



# Rural And Non Rural Digital Divide: Impact On Health Communication Of Chitradurga District, Karnataka

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## Abstract

This paper investigates of the effect of the digital divide among rural and urban citizens. Usage survey data, and research are employed by the authors framing a well-structured questionnaire and interviews among citizens of rural and urban areas of Chitradurga District, Karnataka. The digital divide is one of the major concerns issue in society. The rural area is less likely to have access to the internet and communication technologies, however limited data is available regarding rural-urban in online health information seeking. Online health information seeking is influenced by the factors of; gender, education, age, monthly income, and internet diffusion. Web is an easily available source of health information; it could also create inequalities in the rural area in health information. However, meeting some of the challenges provides justice to the Right to Health as a fundamental right of the rural people under Article 21. The article discloses the impact of these differences.

## 1. Introduction

Treatment has evolved significantly over time, in ancient civilizations such as herbal remedies, spiritual healing, supernatural beliefs, and Ayurveda. However, the enlightenment on health during the 19 to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, by the scientific discoveries, the emergence of hospitals, vaccines, antiseptics, surgical advancement, antibiotics, medical imaging technology, organ transplant, gene therapy, and

biotechnology. Later, in the present 21<sup>st</sup> century health treatment has changed surprisingly in advancements such as genomics, precision health, robotics, artificial intelligence, and digital health. Thus, digital health has become one of the significant advancements and milestones in the history of health treatment. Health communication is sharing information and messages for wellness through various channels, such as public health campaigns, awareness programs, counselling telemedicine, etc. On the other hand, the health literacy programs for community outreach here are some of the outstanding tools for creating awareness of health among the local peoples that include social media, print and broadcast media such as newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio. Access and ability to use modern technologies such as 5G technology and Information and communication technology (ICT) are necessary for making awareness among the rural and non-rural of Chitradurga District, Karnataka. The digital era is a program with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy that widespread health communication. Health information provides information on health, risks, illnesses, and health-protective behaviours. However, the usage of digital technologies in contribution for digital India of the urban citizen is as crucial as rural citizen [1]. The source of health information depends on several factors such as gender, education, age, monthly income, and internet diffusion [2]. Therefore, the research paper focuses on filling the knowledge gap and linking to the overall health perceptions, health status, and health benefits among rural people.

The health communication studied by Manjunatha et al. [3] provides a glimpse of this innovative Karnataka telemedicine (KTM) program and current progress with a preliminary analysis of translational quotient indicating skill transfer and retention. Hans et al. [4] report on the rural health infrastructure in India—A Study in selected villages of Karnataka. Bhat et al. [5], the findings of this study could potentially facilitate further research and health promotional activities for rural people of developing countries. In this article, the Rural and Non Rural Digital Divide: Impact on Health Communication of Chitradurga District, Karnataka was explored.

## 2. Objectives of the study

- ❖ The digital era in which we live has amended the landscape regarding health information.
- ❖ To create the awareness of health professionals among the communities
- ❖ To determine the digital divide associated with gender, education, age, monthly income, and internet diffusion
- ❖ The government initiatives such as eHealth technology and eHealth tools can help to reduce healthcare inequalities that access to health information, to explore health literacy.

### 3. Research methodology

A survey method was followed for the current studies. Fig. 1-5 represents the variation of health seeking information on gender, education, age, income and internet diffusion in rural and urban

#### Tools:

Here are some of the tools that are used for our research findings, we examine 100 people including rural (**Belghatta village**) and urban (**Chitradurga**)

- ❖ Through interview
- ❖ Through questionnaires

#### 3.1 How health information seeking depends on gender in rural and urban?

A. Yes

B. No

SL NO	PARTICULARS	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
1	YES	80	80%
2	NO	20	20%
	TOTAL	100	100%

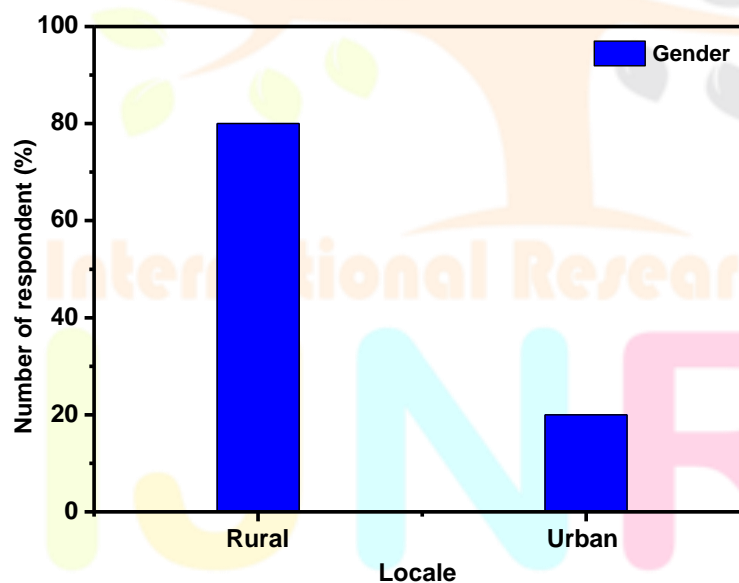


Fig. 1: Health information seeking on gender in rural and urban

#### 3.2 What role gender plays in rural and urban education?

A. Yes

B. No

SL NO	PARTICULARS	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
1	YES	90	90%
2	NO	10	10%
	TOTAL	100	100%

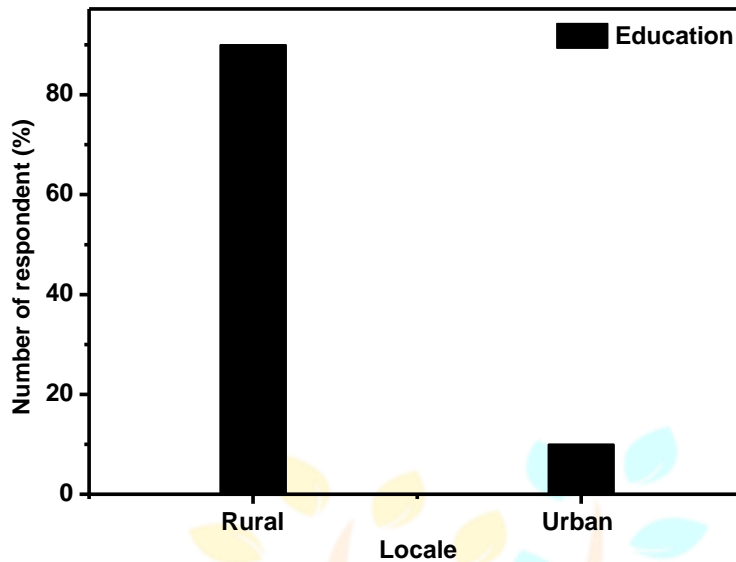


Fig. 2: Health information seeking on education in rural and urban

3.3 Does age significantly affect the decision to obtain medical information in urban and rural areas?

A. Yes

B. No

SL NO	PARTICULARS	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
1	YES	75	75%
2	NO	25	25%
	TOTAL	100	100%

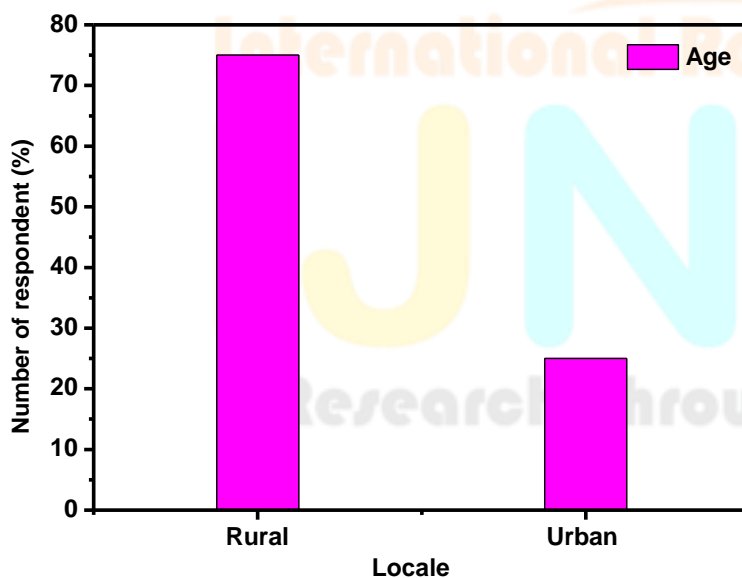


Fig. 3: Health information seeking on age in rural and urban

## 3.4 Does health information seeking depend on monthly income in rural and urban?

A. Yes

B. No

SL NO	PARTICULARS	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
1	YES	95	95%
2	NO	05	05%
	TOTAL	100	100%

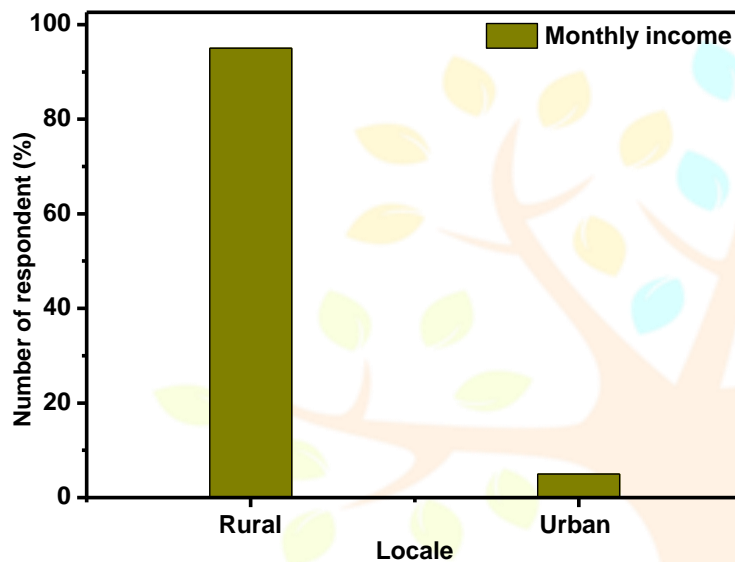


Fig. 4: Health information seeking on monthly income in rural and urban

## 3.5 How health information seeking depend on the internet in rural and urban areas?

A. Yes

B. No

SL NO	PARTICULARS	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
1	YES	85	85%
2	NO	15	15%
	TOTAL	100	100%

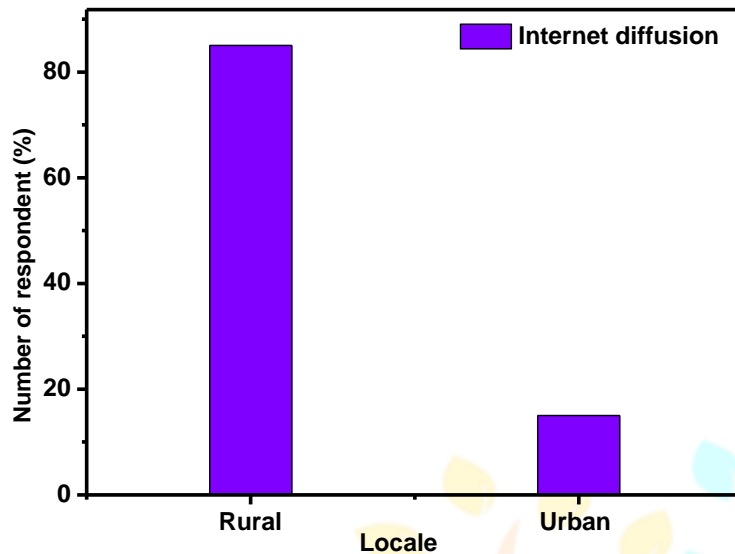


Fig. 5: Health information seeking on internet diffusion in rural and urban

### **Interpretation:**

Here's a more thorough analysis of the ways that gender influences health information seeking behaviour in rural and urban settings: The above graph depicts the factors affecting health seeking information such as gender, education, age, monthly income and internet diffusion in (**Belghatta village**) and urban (**Chitradurga**) community in percentage.

## **4. Discussions**

Computers and the internet in providing health information and health related services such as health information resources, self-management and risk- assessment tools. The internet provides a platform that connects health professionals for effective interaction to reach patients and communities. The internet plays an outstanding role in connecting the gaps between the patients and the health experts rather than the face to traditional face communication. Some of the advantages are improved eruption to personalize health information, the fastest mode of communication during any emergency with the patients, on the dot decisions from the experts, provides an extra platform for the patients to choose better, finds freedom of decision, receiving supports and promotion of self-care. Thus, the internet is an outstanding platform for information dissemination, training, research and response to client support needs. The health information seeking on gender, education, age, monthly income and internet diffusion are discussed below;

### **4.1 Health information seeking on education**

Knowledge is a prerequisite for accessing health information. Studies have indicated that those with greater education are more likely to: know about health information recognize and appropriately interpret health information, utilize health facts to guide your decision-making on their care, effectively navigate

the healthcare system, and speak out for their medical needs. To enable people to take control of their health and make educated decisions about their care, education is essential. We can endeavor to lower health inequities and enhance general health outcomes by enhancing health literacy and education.

## 4.2 Health information seeking on the gender

Gender differences in the influence of the digital divide, or unequal access to digital technologies, on the behavior of people seeking health information, are noteworthy. The following are some significant variations:

### ❖ Women

- less likely to have access to smartphones and other digital devices, especially in remote areas
- may not be as proficient in digital literacy, which makes navigating online health resources more difficult.
- more likely to experience difficulties while utilizing telemedicine platforms and online patient portals as digital health technologies
- may depend more on offline sources for health information, like print materials and medical professionals

### ❖ Men

- More likely to own a smartphone and use it to look for health information
- May be inclined to look for health information online via websites and social media
- Possessing greater proficiency with digital literacy could facilitate the exploration of online health resources
- Possibly more inclined to consider apps and fitness trackers as examples of digital health tools

### **Reducing the digital divide in the search for health information:**

- Expanding the availability of digital technology, particularly for women and people living in remote areas.
- Enhancing digital literacy abilities via educational and training initiatives
- Creating easily navigable digital health resources and tools
- Encouraging the use of offline health resources and assistance for people with little internet connectivity

However, endeavor to lessen health disparities and enhance health outcomes for everyone by comprehending the gender dynamics of the digital gap in the search for health information.

## 4.3 Health information seeking the age

Searching for health information depending on age is impacted by the digital divide as well. The following delineates the impact on distinct age groups: younger adults, adults, and older adults. Because they rely more on online sources for information, younger folks may be more susceptible to inaccurate

diagnoses and disinformation. Adults may need extra assistance while browsing online health information due to potential difficulties. The limited access to digital health services may cause older persons to receive diagnosis and treatment later than they would otherwise.

#### **Reducing the age based digital gap in health information seeking:**

- Creating tools and resources for digital health that are age-appropriate
- Giving senior citizens assistance and instruction in digital literacy
- Encouraging younger folks to use internet health resources and assistance
- Urging medical professionals to utilize basic language in online resources

#### **4.4 Health information seeking on the monthly income**

Depending on monthly income, the digital gap also affects how people seek out health information.

Below is a summary of the effects on various income levels:

low income, middle income and high income. Low-income people may have trouble accessing digital health tools, which can cause delays in diagnosis and treatment. People with middle-class incomes could find it challenging to use internet health resources and might need further assistance. High income people may be more prone to receive inaccurate information and diagnose themselves incorrectly since they rely more on internet resources.

#### **Reducing the income based digital divide in health information seeking:**

- Increasing low-income people's access to digital technologies and internet connectivity
- Educating and supporting middle-class people in digital literacy
- Urging medical professionals to utilize basic language in online resources
- Creating affordable digital health resources and tools for people of all income levels.

#### **4.5 Health information seeking on the internet diffusion**

The dissemination of internet access and usage, or internet diffusion, is impacted by the digital divide and effects on how people seek out health information. The impact of varying degrees of internet dispersion on health information seeking is broken down as limited internet diffusion, moderate internet diffusion, and widespread internet diffusion. Due to restricted access to digital health resources, limited internet dispersion may cause delayed diagnosis and treatment. Moderate internet diffusion can make it challenging to use online health information and necessitate further assistance. The widespread use of the internet could result in an over reliance on it and possibly false information.

#### **Using internet diffusion to bridge the digital gap in health information seeking:**

- Improving underprivileged areas' access to digital technologies and internet connectivity
- Offering assistance and training in digital literacy to areas with a moderate internet penetration rate
- Urging medical professionals to utilize basic language in online resources

- Creating usable and accessible digital health materials and tools for all internet diffusion levels.

Thus, understanding how the digital divide in health information seeking is impacted by internet diffusion can help us work toward closing the gap in health and enhancing everyone's health.

## 5. Challenges of the digital divide in health communication

The barriers to health communication dissemination in the assessment of the digital divide are reported below;

- Enhancing the broadband access of a growing digital divide between the rural and other areas
- Towards understanding the digital divide in rural development
- Digital inclusion among the isolated communities in the qualitative exploration of the challenges faced by people
- Overcoming the immediate corrective in the obstacle and bridging the diffusion in internet access
- Encouraging rural communities to develop in social and cultural activities
- Digital revolution in schools and colleges for training the students, teachers and communities

## 6. Conclusion

The digital era plays a significant role in providing the knowledge that could help during health related problems and amend the landscape regarding health information. Advances in information and technology are useful for patients seeking good health. Also, the health information seeking inequality is extended to the discussion of gender, education, age, monthly income, and internet diffusion. However, the studies are not without limitations. Additionally, our research examines the challenges faced by the rural community. The studies highlight the challenges to be faced to overcome the daily and required need to reach the health education. As it is well known one cannot assess change over time, constant education, awareness and initiatives are to be taken for the development of health in the rural areas for Better India.

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