

# Political Consciousness among Rural Women in Indian Himalaya: A Study of Kumaon Hills

Dharmendra Kumar Dube

School of NRM&ES, College of Agriculture, Haramaya University, Ethiopia.

\* E-mail of the corresponding author: [dk\\_dube@yahoo.com](mailto:dk_dube@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

Present piece of research is an attempt to investigate and access the political awareness among rural women through their own view point. The study was conducted in the Eastern division of Himalayan state of Uttarakhand (India). Keeping in view the vast ecological variation, the study area is divided into four ecological zones named as Shiwaliks, Lesser Himalaya, Great Himalaya and Trans Himalaya. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 25 villages from study area giving due representation to each ecological zones. Descriptive statistical techniques were used for the analysis of the data. It was found that all women cast their vote in village body elections (Gram sabha and Gram Panchayat) but this enthusiasm of participation sinks down for higher election of state assembly (MLA) and Parliament (MP), 56.82 and 46.46 percent respectively. Though almost half of the women cast their vote for higher elections yet only one-fourth to one-fifth women know the name of their elected MLA and MP respectively, which depicts that they don't have much interest in these higher body elections and casting vote is just the execution of the family decision taken by the males of the family. Further it was found that only 27.33 percent women know about the political parties and affiliation to the parties is limited to 4.68 percent women only. However 86.33 percent women were aware about the duties and functions of village bodies and more than two-third supported the higher reservation for women in these bodies. A clear cut zonal variation in all parameters of awareness and action were observed under different zone, ranging highest in Shiwaliks followed by Trans Himalaya and Lesser Himalaya and the lowest at Great Himalaya. Besides drudgery and illiteracy, lack of access to the information was one of the major factors for poor awareness of politics. Only 22.79 percent women listen daily news through radio and Television; just 6.06 percent read newspaper every day. Besides these the socio economic setup, poverty, accessibility, proximity to the cities and plain areas and less importance given to the rural women by political parties and candidates are the other major factors for their poor awareness.

**Keywords:** political consciousness, elections, rural women, Kumaon hills, Himalaya,

## 1. Introduction

On the opening address of the Asian Foundation seminar, Theresa Loar (1999) said that "Women's political participation is a key component of democracy". The political consciousness and active participation in political process could be considered as obvious among the citizens of a democratic nation.

Political awareness includes knowledge of the political system - knowledge about the state legislative assemblies, legislative council, Governor, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, The President, Parliamentary democracy, party system, ideologies of different political parties, the process of election, the franchise as well as the knowledge of local (urban and rural) self governments. It could be a good tool to know that how much women is socially active and concerned about the political setup and change in that area. In case of women it's important as this is directly associated with their development. Unfortunately throughout the history women in general have been kept outside the public domain of politics as most of the political thinkers and philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel considered that women fit only for domestic roles in the private sphere and maintained that there was no place for women in politics because of their suitability in caring roles as mothers and wives. The public private divide remains as the foundation of the various forms of world democracies (Phillips, 1998 and Rai, 2000). Keeping women away from the public sphere and confined them to home and family, was observed by scholars as an outcome of man's feudal chauvinistic mentality. Patriarchy as a system of male domination shapes women's relationship in politics. It transforms male and females into men and women and construct the hierarchy of gender relations where men are privileged (Eisenstein-1984). But system can't remain static, deviation is inevitable and this deviation in socio-political sphere has been perceptible since the second half of the twentieth century. End of colonial era, industrial and technical advancements, change in political systems, acceptance of non gender biased constitution by several countries, spread of education, growing job opportunities, implementation of social reforms by society and law, and emergence of power full women front forced the society and political system to give more room to the women in public system. But existing system was not the only challenge; there were several age old

socio-cultural bindings for women which were not easy to break of. Developing world in general and India in particular where inclinations towards the cultural values are very strong, these bindings were and are, tough enough to ignore. Farzana Bari (2005) says, in some of the countries, particularly in South Asia, women also face cultural constraints on their mobility. The mechanisms of sex segregation and *purdah* are used to restrict their mobility. Women find it hard to participate in politics due to limited time available to them because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. With their primary roles as mothers and wives and competing domestic responsibilities and care work, they are left with little time to participate in politics.

Indian freedom struggle was the first major political event in which after a very long suppression of medieval period, women in general got an opportunity to come out from their strict familial and social premises. After independence, technically constitution and government gave equal opportunities to male and female in all sphere of socioeconomic and political life but in practical women yet have to cover a long way. Changes are perceptive in urban areas, but in rural areas still women are witnessing the same gender biasness and hurdles in their development. These problems get aggravated when an area is having a tough terrain, harsh climate and poor accessibility. Himalaya, The youngest, the highest and the most unstable mountain of the world poses extreme challenges to its natives. Throughout rural Himalaya life is tough and survival is challenging. It become rather more important for the villages of Kumaon hills, which are suffering with excess male dominated out migration and in many cases women are the *de facto* head of the family.

Kumaon is the eastern division of Uttarakhand state in the Central Himalayan region of India, which comprises six districts. Out of these six districts, the five (Almora, Nainital, Pithoragarh, Bageshwar and Champwat) are hilly districts while the sixth one i.e. Udham Singh Nagar broadly falls in Bhabar and Tari belt (non hilly area). Geographically the hilly area of Kumaon could be divided into four transverse- parallel physiographic belts. Ranging from South to North these belts are known as Shiwalik, Lesser Himalaya, Great Himalaya and Trans Himalaya. They are just not a geographical units confined upto the physical features but they also affect the life style of the locals their socio-economic setup and level of advancement of the respective society. They are also considered as ecological zones.

The present study is an effort to go through the political consciousness among the rural women with respect to their spatial variations. The study is based on primary data collected by the field survey across the all four ecological zones of Kumaon hills.

To go get the wide, in-depth information the study is collecting information in three aspects.

- Awareness about elected candidates and government officials
- Level of participation in political process.
- Access of women to the information system i.e. Newspaper, Radio & T.V.
- The educational level of rural women.

#### 1.2. Rationalization of the Study

In general the political decision is a unanimous decision of the family in rural areas, taken by the senior males of the family and followed by all members without any question. Women are largely a passive partner and have neither any say nor much interest in the entire political scenario. This approach had made women insignificant for voting results and so the development policies ignored their interests. Bringing them back as an active participator in political process is the biggest challenge. Present study is focused on this challenge and could be justified on following aspects. Study concentrates on four major points related to the reluctance of rural women in political process, they are - their stage of awareness, their level of participation, access to the information and their educational status. Further two dimensions make this study more unique- first, unlike earlier studies it goes exclusively with the opinion of rural women and second, giving due importance to variation in opinion with reference to ecological zones; which is quite important but absolutely ignored in earlier works.

#### 1.3. Statement of the Problem

The basic problem is why women as a gender don't get due importance in political process, parties manifesto and government policies. The problem is also concerned with the women's negligence for politics, though the constitution gives them equal rights as their male counterpart. Ignorance of women at family and society level is a matter of deep concern. Unless their lives become more comfortable and more empowered within the institution of

family, the chances of their reaching out to legal and constitutional provisions will remain negligible (Dube-2007, Tiwari-2012). To go deep into the problem it's must to assess the political status of women in rural Kumaon hills, their awareness about the elected candidate, their participation in party politics at different stages, their educational status and finally their sources of information. Besides these the two dimensions are important, first the women's perception about their own problem and second is the impact of ecological zones on their perception.

#### 1.4. Objectives of the Study

Major Objective: The major objective of this study is to know the political awareness among the rural women of Kumaon Hills and the factors affecting it.

Specific objectives:

- To study the awareness about the political representative and government personals among the rural women.
- To examine the level of participation in political process.
- To know their excess to state and national news.
- To explore the factors responsible for present status of women's political awareness.
- Possible majors to be taken for increasing in the political awareness.

#### 1.5. Delimitation of Study

The study is delimited within the following frame:

- The study is confined to the Kumaon Division of Uttarakhand State of India.
- The study is focused on the hilly area of Kumaon, excluding the narrow belt of piedmont and plain to avoid the contrast socio-economical and ecological conditions.
- The field survey was conducted on the rural women age ranging from 19 to 65 years.
- The study area was divided into four ecological zones, to give proper representation to each zone and to study their inter-zonal variation.

## 2. Research Method

To undertake this study, descriptive survey research method was used. Because it helps to explain the phenomena in terms of the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing.

### 2.1. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Villages were selected based on Stratified random sampling and households within a village were selected randomly. In total 396 households were surveyed from 25 villages, throughout the study area. Twenty households were randomly selected from each village of Lesser Himalaya but in case of other ecological zones the number of households were determined by the size of the village and scattering of households (Shivaliks) and house clusters within a village (Great Himalaya). In case of Trans Himalayan, due to excessive out migration villages are having lesser number of households. To get a better representation the study decided to go for four villages (in place of two) with 10 households from each village. The selected samples are shown in Table-01.

### 2.2. Data collection Instrument

Both open and closed-ended questions were developed and used to gather data for the study. Questionnaire was used to gather data from three hundred and ninety six households from twenty five villages, on the extent to which the women's perception about their own problem and is the impact of ecological zones on their perception. The instruments covers different dimensions such as awareness about elected candidates and government officials, level of participation in political process at different level, how they decide to vote a party and/ or candidate, access of women to the information system newspaper, radio & T.V, the educational level of rural women.

### 2.3. Data Collection and Statistical Treatment

Being an empirical study the major thrust was to collect the primary data. The vast area with difficult climate and extremely inaccessible terrain of Great and Trans Himalayan zones were the major challenge in the field study. Villages of Trans Himalaya are scattered, having smaller population and need 5 to 7 days trekking. With the help of well developed questionnaire an extensive survey was conducted. Data was tabulated and simple statistical techniques like percentage, mean, were used to do the data analysis.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The collected data through field survey were tabulated under five tables and calculated with different statistical techniques. The analysis and interpretation of each table are as follows:

Vote casted in different elections by the rural women is tabulated in Table no-02. first interesting information is that all rural women in Kumaon hills participate in the village level elections while the percentage goes down to 56.82 percent for State Assembly election (MLA) and 46.46 percent for Parliament election (MP). Second information is the zone wise variation of total participation in all three zones. It is highest in Siwalik (74.64%) followed by Trance Himalaya (70.75%) and Lesser Himalaya (67.31%). The lowest goes to the Great Himalaya with 61.37 percent only. The same zone wise participation trend is followed in both higher elections (MLA & MP) in Kumaon hills. The overall low participation in electoral process is mainly due to less awareness and least interest among rural women in higher elections. Women enjoy and participate the village body elections as they feel it is directly associated with their day to day life but they fail to associate themselves with the outcome of the results of higher elections. For them it is exclusively the males business. Zone wise variation is closely associated with the socio-economic condition of that area, level of literacy and education and the factors like accessibility and interest shown by the political parties. Siwalik being close to plain area and higher accessibility get more mobilization by the contesting candidates and result is higher turnout of women vote while in Great Himalaya these conditions are just reversed. Great Himalaya is the most difficult and un-accessible zone, villages are scattered and approaching to the voters are extremely difficult. Up to larger extent the similar conditions prevails for the Lesser Himalaya also. Besides these natural barriers one common problem of these two areas is the drudgery of rural women. The rural women of both zones are suffering with the problem of drudgery (Pnadey, 1996 and Dube, 2003). Women are too busy with their work and they don't have time, nor interest to take part in these election. Political parties also fail in mobilizing the voters, especially women voters of these remote areas.

Further the information was collected about the awareness regarding local representatives and government functionaries of village level. Table shows that less than one fifth (17.63%) women were aware about their elected Member of Parliament (MP) from their constituency. Inter zonal variation was reported lowest of 9.14 percent at Lesser Himalaya to a heights of 55.81 percent at Siwalik. Similarly, 20.86 percent respondent knew the name of the elected member of their representative State Assembly (MLA). The Block Pramukh was known to almost one-fifth (20.50%) of the total respondents. Except Trans Himalayan villages the response was low and close to the overall average. The most unfortunate part in these inquires was that the main functionaries of the government who are responsible for implementing and looking after the development programs at village level i.e., the Village Development Officer (VDO), The Revenue Officer (Patwari) etc. were known to only 8.99 percent respondent. It shows the laxity on the part of grass root level workers in government development programmes, It also indicates the extremely low interaction of these officers with the rural population specially women. Women's role was mostly observed as passive and mechanical rather an active emotional participation.

If we compare the information of Table no-02 (percentage of women casted their vote for MLA and MP election) and Table no-03 (percentage of women know the name of their elected MLA and MP), out come is interesting. Roughly half of the women (46.46%) cast vote for MP election but only one-sixth of them knows their name. For MLA election 56.82 percent cast their vote but only one fifth (20.86%) of them know the name for their MLA. The worst situation is in case of Block Pramkh election, who is indirectly elected by the village level election, where all women are casting their vote but only one-fifth (20.50%) know their name. these data clearly shows that election is the basic concern of males and women are casting their vote as per the wish of the males of their family. women personally don't have much awareness and interest on these process.

After this basic information study focuses on the main issues, the perception of women for politics and their level of participation in Political Process. Table no. 04 presents the analysis of data collected from the respondents in this context. It revealed those 4.68 percent rural women shows their affiliations to political parties in Kumaon hills. Inter zonal variation is significant in this regard. Lesser Himalaya and Great Himalaya shows slightly less than the over all average (3.04 and 3.84 respectively), while Siwalik has slightly higher percentage of affiliation to political parties (6.80 percent). Trans Himalaya is the only zone where affiliation is relatively very high (20 percent). The low proportion of such women affiliation of political parties in the rural Kumaon hills is not difficult to understand.

Somehow deteriorating environment of rural Kumaon plays a significant roll in it. The overburden of daily work is one of the important factors in this regard. Illiteracy, low level of education and least information of outer world (beyond their village) are the other important factors.

The other side of the coin is that the political parties and candidates don't pay much attention to rural women, as they know that it's the male folk who decide the vote in the family, not women. They are also well aware with the fact that neither rural woman have awareness nor they have time for political activities and they believe it's of no use wasting time for women. The dull approach from both sides has resulted in a very low degree of awareness. Table no-04 shows that only 27.33 percent of rural women are aware about the political parties and local candidates contesting election. This percent varies from zone to zone and the digital fluctuation is between 19.23 percent in Great Himalaya villages the most populated Lesser Himalaya shows a little less than the overall (25.38%) average while Siwalik shows a little higher with 32.56 percent.

Self-discretion is a casting vote is other such factor related to rural women, which follows the same trend. It was observed that it's the family decision usually taken by the head male of the family and followed by all member of the family.

Out of the total respondent about – 10.07 women are or had been member of *Gram Sabha* or *Gram Panchayat*. Further it put more lightly on the data as out of these 10.07 percent elected members less than one-fifth (18.34%) fully take part in the work of *Gram Sabha*. Table no-04 shows that except Trans Himalayan villages where this full participation is as high as 53.33 per cent the rest other zones follow the similar poor trend. It was also found that due to lack of time, majority of the respondents did not agree to take membership of *Gram Sabha* or *Gram Panchayat*. Some respondents showed their incapability for performing the duties as active member in any these locally elected bodies. The Panchayat Raj Act gives a provision for reservation of 30 percent seats for women in village panchayat. It was found this provision of 30 percent reservation for women was known to only 25.18 percent respondent. It varies from the lowest of 19.79 percent in Lesser Himalaya to the highest of 46.67 percent in Trans Himalaya.

Here it's important to note that besides a very low percent of political affiliation (4.68%), a low membership of women (respondents) in *Gram Sabha* and *Gram Panchayat* (10.07%) and a low percent of elected members talking full participation in *Gram Sabha* (18.34%), a very high percent of respondent (66.18%) supported the reservation of seats for women in Panchayat. Though inter zonal variation was observed but even the lowest percent (61.54%) represented by respondents by Great Himlayan villages was fairly high. In case of Trans Himalayan villages the respondents supported it with a high of 86.66 percent. It was also quite significant that 86.33 percent respondents in total were broadly having knowledge about function and duties of *Gram Sabha*. These two responses could be considered as a positive sign towards the empowerment of women.

With this primary information it was observed that women's awareness and interest in politics is quite low, which varies according to different ecological zones. It is discussed in Table no-05 under their access to the daily news through radio, Tele vision or news paper. 22.73 percent respondent's said that they were reading newspaper or were listening news daily from radio and TV. Almost same percent of respondents listening news while only 6.06 percent of them read news papers daily. It was also important that almost 8 out of 10 women never read newspaper. This daily habit of newspaper reading was nil in Great Himalaya, and 3.85 percent in Lesser Himalaya. In case of Trans Himalaya it was as high a 15.00 percent. News paper reading is said to be a serious effort to know what's going on beyond their own sphere, but its unfortunate that its followed by a very low percent of rural women. Non availability of news papers, scarcity of free time, illiteracy, poverty and the most, the lack of will to know what's going out around are the major factor responsible. Most of the women feel that its non-of their concern to know or think what's going on beyond the boundary of their house or village or beyond the sphere of their domestic works. Though a larger percent of respondent's listen news through TV and radio yet how much of them are grasping it, could be another factor. In fact a less number of respondents accepted that, they are specially listening news while for most them it was just filler between two entertainment programs, however It was also observed that the new literate brides listen, read and understand news matter, but the rate of progress is slow.

It's import to note that only 6.06 percent women read newspaper daily while 14.14 percent read it occasionally but most unfortunate part is that 79.79 percent women in rural Kumaon never read newspaper. This data express the

possible lack of awareness of rural women regarding what's going on in world, country or even at their own district. Access to the electronic media, availability of newspaper and foremost the time to read newspaper, if available, does contribution this poor situation.

#### 4. Findings of the study

The findings could be summarized into following points:

- All rural women of Kumaon hills cast vote for village body elections (*Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat and Kshetra Panchayat member*), but in case of State assembly (MLA) and Parliament elections(MP), voting rate goes down drastically.
- Zone wise participation of women in all three stage of election shows the highest in Siwalik (74.64%) followed by Trance and Lesser Himalaya and the lowest participation is in Great Himalaya (61.37%).
- Zone wise variation is associated with the factors like socio-economic conditions, level of education, surrounding environment, physical terrain, accessibility and the interest shown by the political parties.
- Only one-fourth of the respondents know the name of their elected MLA and Block *Pramukh*; in case of MP it is even less than one-fifth. Unfortunately only one out of eleven respondents knows the name of village level officers deputed by the government for their service.
- Almost half of the women casted their vote for the election of MLA and MP but only one-fourth to one-fifth knows their name. It shows that election is not a matter of interest for rural women; rather they only mechanically execute the decision of the family males.
- Just 4.68 percent women have their affiliation to the political parties. Over work load, least information of the outer world (beyond their village), and least interest taken by the political parties in rural women are the basic causes observed.
- Political parties pay least attention to rural women because they know that at family level it's the male who take the decision for voting, female just follow it without any argument.
- Less than one third women are aware about the political parties.
- Out of the elected women members in the village bodies only one-fifth take active part in its proceedings.
- Due to over busy work schedule and lack of time rural women are reluctant in taking part in elected village body.
- More than two-third of rural women supported the reservation of women in the elected village bodies like *Gram saabha* and *Van Panchayat*.
- More than 86 percent women have a basic knowledge about the functions of elected village bodies.
- Access to the sources of information (daily news) is very poor. Less than one fourth respondents listen news (partially or fully) in radio and T.V., but the women who seriously go through news through daily news paper are just 6 percent.
- Eight out of ten women never go through the news paper.
- Political awareness and interest of rural women in Kumaon hills are largely confined up to the village body election.
- High political awareness among women of Siwalik is largely due to their proximity to the adjoining cities of the plain area and easy accessibility. In case of Trans Himalaya it is due to their socio-economic setup and traditional trade based economy. Here the inclination towards agriculture is least and more interest on handicraft and services.
- In case of Great and Lesser Himalaya, subsistence rain fed agriculture and animal husbandry put women under drudgery and they don't have time for any other activity like politics. Poor accessibility, lack of information and less importance to women given by the political parties are the major cause of lesser political awareness among rural women.

#### 5. Research Implication

Poor awareness about the political process, least interest in higher level elections and following male dominated family decision in selection of party and candidate was common among women of rural Kumaon. However at village body elections their interest, awareness and participation is very high. All women cast vote in village body election in rural Kumaon hills but it drastically goes down for state assembly (MLA) and Parliament (MP) election. Almost half of the rural women take part in MLA and MP election but only one-fourth to one-fifth knows their names; it reflects that casting vote is not their interest rather they follow the family decision, taken by the males of the family. Only one third women are aware about the political parties. It was also observed that only one-fifth of the total

elected women candidates in village bodies take active part in the activities. Access to daily news by any mean (radio, T.V. and news paper) and awareness about outer world (beyond their village) is very poor. Only six percent women read news paper daily and eight out of ten never read news paper. Only one fifth women have an access to the news; level of seriousness and understanding of the news is again a matter of debate.

Women responses for different parameters were not unanimous for the entire study area, clear zonal variations were observed. However women show keen interest and active participation for village body elections. Majority of them have the basic knowledge about the duties and functions of the village bodies, and they support the higher reservation for women candidates in these bodies.

Drudgery of rural women, illiteracy and education, socio-economic setup, information about the outer world and importance given to rural women by the contesting candidates and political parties are the major factors. Studies depicts that factors including the drudgery and lack of elementary education decreases awareness among women and inhibit women ability to get involved in politics, (Pandey, 1996; Tiwari, 2012). It is recommended that a strong awareness programme for better understanding of political system is required for the rural women in Kumaon hills. Further steps are also required to reduce illiteracy and increase education among rural women. For reducing drudgery, an integrated scheme is required for promotion of agriculture and conservation of environment. Political awareness is an important component in the empowerment of women. It is necessary for women to assert their identity beyond their personal sphere. Beyond that it will help women of Kumaon hills to put their issues on public agenda, influence policies and facilitating their participation in the political process, which will finally lead for their overall development.

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**Tables**

**Table 01: Ecological Zone Wise Distribution of Samples**

S. N.	Ecological zones	Name of Surveyed Villages	No. of survey villages	No. of samples per village	Total Samples
1.	<b>Shiwalik</b>	Amrit Pur, Saladi, Do gaon	03	15-16	46
2.	<b>Lesser Himalaya</b>	Chara, Padyula, Gadsiyari, Supi, Dol, Syahi devi, Bimola Supakot, Bilona, Girgaon	13	20	260
3.	<b>Great Himalaya</b>	Supi, Khati, Bhanar, Liti, Lilam	5	10	50
4.	<b>Trans Himalaya Kumaon Hills</b>	Milam, Bilju, Martoli, Ganghar	4	10	40
		Total-22	25		396

**Table 02: Vote casted in Different Elections (Last Elections)**

Different Election	Siwalik	Lesser Himalaya	Great Himalaya	Trans Himalaya	Over All Kumaon Hills
<b>Village Body Elections (Gram Pradhan / Block Pramukh)</b>	100	100	100	100	100
<b>State Assembly (MLA)</b>	67.39	56.15	46.00	62.25	56.82
<b>Parliament Election (MP)</b>	56.52	45.77	38.00	50.00	46.46
<b>Average of all Three Elections</b>	74.64	67.31	61.33	70.75	67.67

**Table 03: Awareness about Political Representatives and Government Personal. (in %)**

Political representatives and Government Personal	Siwalik	Lesser Himalaya	Great Himalaya	Trans Himalaya	Over All Kumaon Hills
Member of Parliament (MP)	55.81	9.14	11.54	26.67	17.63
Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA)	67.44	10.66	11.54	33.33	20.86
Block Pramukh	27.91	15.23	23.08	60.00	20.50
Village Level Government Officers	9.30	7.61	11.54	20.00	8.99

**Table 04: Women's Participation and Participation in Political Process in Rural Kumaon (in %)**

Zones	Affiliated to political parties	Awareness about their local candidates	Self decision in casting vote	Active participation in <i>Gram Shabha</i>	Awareness about the functional duties of GS	avored the reservation of women seats in GS
Shivalik	6.80	32.56	0.00	18.84	88.46	70.24
Lesser Himalaya	3.04	25.38	0.00	17.76	85.75	64.88
Great Himalaya	3.84	19.23	0.00	09.56	80.26	61.54
Trans Himalaya	20.00	38.48	0.00	53.33	96.00	86.66
Kumaon Hills	4.68	27.33	0.00	18.34	86.33	66.18

**Table 05: Zone wise Percentage of Women Who Read News Paper or Listen Radio/T.V. News (in %)**

Zones	Percentage of Women Who read/Listen News			Women who read News Paper			Women who Listen Radio/TV News		
	Daily	Occasionally	Never	Daily	Occasionally	Never	Daily	Occasionally	Never
Siwalik	34.78	39.13	26.09	8.69	13.04	78.26	34.78	39.13	26.09
Lesser Himalaya	20.00	35.38	44.61	3.85	13.08	83.08	20.00	35.38	44.61
Great Himalaya	8.00	40.00	52.00	00.00	00.00	100.00	08.00	40.00	52.00
Trans Himalaya	25.00	40.00	35.00	15.00	40.00	45.00	45.00	45.00	10.00
Kumaon Hills	23.23	36.87	39.89	6.06	14.14	79.79	22.73	37.37	39.89

**Table 06: Zone and Gender wise Literacy in Rural Kumaon Hills (in %)**

Gender	Siwalik	Lesser Himalaya	Great Himalaya	Trans Himalaya	Over All Kumaon
Male	85.18	80.12	84.37	75.00	80.84
Female	76.00	57.52	83.87	61.11	62.46
Total	80.77	69.89	84.13	68.42	72.38

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