all tiers of government of both politicians and the military regimes. The rural communities’ accessibility to pertinent information becomes extremely difficult and impractical. Effective information service in the rural community enhances development.

Anwar and Supaat [2] present an analysis based on the findings of a study of the information needs of the population of a cluster of 3 Malaysian villages with no library service. Out of 300 households 108 individuals were interviewed during Feb 1996. Results emphasize that the needs of the rural population must be investigated when planning rural library services.
Yates and Wotherspoon [3] report the results of a questionnaire survey, conducted among UK rural communities, to examine the current information needs of users in these communities, their difficulties in obtaining information and to assess the acceptability of information provision through information technology. They conclude that there is currently a much greater awareness of the information needs of rural users, but this awareness is stifled to some extent by factors regarded as being beyond the control of library authorities and others. Great reliance is being placed on the use of information technology to provide information to and within rural communities.

Beer, Marcella and Baxter [4] report the results of a study of the rural information needs in the Shetland Islands areas. It is aimed at gaining a greater understanding of the operation of the Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau (SICAB) based on interviews with 50 leaders within the rural community who might be consulted by those needing information and advice, within 2 parishes in the North Mainland of Shetland. Those interviewed included: social workers; nurses; doctors; youth and community workers; teachers, care workers; shopkeepers; a tenants association representative; and both Community and Shetland Islands Councilors. Findings suggested that these community leaders were acting as a major rural advice and information source and that provision could be greatly enhanced if greater use were made of the Citizens Advice Bureau as a resource whose trained staff and library could provide a wider and more current knowledge base.

Momodu [5] examined the information needs of rural populations in the Ekpoma district. These include information needs and information sources, and the information gathering habits discovered. Issa [6-7] describes the information needs of rural dwellers and information provision available to rural dwellers in Kwara state. He also discusses the role of the popular mass-media of information dissemination such as the Radio, Television and Newspaper conclude that it is in the combined efforts on the parts of these information professionals that the challenges of information dissemination to these rural dwellers actually lies.

Etebu [8] observes that in Africa, there are different methods of providing information for the people. These are the traditional African methods and the foreign or organizational methods. He highlights the importance of traditional African methods of providing information to rural dwellers for sustainable economic, political, communal, and social development.
Talbot [9] studied the information needs of rural communities, as part of the SUN (Sites User Networks using Tele-applications for Community Development) Teleregions project in the North of England. Focuses its attention on developing a ‘strategy’ for the development of telematics in the rural North, it contributes to the RIS project, which is developing a web-based application for citizens and SMEs throughout the region.

Barron [10] reports the Community Information Needs/Library Services (CIN/LS) project which was undertaken to address a series of problems related to the public library’s role in the delivery of information to rural citizens. The major problem or issue was acknowledged as a familiar one. One which was much easier to identify than to tackle. He stated that, people require information and the mission of libraries is to acquire and disseminate information to meet the needs of people in their service areas.

3.2.2 Rural Women

Nwagha [11] describes some factors contributing to the low standard of living of rural people in Africa in general and rural women in particular, and highlights the ineffectiveness of the various governments’ programmes to redress the situation highlighted. A survey conducted in Nigeria reveals that rural women, who are predominantly illiterate, are ignorant of modern methods of improving agricultural production and of other ways of self-development. The dissemination of vital information that could assist rural dwellers to improve themselves and their economic status is recommended as an effective means of rural development. The use of radio jingles is also recommended to make information dissemination to rural people effective.

Mooko [12] investigates the information needs and information-seeking behavior of rural women residing in three non-urban villages in Botswana. The total population of the study was divided into two groups, opinion leaders and women residing in the three villages. The women residing in the villages were either single heads of households or married. The family situations that led them to seek information included health, agriculture, employment, family violence, and basic needs for the family. In addition, the women needed information on government aided funding, welfare subsidies and policies, and training. The sources of information used included village nurses, community welfare officers, and traditional doctors, other women in the villages, village chiefs, and agricultural demonstrators.
The study by Liyane [13] explores the media needs of the rural women and how they are fulfilled in the areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Through a normative survey method and critical incident technique, 109 women were interviewed and questionnaires administered to 18 community leaders as well as observation for primary data. Evidently, there is need for suitable media where information on agriculture, health, education, business, legal, and career opportunities as well as self-help related activities can be accessed. Such media should be available closer to home environment, in visual and sound formats, orally delivered by people closer to the community such as friends, relatives and neighbours as well as community leaders. Largely, the findings are consistent with similar studies conducted elsewhere in the developing countries.

Saleh [14] notices that there is a lack of proper information dissemination mechanism in the country and also notes that there are basically five sources through which rural women satisfy their information needs. These are: Government and its agents, Elite groups, Relatives and friends, Market women, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The channels of information available to them are both formal and informal. The formal channels include radio and television, Local Government information office, agricultural extension workers, primary health care workers, and the only Public Library in the zone situated in Monguno. The informal channels on the other hand constitute Village or Ward Heads, the School Headmaster, The Imams (Religious Leaders) and other elite group in the community. It is very clear from the sources and channels of information used by the rural women, that their Information seeking behavior is mainly informal. They align more to information got from friends, relatives, husbands, sons and daughters, and market women. The rural woman hardly seeks information in a formal way through formal sources or channels. Watching television or listening to radio available, is seen as luxury only men can afford.

Young [15] examines women’s information needs and information seeking behaviour and to develop more effective delivery methods for government information. Women play a major information-seeker role. Women’s information seeking experiences and preferences are diverse. Women from low socio-economic backgrounds and minority groups are disadvantaged in information seeking.

Abduholikov [16] focuses on rural women and their social status as a measure of social progress. This survey was carried out in two villages: Kistakuz, a large village in Khujand district and Formankurgan, a much smaller village in Nan district.
Rural women in Tajikistan face formidable barriers created by their family status, socio-economic hardship and male dominance over women inside and outside the family.

*Ukachi* [17] focuses on rural women as information users in order to ascertain the information needs and information seeking behaviour of rural women. The barrier to information flow to them was also identified. The result showed that the rural women do not have access to adequate information because the libraries as well as the local government have been inefficient. Recommendations such as; organizing adult education programmes, sending health workers, agricultural Extension workers, etc. to educate the rural women were made to ameliorate the situation. Based on a study carried out *Okunna* [18] found out what communication media are used by rural women in Nigeria as sources of development.

### 3.2.3 Rural Development

*Mchombu* [19] presents the findings of a study undertaken to determine the need for information support for rural development in Malawi. He examines the information provision system of rural communities, including the information exchange patterns and needs, and looks at extensive workers, their role in information communication and their effectiveness. The findings indicate that: information is needed in the areas of health, agriculture, and income generation activities; information is exchanged mostly on social occasions, utilizing personal and interpersonal sources; and the efficacy of extension workers as providers of information is rather low.

*Mchombu* [20] summarizes a study conducted at the Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana, aimed at assessing rural peoples' need for development information. The findings reveal that rural peoples' need for information is in two broad categories: i.e. first is common information needs found throughout the different communities participating in this study; and second is locating specific needs that are related to the specific environment of a community. Awareness of information needs is in some cases very low; hence, methods used to assess needs have to be both diagnostic as well as direct questioning of respondents to obtain a full picture of rural information needs. An outline of an information strategy is proposed that will act as the foundation for the second phase. In most of rural Africa, there is an acute shortage of relevant and timely information to support the efforts of the community and individuals to bring about development.
3.2.4 Women Farmers

Seriki [21] describes a study of the information needs of the Ibillo rural community in Edo State, Nigeria who are largely engaged in cassava production. The study revealed that the community's information needs centred around cassava farming techniques, improved cassava varieties, marketing strategies and crop production management. Makes recommendations for the provision of the required information for rural development and suggests that Nigerian library schools should integrate courses on rural librarianship into their curriculum.

The information needs of women farmers in the Mubi region of Nigeria was evaluated by Elizabeth [22] using a multi-stage random sampling process involving 300 respondents registered with the Agricultural Development Project of Adamawa State in 2006. Results indicate that women farmers required information on weather, soil management, credit availability, and farm management, besides awareness on improved seedlings, fertilizer and insecticides, animal health, future market prices, land tenure, child immunization, and vaccination for animals. The inferential statistics indicate that the responses were not similar for most of the information resource needs. The information needs of women farmers in these locations should, therefore, be tailored along the preferred needs.

Okwu and Umoru [23] aimed at determining women farmers’ agricultural information needs and accessibility, using Apa local government area of Benue State as a case study with 65 women. The result showed highest information needs in the areas of pesticides and fertilizer applications and improved farm implements. Husbands, fellow women and mass media were the main sources of agricultural information to women farmers and accessibility of information from these sources was relatively high. Age, educational level and income of women farmers showed significant relationships with their accessibility to agricultural information. It is recommended that enough information should be provided in the needed areas and women adult literacy and economic empowerment programmes should be given serious attention to enhance their access to needed agricultural information.

Rezvanfar and Vahedi [24] carried out a study in the rural communities of Shirvan-chardavol district of the state of Iran. A sample of 125 farm women was selected using cluster sampling technique. Results show that the information needs of farm women in study area are mostly occupation driven. Farm women were found to have a need for information about dairy farming but also for home management. Most
of the farm women depend on friends, husbands, neighbours and other native sources like local leaders and educated people for their information needs. Their primary and most important sources of information include friends, husband, neighbours and other native sources. The study recommends that the farm women in Ilam state urgently should be provided with a formal system of information provision like the services of extension personal and agricultural information officers. Farm women in Ilam State of Iran play an important role in managing different kinds of dairy farming and home affairs.

Otolo’s [25] study focuses on women farmers in Nigeria, the case of oil producing communities of Delta State. The objective of the study is mainly to determine the information needs of rural women farmer, information sources and to find out if their information needs differ according to the different foods produced and the constraint to obtain relevant information. The result of the study should enable librarians and policy makers know the information they would provide for these group of users.

Walker [26] describes a new tool for rural women which international agencies have begun to construct telecentres as a major effort to "cross the digital divide" between those with access to information and those without. Women however, even though living and working in close proximity to the telecentres, have not been able to use them effectively. This new tool is affordable, adaptable and capable of carrying multiple language tracks. It offers farm women direct access to information they need to improve their productivity without relying on someone from outside, such as an agricultural extension agent- to bring the information to them. It also provides a way of accessing information in their own time and at their own speed. The user is able to open up the programme, move to different sections as needed, or linger over parts that they particularly want to go over again and again.

3.2.5 Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Wagacha [27] looks specifically at information in its dimension of content and on issues related to education, employment, political representation and governance, health and nutrition, economic empowerment and security.

Needs of women’s movements in Georgia [28] were assessed Women’s NGOs in Georgia have diverse organizational profiles, although most are relatively young. The most common NGO activities are women’s education and direct fieldwork, both of which are usually related to nature conservation and biodiversity
issues. Overall objective of the project is Women empowerment through structural capacity building for women’s NGOs, support of female civil initiatives and informational promotion of women’s movement in Georgia through development of proper information policies and comprehensive research of existing needs in female NGO community. Results of the project are strengthening of women’s NGOs as well as their unity for positive change and creation of consultation, informational, training and methodological facility for women’s NGOs. This project used Qualitative research method including expert focus-groups, interviews in-depth, field visits and evaluation of the project documentation of the NGOs and policy statements of the developments agencies and grant making institutions have been conducted. Research was focused on outline of the needs and restrictions of the women’s NGOs in Georgia.

Cho and Eun [29] describe Women’s Development center established by a local government in Korea - Gyeonggi Women’s Development Center to empower women’s socio-economic activities. This study lists various lessons Koreans have learned through the center, which is dedicated to encouraging women’s leadership roles in various informational fields, to contribute to the empowerment of all women in the world.

Based on the assumption that cultural, political, economic, and other factors will influence the degree to which ICT are used by women and the degree to which women benefit from the information revolution Daly [30] recognizes that the technology opens new possibilities and in that respect not only serves to facilitate the implementation of policies but also serves to allow new approaches to often intractable problems.

3.2.6 ICT and Internet

Achugbue and Anie observe that [31] in most states in Nigeria, more particularly Delta state investment in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has focused mainly on the urban areas although ICTs have a great potential to help meet the needs of rural female farmers and to benefit rural communities. Information initiatives and policies should therefore be tailored towards strengthening the grass roots, with special emphasis on women, and be developed in places without public libraries or other information resources. This may be achieved by setting up functional integrated information systems in rural and peri-urban communities, which
would bring a new and diverse resource to enable female farmers to access information.

*Frylink* [32] focusing on the information needs of remote, rural users, reviews Australian initiatives to meet these needs. Innovative activities within the tertiary sector and the positioning of Curtin University of Technology and its Library and Information Service in particular are highlighted. These include strategies such as Curtin Learning Link and LIS Web (used as a gateway to scholarly information and as a promotional tool). It covered joint ventures through alliance with partners to develop and supply technology based services such as patron initiated interlibrary loan requests and interactive information literacy programmes. Relying on a detailed communications audit, gaps in communication infrastructure in regional Western Australia are pointed out. The effect of these gaps on the effective delivery of innovative information technology (IT) based distance education and concomitant library and information support is a concern. It also covers the measures implemented to close the gaps such as educational television, telecentres, satellite delivery, narrowcast television, teleconferencing, community broadcasting and on-line information services are covered.

*Ochieng* [33] analyzed how the Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) can empower young women in the education and economic sectors, as well as their advocacy to end violence against women and the girl children. The focus is on the young women in Africa. Examples of different initiatives and strategies by women organizations to empower young women through ICTs are highlighted.

*Bellard* [34] examines attitudes toward computer/IT careers among women, mostly employed, who are considering career options. Most of the 42 women in this questionnaire study were attending career transition workshops conducted by non-profit organizations. Specifically the study focuses on computer usage and personal knowledge of women in IT in relation to attitudes toward computer/IT jobs, aspects of the IT work environment, and preparation for computer/IT careers. Consistent with recent studies, the women have positive attitudes toward computers and IT. The findings suggest there may be value in marketing computer/IT careers as creative activities and marketing computer/IT careers to women who are already in the work force.

The study focused on poor women’s access to and use of ICTs in *Bangladesh* [35]. The core study draws on policy papers, case studies, secondary research
publications and correspondence with organizations in Bangladesh. Case studies from South Asia are used as much as possible to provide regional best practices where women share similar gender-specific roles and constraints. Policy and program recommendations are included in the final section of the study, and are drawn from anecdotal and qualitative analysis. There is little relevant ICT data available to support this study.

*Kwapong* [36] feels that to support women to make the best of modern information for their personal development, their willingness to pay for the use of an ICT facility based on their socio-economic characteristics needs to be assessed. There is also the issue of women being technology unfriendly. This calls for making information technology women friendly in the light of adult educational methodologies.

*Wafula and Dennis* [37] study explores whether ICT use is feasible in the rural areas of South Africa and Kenya by using largely survey research method. The survey involved interviewing 400 women aged between 16-60 from both Kenya and South Africa. The multistage sampling data was obtained from Census household data of the magisterial districts of Umlalazi i.e. Eshowe, Amatikulu, Gigindlovu and Mtunzini (South Africa), and from the sub-divisions of the Kaplamai Division in Trans-Nzoia district, i.e. Kimoson, Sinyerere, Sitatunga and Makutano (Kenya). The survey results signify that problems of access and exclusion are still predominant. For instance, while a meagre average of 11 (5.4%) of the respondents in South Africa use modern technologies such as the computer/internet, more than half (115:57.5%) of the respondents faced problems ranging from affordability to distance and time. Additionally, there is a marked correlation between educational level, type of ICTs accessed on one hand and information need and purposes on the other. It is observed that alone, ICTs are insufficient for significant benefits to emerge. Accordingly information ethical challenges are identified and recommendations made.

*Lennie* [38] presents findings from the evaluation of a feminist action research project that aimed to enhance Queensland rural women’s access to interactive communication technologies (ICTs). Project activities aimed to be empowering and inclusive. They included online conversation groups, workshops and audio conferences. A model of women’s empowerment is used that comprises social, technological, political and psychological forms of empowerment. The evaluation results suggest that many participants experienced each of these forms of empowerment. The online
group link (women’s electronic link) was considered particularly important in facilitating women’s empowerment. However, the analysis also indicated various disempowering effects of participating in the project. Case studies of two participants illustrate these contradictory effects. These results suggest that enhancing rural women’s technological empowerment is urgently required, given that use of ICTs is becoming increasingly important to their leadership and participation in community development.

Olorunda [39] analyses how women can realize economic development through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT); one of the ways this can be guaranteed is for information centers especially public libraries in developing countries to automate their systems, form networks for resource sharing and take advantage of the numerous benefits of IT, especially data sharing capabilities of the Internet. The information can play a vital role in the economic development of women in developing countries. The peculiarity of information needs of women required to promote economic development goals was analyzed.

Aitkin [40] analyzed how rapid proliferation and development of telecommunications and information technology are effecting women in developing countries, particularly in rural and remote areas by examining trends in rural telecommunication in general, focusing primarily on rural telephone system installations, positive benefits for women, obstacles preventing women from taking full advantage of telecommunication tools and opportunities.

Kamba [41] highlights on the value and usefulness of information as it affects rural community development and the need for it to be managed effectively by promoting the role of information through the establishment of innovative community information centre (ICIC) which will strengthen and empower the rural people to be among global players in the knowledge-based economy and also it will provide the opportunities for rural community development in general. Finally provides a framework for which library and information services can be sustained to foster rural community development by making information as influential factor, which serves as an agent of social, educational, economic and political development.

3.2.7 Enterprises and Business

Ikoja [42] presents insights into the information needs and information seeking strategies of women in the Ugandan informal sector, explores and represents their business characteristics and sources, the channels they use to access information and
the constraints they face in information seeking. One hundred and seventeen women from five districts were sampled through snowballing and disproportionate sampling techniques and recommends actions to be taken to make business information available to women.

*Mchombu* [43] investigates information needs of women in small businesses in Botswana in order to establish how these needs arise, and factors which influence information seeking habits. The identified information needs were business management, sources of financial assistance, business diversification and legal information. The study also found that women obtain most of their business information through informal channels and that women lack awareness of formal information resources.

*Jorosi* [44] investigates the information needs and information seeking behaviours of SME (small and medium-sized enterprises) managers in Botswana’s manufacturing industry, using a self-administered questionnaire. The key findings of the study indicate that: SME managers consider customer and competition in formation to be the most important types of information to their firms; SME managers devote a significant amount of time to active information-seeking and on average spend approximately five hours per week seeking information; SME managers spend time seeking customer and competition information; they use both personal (e.g. customers, business associates) and impersonal sources (news papers, broadcast media and government publications); information source selection is largely determined by accessibility and ease of use; and managers use information for making important decisions and performing their routine activities.

*Ikoja* and *Ocholla* [45] report the results of a study aimed at identifying the information needs and uses of the informal sector in Uganda. This study has largely employed qualitative research methodologies, such as the critical incidence technique for interviews with 602 informal sector entrepreneurs from a variety of trades. Observations of the entrepreneurs’ work environments and historical methods were also employed. The results suggest that modern/exotic models of information transfer based on textual media and ICT exhibit less impact on the entrepreneurs’ information needs and use at macro levels because of poverty, illiteracy and poor information infrastructure. It is noted that most ‘elite’ models share a platform with information behaviour of entrepreneurs at the micro levels. The study concludes that an appropriate model for information behaviour for the information poor community
must be grounded on oral traditions and indigenous knowledge and be sensitive to poverty, infrastructure and illiteracy. Recognition is also made of the need for information repackaging and the use of appropriate media for information provision.

Robert Iko [46] examines the information-seeking and communicating behavior of the entrepreneurs in the informal sector of Uganda through observation methodology. Findings revealed that results from observational methodology compare favorably with those of other methods, such as surveys by means of traditional interviews or questionnaires. It established that entrepreneurs seek and communicate information mostly informally and orally. The study concludes that the observation method is essential in qualitative research and greatly supplements other methods and instruments essential in triangulation for verifying the validity and reliability of research results. It recommends that LIS professionals and researchers apply this method, since it provides them with additional, if not new, paradigm for information science research.

3.2.8 Health

Graydon and others [47] assessed the information needs of 70 women with breast cancer being treated by surgery, chemotherapy or radiation therapy. Information needs were measured by the breast cancer version of the Toronto Informational Needs Questionnaire (TINQ-BC). All women had high information needs, irrespective of type of treatment received. They mainly wanted information about their disease, treatments and investigative tests. An examination of individual items on the TINQ-BC revealed that all women wanted information about recurrence, specifically they wanted to know if the cancer would come back and how to tell if it had recurred. Jodie and Braunack [48] report the findings of an exploratory study about the information women diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) want to know about their condition and the consequences of this information for future treatment and health outcomes.

Focus groups and in-depth telephone interviews were used by Bang [49] to develop a telephone questionnaire later completed by people 55 years and older about their use of a Health Information Support Telephone Service (HISTS). Preliminary findings identified an equal number of well-educated male and female callers, who called for information for themselves. The confidentiality of the service was very important to respondents and may have impacted the time to recruit people for the focus groups. Describes a pilot test completed by three Consumer Health
Information/Resource Centres (CHIRC). An Info Script was used by health professionals to direct people to information centres. Results indicate that over half of the participants stated they visited the information centre because they were given an Info Script and that they would not have gone without the Info Script.

3.2.9 Foreign Women

Malik [50] assessed the information needs of foreign women in Malaysia, with a particular focus on the Sudanese community. The study identified the main information needs, the sources they used to find the information, their use of the library and the types of materials they utilized in seeking information. Ninety copies of questionnaires were distributed to the Sudanese women living in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. The majority of the respondents were housewives (48.5%) with students being next (33.3%). An analysis of the data showed that the main information needs were related to continuing their education, the education of their children, parenting, concerns about their family health, child-care, tackling youth problems and other everyday concerns. The respondents showed a tendency to have multiple information needs and sources. The main sources of information for housewives were through contact with friends, radio, television and newspapers. The students cited the library and the Internet as their main information sources. The student respondents mentioned books as their main sources of information in the library, while journals, the Internet and newspapers come next. The main obstacles in meeting the information needs of the respondents were limitations in Bahasa Alelayu and the English language, lack of information regarding continuing their education, chances of education for their children and lack of finance. On the facilities available in the library, it was found that CD-ROMs and the Internet were mostly used. It was also noted that most of the students did not have library user instruction programs.

3.2.10 Mass Media

A report [51] examined the potential of using mass media to enhance the access of poor rural households and women to educational opportunities. It argues that, the extent of rural poverty and illiteracy in Asia is not enough to simply rely on formal or mainstream education to reach the rural poor who have in the past generally been denied access to education and training opportunities. Asians represent the largest mass media consumers in the world. In this context, this report explores how mass media can be used to meet the enormous educational challenges facing Asia. It underlines the importance for mass media to create conditions and mechanisms
whereby people have genuine access to media. More specifically, it explains how mass media, especially radio, can be used as a creative, practical and cost-efficient vehicle to bring education within reach of the rural poor, and to simultaneously promote the empowerment of women and strengthen community development. The successful and innovative experience of the Bayanihan Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) in the municipality of Infanta, in Quezon Province in the Philippines is documented through a case study that describes the BBC's innovative community-based radio broadcasting model which has been effectively used to promote sustainable agriculture.

Nakabugu [52] by considering Uganda as an area of reference notes that it is confronted with a number of developmental challenges. However there is a major challenge to have food security because of the growing population and this can only be done by promoting agriculture and rural development. Uganda's approach to agricultural development is enshrined in its modernisation of agriculture plan, which calls for a shift from traditional agriculture to a technologically based scope. Also with elements of diversifying cash crop production and ensuring food security. The challenge government faces in achieving this goal centrally lies in its communication strategy as a denominator to cause change. This calls for communication approaches that target and involve the communities. One such approach is rural radio.

### 3.2.11 Domestic Workers

Forbes [53] reports on an information needs assessment of a group of domestic workers usually women using the critical incident approach in Clarendon, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Findings indicate that most needs can be categorised into the need for coping/survival and helping information. Evaluates the critical incident approach and makes suggestions concerning how the information needs may be met.

### 3.2.12 Battered Women

Dunne [54] observes that although little research has specifically focused on the information behaviour of battered women, many studies designed with other intentions reveal useful insights into the role of information in their lives. Develops an expanded version of the person-in-situation model: a 'person-in-progressive-situations' model to create a picture of the changes in information needs, seeking and use at various stages in the progression of abuse. The model also considers three categories of barrier that constrain the women's information-seeking alternatives: personal,
responsive, and situational and reveals many implications for librarians and other information providers seeking to address the information needs of battered women and implications for further research.

3.3 INDIAN LITERATURE

3.3.1 Rural Community

Raju [55] outlines the various needs of rural people and identifies those information needs that would improve the quality of life and sustain it. In the light of the processes that are leading to the democratic decentralisation to empower the local people to increase their participation in planning and development, the kind of activities the local governments at various levels are scheduled to take up, are outlined. The role of Community Information Centres in fulfilling the articulated needs of the village community and how these centres can be conceived as dynamic institutions, integrating information generated at various levels, transforming into readily usable material, and the various databases to be developed depending upon the needs of the rural community are discussed. Suggests the need to bring this communication revolution to the doorsteps of the people. Then there is a possibility that information available on the super highway would also be made available in a repackaged format in an intelligible and usable format to the rural people.

Tadasad and Yallappa [56] report, the results of a study conducted to know the information needs and gathering habits of rural community for identifying the role of rural libraries based on the interviews conducted using structured interview schedules with one hundred and seventy-eight people of Kusanoor village, Gulbarga district, The study identifies the awareness of various types of information, types of information sought, reasons for wanting information, preferred sources and preference for obtaining information in the past and future, importance of information for exercising citizenship rights, awareness and importance of Right to Information, preferred methods for gathering information, methods used to express the feelings in public, methods used for obtaining information, awareness and utilization of rural library services. Identifies different roles of the rural libraries – supplementary role, coordinators role, role of a friend, and role of input provider to the Government. Suggests that the awareness of rural libraries has to be created through various outreach programs, the Department of Public libraries, Government of Karnataka has
to take vigorous and integrated programs jointly with NGOs in developing multipurpose rural library system.

Singh and Agrawal [57] list number of problems. The first problem is: we don’t exactly know the information needs and information seeking behavior of the rural populace; second: we still haven’t found an appropriate mechanism, system to deliver this information. aAqua (almost all questions answered) a multilingual multimedia question answer system is a project at Media Lab Asia, IIT Bombay, which is a step forward in attempting to solve this problem. aAqua a multilingual communication system connects the farmer’s question with the expert’s answers.

Meitei [58] attempts to find out the information needs of the persons engaged in the agricultural activities particularly farmers community in the rural areas of Manipur. Data on farmers information needs were collected by using pre-tested semi structured questionnaire and data processed and analyzed through Minitab-software. He highlights the channels of getting information by rural farmers’ community in order to fulfill their information needs. The observations of the study have also revealed that rural farmers community need a variety of information but the required information for their day to day agricultural activities are unmet. Considerable work and efforts are needed for imparting information support for sustainable agricultural development with the application of emerging information and communication technologies for information oriented and socio-economic empowerment of the rural farming community.

Chakrabarti and Basu [59] describe the economic needs of the Totos, a sub-Himalayan tribal community living in West Bengal, India and reports the findings of research that reveal that 42 per cent of the population require information on various types of occupation. Looks at the need for a network of community information centers to address the information requirements of the people, to improve communications between villages and to monitor developments and needs of the community.

Sharma [60] based on the results of 667 rural respondents of Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh finds that 84.85% respondents seek information through television, which is the main source of information seeking in rural areas. Regarding familiarity with new technologies most of the respondents are familiar with telephone, while only few people are familiar with Internet. Almanac is a main reference and
information source for getting of information. Regarding Government schemes 76.46% people depend on radio/television to get information in rural areas.

3.3.2 Rural Women

Dasgupta [61] addresses the diverse facts that influence the information seeking behavior of women in India. She identifies the type of information women need, social factors, economic factors and familial norms and hierarchy. She discusses the hierarchical structure of the Indian society, including five categories of women and their information needs: urban elite; educated urban middle class; educated rural elite; educated rural /semi-urban middle class; and uneducated rural poor. She also considers the role of the librarian and information professional, including well-developed modern library and information dissemination facilities, public libraries in the new information-seeking environment, and information/communication centers at the rural level.

Dasgupta [62] observes that a large group of working women of India are in the rural and unorganised sectors. Socially majority of Indian women are still tradition bound and are in a disadvantageous position. Since globalisation is opening up the Indian economy suddenly at a very high speed, without the required economic and social policies to provide the much required safety net, women who have been involved with production in the traditional ways, have to cope with numerous problems and yet try to avail of the opportunities which an open economy promises. The changing scenario will diversify the information needs of women at different levels.

Chaudhry [63] feels that rural women have no access to modern sources of information. Based on the study of 120 rural women of tehsil Faisalabad involved in agricultural activities it was found that there is a significant relation between age, education along with TV and radio. Rural women liked information disseminated through such media.

Sen [64] feels that rural people are capable of using information and exploiting the same for their betterment, in spite of lack of traditional education and presence of infrastructural obstruction, which can be demonstrated from the acceptability of e-choupal, initiative of ITC Ltd. In this context rural libraries must reposition themselves in order to be a relevant agent in this developmental work. Libraries can work as a switching mechanism between information and its users. A survey reveals that there is a very weak women member base of rural libraries. This implies that
unless the acceptability of the rural libraries increases, the libraries cannot act as a successful agent of change. Hence she suggests for more interaction between rural libraries, and other developmental agencies and carrying the information to the rural women within the framework of standard library services.

3.3.3 Rural Development

Chatterjee [65] notices that lack of sufficient information support is hampering the rural development work in the country although rural information kiosks have been set up in different states for providing information needed by the rural folk. These are functioning independent of local public libraries, which is not a good trend. Moreover, such facilities developed so far are quite inadequate considering the vastness of the country. Hence it is suggested for the development of appropriate information products and services and a good information dissemination mechanism. A scheme should be taken up for creation of area specific databases and information kiosks should be set up in all villages. As far as possible, local public libraries should be given the responsibility of running these kiosks. Further, local information dissemination centers should be networked to facilitate information exchange and sharing and an information system for rural development should be developed for catering to the needs of policy maker, scientists and extension worker.

Mahajan [66] highlights the importance of information support for the rural development with special reference to the state of Panjab by discussing the role of institutions located at Chandigarh that are playing an important role for the rural upliftment in north-west India. Jeevan [67] analyses the difficulties of the prevalent broadcasting oriented model of information dissemination for rural development and suggests pragmatic utilization of public libraries and school libraries to evolve an information oriented model based on the types, sources and channels of information for rural development and the major impediments for accessing information by the rural community.

3.3.4 Information and Communication Technology

Pattanaik [68] remarks that IRMA-India has established two community information centres as a pilot research in collaboration with Connected Nation in 2007 as an enabling technology and empowering poor. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are for everyone and that does not mean for urban or rural communities. Recent developments in the fields of information and communication technology are indeed revolutionary in nature. By definition, Information and
Communication Technologies (ICT) are a diverse set of technological tools and resources to create, disseminate, store, bring value-addition and manage information. Knowledge thereby becomes the fundamental resource for all economic and developmental activities in the knowledge society, of which rural poor form an equal part. The process of synthesis of knowledge possessed across communities by men and women, with the global pool of knowledge and with the scope for further enrichment provides the genesis for information sharing.

Prasad and Sreedevi [69] discuss the success story of a government project for poverty eradication using ICT. The case study on ‘ICT micro-enterprises by self-help group of poor women’ describes the story of a self-help group, which uses potential of ICT for poverty eradication through economic empowerment of poor women. It illustrates how ICT can effectively be used as a technology for micro-enterprises, which are promoted by poor women under self-employment scheme. It is suggested that if a country has the necessary enabling environment permitting the establishment of ICT micro-enterprises, poor women can promote such business for their economic empowerment.

Gupta [70] argues that the information technology (IT) applications can help in not only democratizing knowledge but also overcoming the asymmetry in formal and informal knowledge systems. Prasad [71] highlights the importance of making women economically powerful, especially in the Indian context. She suggests that one solution to this problem is to make a girl child economically strong and at the same time her traditional role as a home maker is also not affected. Information and Communication Technology alongside a knowledge based service sector offers the empowerment tool that women require. Rao and Pattnaik [72] report how the telecom media has been flourishing and contributing towards the rural development process in India.

Jain [73] writes that the Internet and ICTs are emerging as a powerful tool for gender empowerment in a developing country like India. There has been a rapid growth in the ICT sector since the late 1980s and the use of ICT has dramatically expanded since the 1990s. There is a gender digital divide in India which is characterised by low levels of access to technologies. Poverty, lack of computer literacy and language barriers are among the factors impeding access to ICT infrastructure, especially in developing countries. Looks at the avenues created by ICT-enabled networking processes for women’s empowerment. Discusses the main
challenges and obstacles faced by women, suggests practical strategies to address those challenges and goes on to suggest ways to improve the conditions leading to women’s empowerment. Also analyses a case study from India and examines how women’s ‘power within’ has been enhanced through their access to and control of Information and Communication by use of ICTs.

*Dalal* [74] calls for adopting sound ICT strategies and policies, setting our priorities to those areas where we are lagging far behind that is the unequal access of ICT to women. *Arunachalam* [75] claims that if used intelligently and innovatively, ICTs can form an integral component of developmental projects, as is shown by the award-winning Information Village project of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. The needs of the people and the best means to satisfy them should determine the whole programme. Often ICT-based developmental projects do not bring in the expected results because of undue emphasis placed on technology. The factors that led to the success of the Pondicherry experience are analysed.

### 3.3.5 Mass Media

A study on Radio listening and televiewing behaviour of rural women was undertaken by *Malagar* [76] during 2006-07 in Belgum district of Karnataka state. Sample consisted of 200 rural women pre-tested interview schedule was used for collection of information. Radio and Television programmes were classified into four categories namely farm, home, community and any other programmes. Any other programme included news, quiz, cinema and its songs, employment, crime, entertainment, astrology, serials, philosophical, educational programmes, etc. Amongst all these programmes majority of the respondents had listened and viewed only entertainment programmes. Highest time was spent on listening to any other programmes followed by home programmes, farm programmes and community programmes. With respect to television highest time was spent on entertainment programmes followed by home programmes, community programmes and farm programmes. Rural women strongly agreed that radio and television programmes are in simple language and helpful for adoption of technologies and give more information. Lack of leisure time for rural women was the important problem for not listening and viewing to all radio and television programmes regularly as mentioned by large majority of rural women. They preferred simple programmes in local language, programmes to give timely information and they wanted detailed information on income generating activities.
The research study was conducted by Hiremath and Balasubramanya [77] to know effects of TV programme in empowering rural women in Belgaum, Dharwad, Gadag and Haveri districts of northern part of Karnataka state. Effect of TV programmes in empowering rural women for improving quality of life showed the highest value with educational aspects followed by social aspects, economic aspects, technological aspects and political aspects. In economic empowerment except age and education and respondents’ occupation all the variables showed positive and significant relationship. Organizational participation had significant relation with political empowerment but was found non-significant in educational area. In social empowerment of rural women age, marital status and occupation contributed non-significant relation.

Waris, Singh and Chauhan [78] analysed the mass media sources utilized by rural Women of Arid Zone. Data was collected from 120 rural women from four randomly selected villages of Jodhpur district. Rural women’s utilization of mass media sources such as Radio, Television and newspapers, for obtaining information related to Agricultural and livestock activities was analysed. Information seeking through mass media sources was found to be very low. Radio was reported as a source of information by 20 percent of the rural women and 17 percent of them were viewing programmes related to Agricultural and livestock on Television. More over only 3 percent women reported use of newspaper as source of information. The probable reasons for low utilization of mass media sources may be low economic status thereby inability to purchase radio and T.V. Low literacy of women was the reason for no utilization of printed material on Agricultural and livestock activities. The traditional folk media of this region could be used for dissemination of technical information to rural women as their participation in Agricultural and livestock activities was found to be 60 and 90 percent respectively. Rural women’s access to and understanding of technical information is highly essential for adoption of improved technologies.

Prathap and Ponnumamy [79] experimentally examined the effectiveness of mass media viz., radio, television, print, and internet in influencing the symbolic adoption behavior of rural women on rabbit farming technologies. The 144 rural women belonging to self-help groups of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, India formed the sample. Results indicated that all the four mass media formats were effective enough in convincing the respondents to mentally adopt the technologies.
While identifying radio as the most effective and superior treatment, offers guidelines for extension agents while utilizing this medium.

Ghatak [80] notes that mass media aims to contribute to the lives of the local community by creation of content by the people and for the people of that community. It will focus on issues relating to education, health, environment, agriculture, rural and community development. It is a powerful communication medium, particularly in India where, in the absence of regular and stable electric supply in rural and far flung areas. People have to depend on radio to meet their needs of information, education and entertainment. Community radio serves to bring small communities together, focuses on the common man’s day-to-day concerns and helps in realizing local aspirations.

Kumar and Kashyap [81] reported that information needs of target audience and their social aspects are hardly taken into account while producing programmes for rural audiences. The rural poor’s are still lacking the information systems of the desired kind and extent. Development efforts in past have been undermined by incompatible communication approaches. The activities of development agents at the grassroots level (like agricultural extension worker or health worker) are coloured by biasness arising out of their education, language divergent interest and differing perception of realities of a given situation. Thus communication support does not mean mere addition of communication infrastructure or dissemination of information. It is a response to the need to overcome the barriers and help at every stage in enlisting people’s participation in planning and implementation through use of media and non-mediated sources.

3.3.6 Health Care

The findings of the study by Mathiyazhagan and others [82] revealed that tribal’s tend to believe in interpersonal communication as compared to other modes of communication; availability of electronic media viz. radio and television with the tribals is limited, however, their accessibility to these media is somewhat better; IPC followed by traditional media is the choice of combination of channels preferred by the tribals; and tribals prefer to watch television or listen to radio only in the evening hours but information seeking behaviour among them from various sources is casual.

Sivakami and Kulkarni [83] examined whether women from economically, socially, and educationally weaker sections of the society receive adequate maternal health care. Though most women in Tamil Nadu receive antenatal care, many do not
get institutional and professional care at delivery. Logit regression analysis shows that in both rural and urban areas only the economic factor, and not the social and educational factors, has a significant net effect on the ability to secure institutional delivery care.

3.4 CONCLUSION

A vast literature shows that information is an important asset which needs to be accessed easily and used for development. However, many communities, especially those in rural areas, are facing with various problems. When trying to access it to satisfy their needs, most of the women depend on other people for information. It is assumed in this study that if information can be easily available to women, self and societal advancement, education, literacy and community development can be better.

The availability of information and its use is of vital value to women who form half of the world population. The information needs of women for economic development have a significant impact on information producers for the achievement of this. The peculiarity of information needs of women required to promote economic development goal is too diverse. The review of literature revealed that a number of studies have been reported worldwide and in the Indian context as well. Majority of the studies have been conducted to support women with information on health care, gender enabled technology, small-scale enterprise, consumer products, housing, gender discrimination, etc. On the contrary, the literature from developing countries reveal that studies on information support to women with regard to community information – rural women, rural development, information and communication technology, mass media, general health problems, use of fertilizers and manures, food and agriculture, small scale enterprises, use of IT and gender responsive technology, etc. Such studies help in understanding and thereby planning for the development of weaker women.
3.5 REFERENCES


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