

## **TELEVISION VIEWING MOTIVES OF RURAL WOMEN IN VILLUPURAM DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Rural women view television with specific motives. For many rural women television might be the only medium that exposes them to the outside world. This study tries to find out the television viewing motives of rural women in Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu. This study is based on the findings of a UGC- UPE funded project. A survey method was adopted for this study. Findings reveal that rural women view television as it fulfils specific motives in their lives.

**Keywords:** Television viewing motives, rural women, Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu, television

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many programmes on television are particularly targeted towards female viewers. For some rural women, exposure to the outer world is only through television. Also, television plays the role of a constant companion when other family members are away for long hours. Viewing television is an essential and frequent leisure activity for women. It is mainly considered as a source of relaxation and stress reduction. This present study tries to analyse the television viewing motives of rural women in Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu. This study is based on the findings of an UGC- UPE funded project.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

According to Wiebe (1970), television watching has the function of relieving stress. Csikszentmihalyi and Kubey reported a study of television watching (Csikszentmihalyi & Kubey, 1981; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and they found that television viewing "was consistently tied to relaxation, to weaker cognitive investments, and to lower feelings of potency when compared to other activities" (pp. 325-326). Watching television is an easy, routine activity, which brings about a happy, relaxed mood. It is associated with little concentration and involvement. It is also a rather lonesome activity.

When researchers studied the reasons as to why people watch television so often, it was suggested that (a) it is a source of some pleasant relaxation and (b) it is readily available, and (c) it is a well-established habit (Lee & Lee, 1995; McIlwraith, Jacobvitz, Kubey, & Alexander, 1991; Verplanken & Orbell, 2003). It is seen as a major way of spending leisure time. Television viewing emerges as an indifferent way to relax and achieve some freedom from negative emotions.

Television is a favorite way to spend one's leisure hours because of the small effort needed, to turn on the set and watch. The power of habit and the pleasure of being entertained seem to be irresistible (Kippax & Murray, 1977; Mundorf & Brownell, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 1982).

This study adopts a Uses and Gratifications perspective. This theory assumes that audiences actively seek out media in a goal-directed way that provides them with the means of gratifying a wide variety of needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). Here rural women in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu have specific television viewing motives. They use television in a goal-directed way and expect specific gratifications from television viewing.

## **METHOD**

This study attempts to find out the television viewing motives of rural women in Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu. The participants of the study were 514 rural women from Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu. These rural women were selected from the villages in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu.

## **INSTRUMENT**

Television Viewing Motives was studied using a 5 point Likert –type scale from ‘Very Often’ to ‘Never’ and was used to measure the respondent's television viewing motives. Higher scores indicated lower Television Viewing Motives.

Television Viewing was defined as the number of hours rural women spend viewing television in a day. Higher scores indicated higher television viewing. The number of hours of watching television daily, a numeric variable was collapsed into a categorical variable called TV viewing, by dividing it into three groups. Heavy Viewers (those who watch more than three hours TV), Moderate Viewers (those who watch more than one hour but less than three hours of TV), and Light Viewers (those who do not watch TV at all or watched less than one hour of TV).

## **ANALYSIS**

A one –way analysis of variance was performed with the compound variable, television viewing, as the independent variable on the following dependent variables.

**Table 1: Relaxation**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
	Relaxation	Within	Error		
1.	I watch television, because it entertains me	2	498	5.732	.003
2.	I watch television, because it allows me to unwind	2	498	3.964	.002

1. I watch television, because it entertains me on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 5.732, p=.003$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.899$ ) said that they watch TV because it entertains them significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=2.178$ ).
2. I watch television, because it allows me to unwind on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 3.964, p=.002$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.579$ ) said that they watch TV because it allows them to unwind significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=1.985$ ).

**Table 2: Companionship**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
	Companionship	Within	Error		
1.	I watch television, to feel less lonely	2	498	6.755	.002
2.	I watch television, so I'm not alone	2	498	3.838	.004

1. I watch television to feel less lonely on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 6.755, p=.002$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.983$ ) said that they watch TV to feel less lonely significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=2.169$ ).
2. I watch television, so I'm not alone on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 3.838, p=.004$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The

test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.739) said that they watch TV so that they are not alone significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=2.278).

**Table 3: Habit**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
		Within	Error		
1.	I watch television, just because it is there	2	498	4.538	.003
2.	I watch television, because I just like to watch	2	498	8.327	.001

1. I watch television just because it is there on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 4.538, p=.003$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.640) said that they watch TV just because it is there significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=2.118).
2. I watch television, because I just like to watch on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 8.327, p=.001$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.485) said that they watch TV, because they just like to watch significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=1.391).

**Table 4: Pass Time**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
		Within	Error		
1.	I watch television, when I have nothing better to do	2	498	7.533	.001
2.	I watch television, because it passes the time away, particularly when I am bored	2	498	4.376	.004

1. I watch television, when I have nothing better to do on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 7.533$ ,  $p=.001$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.873$ ) said that they watch television, when they have nothing better to do significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=2.334$ ).
2. I watch television, because it passes the time away, particularly when I am bored on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 4.376$ ,  $p=.004$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.463$ ) said that they watch TV, because it passes the time away, particularly when they are bored significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=1.641$ ).

**Table 5: Entertainment**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
	Entertainment	Within	Error		
1.	I watch television, because it entertains me	2	498	9.845	.000
2.	I watch television because it's enjoyable	2	498	5.381	.002

1. I watch television, because, it entertains me on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 9.845$ ,  $p=.000$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.743$ ) said that they watch television, because it entertains them significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=2.045$ ).
2. I watch television because it's enjoyable on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 5.381$ ,  $p=.002$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.574$ ) said that they watch TV, because it's enjoyable significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=1.963$ ).

**Table 6: Social Interaction**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
		Within	Error		
1.	I watch television, because it's something to do when friends come over	2	498	9.927	.002
2.	I watch television, so I can talk to other people about what's on	2	498	7.437	.003

1. I watch television, because it's something to do when friends come over on TV viewing F (2,498) = 9.927, p=.002. A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.849) said that they watch television, because it's something to do when friends come over significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=2.384).
2. I watch television, so I can talk to other people about what's on, on TV viewing F (2,498) = 7.437, p=.003. A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.796) said that they watch TV, so that they can talk to other people about what's on, significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=2.362).

**Table 7: Information**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
		Within	Error		
1.	I watch television, because it helps me learn things about myself and others	2	498	5.184	.002
2.	I watch television, so I can learn how to do things which I haven't done before	2	498	3.979	.001

1. I watch television, because it helps me learn things about myself and others on TV viewing F (2,498) = 5.184, p=.002. A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are

heavy viewers (M=2.851) said that they watch TV because it helps them learn things about themselves and others significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=2.137).

- I watch television, so I can learn how to do things which I haven't done before on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 3.979, p=.001$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.568) said that they watch TV so that they can learn how to do things which they haven't done before significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=1.934).

**Table 8: Arousal**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
		Within	Error		
1.	I watch television because it's exciting	2	498	6.725	.002
2.	I watch television because it's thrilling	2	498	3.868	.004

- I watch television because it's exciting on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 6.725, p=.002$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.945) said that they watch TV because it's exciting significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=2.154).
- I watch television because it's thrilling on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 3.868, p=.004$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers (M=2.993) said that they watch TV because it's thrilling significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers (M=2.448).

**Table 9: Escape**

S.No.	Dependent Variables	Degrees of Freedom		F	P
	Escape	Within	Error		
1.	I watch television so I can forget about work or other things	2	498	4.595	.003
2.	I watch television so I can get away from the rest of the family or others	2	498	8.336	.001

1. I watch television so I can forget about work or other things on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 4.595, p=.003$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.661$ ) said that they watch TV so I can forget about work or other things significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=2.189$ ).
2. I watch television so I can get away from the rest of the family or others on TV viewing  $F(2,498) = 8.336, p=.001$ . A post hoc Tukey test was done to see if any category was significantly different from the other. The test revealed that rural women who are heavy viewers ( $M=2.467$ ) said that they watch TV, so that they can get away from the rest of the family or others significantly more than rural women who are light or no viewers ( $M=1.339$ ).

**DISCUSSION**

From the study it is understood that rural women of Villupuram District view television with clear motives. They use television as a means of relaxation. They know that television can relax them after a hard day’s work. Television relaxes them and helps them to unwind. They use television with a motive to get companionship. It makes them feel less lonely, and gives them the feeling that they are not alone. Television viewing has become a habit for these rural women since it is easily available at home. They use television with the motive of passing their time. They view television when they do not have anything to do and television relieves them from boredom. These women view television for entertainment, since television viewing entertains them and gives them an enjoyable time. They view television for social interaction, they talk about what is on television with others. Information is another motive for television viewing. They learn about themselves and others through television. They also learn about things they have not done before. They view television for arousal to get a sense of excitement and thrill. Finally they view television for escape. Television helps them to escape to a different world, and

gives them a break from their routine work. It helps them to get away from people or things they want to escape.

## **CONCLUSION**

The above study indicates that rural women from Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu view television with clear motives. In rural homes, television might be one of the most used medium. Every household will have a television set. This makes it readily available for rural women to involve in television viewing. For many rural women television might be the only medium that exposes them to the outside world. So television viewing is looked up as an important part of their lives. Television programmes should be produced by understanding the motives with which rural women view television. Many television programmes are produced keeping the urban women in mind. Television programmes should be designed and produced that makes the lives of rural women more fulfilling.

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