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Study on the profile of rural and urban women of Gadag taluk, Karnataka state and the water supply the households receive

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in 2008-09 in urban and rural areas of Gadag taluk, Karnataka state. Total 100 samples were taken for the study 50 each from rural and urban areas. In urban and rural areas 70 and 80 per cent of women respectively belonged to the age group of below 25 years. As expected more women in urban area were educated as compared to their counterparts in rural area. In urban area 20 per cent women were in government jobs and 20 per cent in private jobs and rest 60 per cent worked as housewives. Obviously the rural households were poorer as compared to urban as the former's monthly income was just on third (Rs 9,000) compared to latter's monthly income (Rs 27,000). The households in urban as well as in rural areas received water from multiple sources. In general rural people had to depend on various sources due to no single assured supply of water. There was no certainty about the water supply in the rural area as compared to urban area. The study revealed that there was still gap in the living and social standard of rural and urban women. It was concluded that due to more exposure to urban life the women in urban areas had raised their social standard.

Keywords: Rural, urban, households, women, water supply

INTRODUCTION

Water covers about three-fourth of the earth's surface and nearly 97.3 per cent of earth's water is in oceans and seas. Fresh water constitutes only very small fraction (2.70%). Of this fresh water 75.2 per cent lies in frozen form in the polar regions and 22.60 per cent as ground water. That means very little portion of fresh water is effectively available for consumption (Charyulus et al 2007). India receives only meager amount of rainfall annually that too irregularly and only during limited period of two to three months. Out of this more than three-fourth is lost due to evaporation, deep percolation and seepage into sea. With the remaining water we have been able to create irrigation facility for about 40 per cent of the 142 million hectare of cultivated land. The main water resources in India include rivers, canals, wells and tanks. Water is

abundant globally but scarce locally. In some areas water withdrawals are so high relative to supply that surface water supplies are literally shrinking and ground water reserves are being depleted faster than they can be replenished by precipitation. Groundwater is the most valuable and renewable resource but it is highly vulnerable. Hence the fall in the water table and the attendant deterioration in water quality are matters of serious concern (Moench 1994). Every day we read the reports of incidents of contamination and pollution of drinking water sources. Very often a glass of plain tap water has been found to contain contaminants that can cause anything from simple headache to serious diseases. This is the reason for every household to look for clean and safe drinking water or at least adopt simple methods of purifying the tap water at household level. The quality of water is as important as provision of adequate water supply. Excess irrigation and industrial development results in excess consumption of water. To fulfill all these requirements the man is blindly exploiting the natural resources of water without thinking of future. Population of rural and tribal blocks may have to carry drinking water on average from a distance of about 300 meters and 850 meters respectively. The principal collectors of water in Indian households are women usually between the age of 15 to 35 years. This could be for the purpose of drinking, cooking, washing, bathing or for cattle. In view of this the comparative study on the social profile of women of rural and urban areas of Gadag taluk of Karnataka state and the sources of water supply they receive was undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted during 2008-09 in rural and urban areas of Gadag taluk of Karnataka state. In total 100 samples 50 each from rural (villages Nagavi and Kalasapur) and urban areas were taken in the study who were interviewed on the pre-tested proformae. The data thus collected were subjected to statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social profile of the women respondents

The data pertaining to social profile of the urban as well as rural women are given in Table 1. These include age, education level and occupation of the respondents and also their family size, type of families and their monthly income. It was found that in both the areas majority of women comprised of younger age. In urban and rural areas 70 and 80 per cent of women respectively belonged to the age group of below 25 years. As expected more women in urban area were educated as compared to their counterparts in rural area. In urban area half of the respondents were educated up to SSLC and remaining 50 per cent were either PUC qualified (40%) or

Table 1. Social profile of women in rural and urban areas

n= 100

Particulars	Number of women	
	Urban area (n=50)	Rural area (n=50)
Age of the respondents (years)		
Up to 25	35 [70.00]	40 [80.00]
26-35	5 [10.00]	5 [10.00]
More than 35	10 [20.00]	5 [10.00]
Education level		
Illiterate	-	35 [70.00]
Up to SSLC	25 [50.00]	15 [30.00]
PUC	20 [40.00]	-
Graduate	5 [10.00]	-
Occupation		
Government service	10 [20.00]	-
Private service	10 [20.00]	10 [20.00]
Agricultural labour	-	30 [60.00]
Housewives	30 [60.00]	10 [20.00]
Family size		
2-4 members	20 [40.00]	10 [20.00]
5-6 members	30 [60.00]	35 [70.00]
More than 6 members	-	5 [10.00]
Type of families		
Nuclear	45 [90.00]	45 [90.00]
Joint	5 [10.00]	5 [10.00]
Monthly income of the family (Rs)	27000	9000

Figures in parentheses are per cent values

graduates (10%). On the other hand in rural area only 30 per cent women were educated up to SSLC level and rest 70 per cent were illiterate. No one in urban area was illiterate. In urban area 20 per cent women were in government jobs and 20 per cent in private jobs and rest 60 per cent worked as housewives. On the other hand in rural area majority of women worked as agricultural labour (60%). No woman here had government job. The family size of the rural households was comparatively bigger than the urban area as 70 per cent had 5-6 members and 10 per cent had more than 6 members in the families in rural area. As against it in urban area 40 per cent families had 2-4 members and rest 60 per cent had 5-6 members. Interestingly, the types of families were same in both the areas ie 90 per cent were nuclear and only 10 per cent were joint families. Obviously the rural households were poorer as compared to urban as the former's monthly income was just on third (Rs 9,000) compared to latter's monthly income (Rs 27,000).

Sources of water supply to the urban and rural households

The description of the sources of water supply to the urban and rural households is given in Table 2. The data show that households in urban as well as in rural areas received water from multiple sources. It is evident from the table that all the urban households received corporation water as compared to the 50 per cent

Table 2. Sources of water supply in rural and urban households n= 100

Sources of water	Number of households getting water supply	
	Urban area (n= 50)	Rural area (n= 50)
Corporation water supply	50	25
	[100]	[50.00]
Bore wells	20	10
	[40.00]	[20.00]
Wells	5	30
	[10.00]	[60.00]
Mineral water	2	-
	[4.00]	
Tanks	-	20
		[40.00]
Lakes	-	5
		[10.00]

Figures in parentheses are per cent values

households getting supply in the rural area. In urban area 40 and 10 per cent households received water from bore wells and wells respectively and a few (4%) also purchased mineral water occasionally. However no household received water form tanks or lakes. As against it 20, 60 40 and 10 per cent households got water from bore wells, wells, tanks and lakes respectively but not purchased mineral water in rural area. The study shows that rural people had to depend on various sources due to no single assured supply. They even had to depend on tanks and lakes for collection of water which was not a case in urban area.

Frequency of water supply to the urban and rural households

The data pertaining to frequency of water supply to the urban and rural households are presented in Table 3. The data depict that all the urban households received water supply from the corporation daily whereas the 50 per cent rural people receiving water from the corporation received it fortnightly. In the urban area all the households received water weekly from the bore wells and 40 per cent from the wells fortnightly. They (4%) also purchased mineral water occasionally. However in rural area 40 per cent households collected water from wells daily and 20 per cent

Table 3. Frequency of water supply from different sources to rural and urban households n=100

Source of water	Urban (n=50						Rural n=50					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Corporation water supply	50 [100]								25 [50.00]			
Bore wells		50 [100]										
Wells			20 [40.00]				20 [40.00]		10 [20.00]			
Mineral water						2 [4.00]						
Tanks								20 [40.00]				
Lakes										5 [10.00]		

1-daily, 2- weekly, 3- fortnightly, 4- monthly, 5- bimonthly, 6- occasionally

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

fortnightly. In the rural area 40 and 10 per cent households collected water from tanks and lakes on weekly and monthly basis, respectively. This shows that there was no certainty about the water supply in the rural area as compared to urban area.

CONCLUSION

While summing up it can be inferred that there was still gap in the living and social standard of rural and urban women. Due to more exposure to urban life the women in urban areas had raised their social standard. In rural areas however the women were still having second status as compared to men. Though they had started getting education and entering into jobs yet they were still far behind than the urban women. The water supply to the rural households was still not up to the mark and people had to depend on natural sources for the water which might not be safer for usage.

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