



Coverage Of Women's Health Issues In Kannada Magazines: A Case Study Of Grihsobha

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Abstract: Female health trends have drawn enormous importance in social science, as it undoubtedly reflects the prosperity of a nation. Researchers have brought out the poor state of health among women, especially in Asian countries. Despite various governmental and non-governmental interventions the situations remain far from satisfaction. Effective health communication is crucial to improve the health literacy among people. Print media have tremendous impact on the knowledge, attitude and practices related to health. The present research sought to understand how much importance is given to various health topics in Grihsobha, a women magazine published in Kannada language, especially when the entire world was shocked with the Covid-19 pandemic. The content analysis showed that even when the entire world was affected by the pandemic, fashion and entertainment was given more importance than health issues in women magazines.

Key words: Health communication, Covid-19, Women health, Women magazines.

I. INTRODUCTION

Health is a state of physical, mental, social well-being and not just absence of disease and infirmity; and it is considered as a fundamental right of every human being (WHO, 1948).

National income of a country or the economic growth is not the sole indicator of a country's development. Human Development Indices base their calculations on education level and health of people among others, which are crucial for sustainable development. UNDP (1996) has repeatedly stressed that absence of adequate health becomes a barrier for the development of individual, family and nation.

The situation calls for organized, accurate and adequate health communication. Singh (2011) found that some information disseminated happens to be misleading and inaccurate.

Apart from governmental interventions, various NGOs are active in this area. Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ - 2021) promotes public health awareness and focuses on improving the quality, accuracy and visibility of health care writing and reporting.

II. Review of Literature

In the article, Issues and initiatives in communicating health information, Atkin and Arkin (1990) affirms that health communication suffers from two mindsets – what gatekeepers judge newsworthy and what health specialists believe what the public should be told.

The gender dimension in health probes the physical, mental and spiritual health of men and women. In India woman face more health issues compared to that of men. The gender difference in health between men and women are of a greater importance because the health vulnerabilities of women are more pronounced. Researchers find that health awareness is very low among women (Tapan, 2000). National Health Survey (NHS, 2015) focuses on the treatment and diagnosis of diseases that affecting a woman's physical and psychological well-being.

Parkavi (2016) found that media ignore their role of providing health literacy to rural women and neglects their health issues. Newspapers and magazines were concentrating on urban women and their problems. Undue importance was often given to beauty, body image, food and excessive dieting.

Coverage of health news in Hindi dailies especially Hindustan Times and Dainik Jagaran, was found to be very poor in a research conducted by Khattri (2019). The author says these two newspapers failed to adequately cover the health related news. Maximum news articles published in this newspaper were about political developments, accidents and crime.

Research Problem

The Covid-19 pandemic gripped the world with fear and increased health consciousness. The researcher deemed it necessary to find how much importance women magazine publishers gave to health during this time, taking Kannada women magazine Grihsobha as a case study.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought specifically;

1. To know the space allotted to health, especially to women health issues,
2. To study the Covid-19 pandemic concentration in health reporting, and
3. To highlight importance given to various health topics.

III. Methodology

The study selected Grihshobha a leading women's magazine in Karnataka as a case study. It is published by Delhi Press Group from 1979 in various languages - Hindi, Bangla, Gujarati, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. It commands an enviable readership and covers topics that are most popular among women – film, beauty, fashion, family, relationships, travel, cookery and personal issues. The research covered the content that was published over 12 issues in 2020.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Space allotment in the magazine

The study found that out of the total area of Grihshobha magazine (5,69,289.57 sq.cm) the space allotted to general health was 130239.78 sq.cm (22.88%); and 6080.37 sq.cm (1.07%) was allotted to women health related topics. Non-health topics occupied 432969.42 sq.cm (76.05%)space.

Health related ads got 6.93 percent of space. The major advertisements were on acidity tablet, Chyavanprash, moisturizing creams, Shilapravanga, Hospital ads, health drink, baby health product, bone related problems, joint pain, and Covid-19).

Table 1. Importance given to women's health

Topics	Space Allocation (Percentage out of 5,69,289.57 Sq.cm)		
	Non health	General Health	Women Health
Miscellaneous Articles	1,20,797.99 (21.21%)	21604.28 (3.79%)	4555.14 (0.80%)
Fashion	1,06,939.11 (18.78%)	-	-
Fitness		9277.6 (1.63%)	-
Film & Entertainment	54,120.6 (9.50%)	-	-
Food and Cooking		57287.48 (10.06%)	-
Advertisement	35,778.65 (6.28%)	39449.57 (6.93%)	1525.23 (0.27%)
Literary writings	77,160.77 (13.55%)	-	-
Layout general	28,350.97 (4.98%)	-	-
Editorial	9,821.33 (1.72%)	2620.85 (0.46%)	-
Total	432969.42 (76.05%)	130239.78 (22.88%)	6080.37 (1.07%)
Grand Total	432969.42 (76.05%)	136320.15 (23.95%)	

There was 0.27 percent space allotted for advertisements targeting women related health issues (Rheumatology arthritis, women Horlicks, Brexelant etc.). The data indicates that general health related ads were getting more importance than women's health in women's magazine.

The study found that the focus of Grihshobha magazine content centred around four F's – Food (10.06%), Fashion (18.78%), film and entertainment (9.50%) and Fitness (1.63%).

2. Importance given to Covid-19 pandemic

The total space given to health (general and women health) was 136320.15sq.cm (23.95%) out of the total space of the magazine. Out of this space non- Covid-19 health issues occupied 108882.07 (79.87%) and Covid-19 related articles occupied 27438.43sq.cm (20.13%).

Feature articles related to Covid-19 health got 10.13 percent of space. The major themes were about cleaning and becoming aware about the pandemic.

Table 2.Covid related contents in the magazine

Formats	Space (Sq.cm)	Total Space (Sq.cm) & Percentage
Covid-19 Related Articles		27438.43 (20.13)
Editorial	2620.85 (1.92%)	
News	1576.75 (1.17%)	
Feature Articles	13812.15 (10.13%)	
Health tips	7592.25 (5.56%)	
Advertisements	1836.43 (1.35%)	
Non-Covid-19 health articles		108.882.07 (79.87)
Total		136320.15 (100%)

There were health tips about how to deal with the pandemic like hand washing and wearing mask. Food to be taken during the pandemic to improve the immunity was also dealt with. Editorials spoke about lockdown causes and effects. Advertisements took 1.35 percent space, and they were about acidity tablets, Chyavanprash, cough control tonic and immunity booster tonic. There were also a few articles in news format about the pandemic.

Covid-19 Topics Covered

The Covid-19 related themes ranged from taking precautions to suggestions for treatment. They included articles on work from home (44.61%), covid-19 warriors, lockdown details and issues during lockdown. Other topics were about hygiene (18.16%), taking precautions (13.34%), nutrition (11.45%) and fitness. There were a few advertisements and some news about Covid-19.

Table 3. Health topics related to the pandemic

Themes	Space (Sq.cm)
Treatment /precautions/hospital	3659.65 (13.34%)
Hygiene	4982 (18.16%)
Nutrition / Food	3142.9 (11.45%)
Work from home/ covid-19 warriors / lock-down effect	12240.7 (44.61%)
Miscellaneous	3413.18 (12.44%)
Total	27438.43 (100%)

Corona special issues were published May and June. Main articles were about Corona virudda Vanithayara Samara (women's fight against Corona), Lock-downnalli Ruchikara tinisugalu (Special and tasty dishes during lock-down), and Corona: Elu sangathigala bage ecchara (Beware of seven things during Corona).

Subsequent issues also dealt with health and hygiene during Corona, how human life have changed with corona, work from home, usage of mask, and social gathering and celebrations during the pandemic, precaution, Covid-19 check-up, health conditions of symptomatic and asymptomatic persons, precautions to be taken during and after the lockdown, need for nutritious food, improving immunity, nature of physical exercise, married life during the pandemic, nature of treatment and treatment centers.

3. Women Health Issues covered

The total space given to health was 136320.15 (23.95%). Out of this space 6080.37sq.cm (1.07%) was allotted to women health related topics. Major share of the space was occupied by articles on various themes - 4555.14 sq.cm (74.92%). Out of the total space given to advertisements, space given to advertisements related to women health issues was 1525.23sq.cm (25.08%). Table 4 lists the various themes covered.

Table 4. Women health related topics in the magazine

Themes	Total
Menstruation	2536.05 (41.71%)
Maternal health	470.77 (7.74%)
Pregnancy/reproduction	509.52 (8.38%)
Psychological health	1038.8 (17.08%)
Advertisements	1525.23 (25.08%)
Total	6080.37 (100%)

Articles related to menstruation occupied the major space (41.71%). It was followed by psychological health (17.08%) and topics on reproductive/ pregnancy related issues and maternal health issues. The articles tried to educate women on the reproductive health, menstruation, anxiety over missing period, physical and psychological problems during periods, sex during menstruation, breast feeding, worries and solutions over breast size etc.

The recurring advertisements were about Women Horlicks, Rheumatology, Arthritis and Brexelant (a breast size enhancing cream).

V. Conclusion

Although Grihsobha magazine is meant for women, women's health was not given much priority, and the health issues and other challenges faced by women in the context of Covid-19 have not been discussed in detail.

Health related advertisements occupied more space than health related articles, news, and information in the magazine. Many advertisements were related to general and mental health, medicines for gastritis, bone related diseases and relief medicines.

There were a few news articles, even though government had put restrictions for controlling rumors. The published articles were mostly related to topics such as appropriate tips for social behavior, work from home, food habits and hygiene during the pandemic.

The focus of Grihshobha magazine content centered around four F's – food, fashion, film and fitness. The main recurring topic about women health centered around menstrual problems.

Thus, Grihshobha did not give adequate importance to women health issues at a time when women were facing enormous problems due to the Covid-19 related lockdown.

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