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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Launched in 1965, Communicator is a peer reviewed journal of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) that publishes original research on communications. The flagship journal of the IIMC endeavours to publish the best literature available in the field of communications and its related branches for the greater benefit of scholars, practitioners and policy-makers. The main aim of Communicator Journal is to focus on communication theory, research, policy and practice. This UGC-CARE listed Journal is published on quarterly basis. Communicator is now being indexed in the Indian Citation Index.

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FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR'S DESK



Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi
Director General,
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Welcome to the first issue of the 56th Volume of *Communicator*, a flagship journal published by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) since 1966. With the formation of the new editorial board in 2020, the journal has progressed in terms of accommodating more papers, visually appealing design with standardized components, to name a few.

To retrieve the best benefits out of these improvements made in the journal, we encourage more practice-based articles, state-of-the-art content and critical review articles including commentaries. The prime objective of these changes is to help us in scoring high in performance measures and moving up in journal ranking lists. It is the perfect time for us to look at the journal as truly international and continue to work harder to help the journal in climbing up the ranking ladder with increased impact factor and quality content for Journalism and Mass Communication scholars.

We are looking for better articles that cover developing concepts and research dimensions, original pieces that can pique the readers attention, and content that academics can utilise to broaden their knowledge horizon. Detailed author's guidelines have been included in this issue also that will provide clear directions to the authors.

This issue of *Communicator* has a variety of research papers covering national and international, social, political, and economic concerns arching innovative approaches to mass communication and journalism. The collection of research papers included in this issue starts with a research study discussing various frames used by the print media particularly newspapers in the formation of climate-related topics and concerns, as well as highlighting the shift from the term global warming to the umbrella term of climate change in the current media landscape.

A paper concerning the usage of mobile phones for political marketing along with its application for the propagation of political ideas in public welfare has also been included. This study suggests different ways by which mobile technology can be applied for marketing and promotions. Moving on to other papers included in this issue, a research study on Facebook addiction and its impact on the youths has also been incorporated. This study investigates how college students use the internet and social networking sites, as well as the influence they have.



Other research articles include topics ranging from New Media and its application to the shift of vernacular presses to other digital platforms.

In addition, papers on the depiction of disability in films and the use of participatory communication in accomplishing long-term goals are included in this issue to give readers a taste of the range of content and research topics emerging within the subject of media studies. Other themes covered include the impact of social media on news consumption and the development of regional cinema in the country, among others. This issue also includes research studies on the English language and its relevance in content development, as well as a historical examination of the Haryanvi cinema. This issue is a collection of diverse research papers catering to the demand for knowledge expansion in the discipline of mass communication and journalism.

I would like to thank the entire editorial team of Communicator, the editorial board and the reviewers for all their support. Comments, suggestions and proposal for special issues are always appreciated.

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi



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Contents

1. Newspaper Representation and Frames of Climate Change in India: Content Analysis of National English Dailies 1
Aakriti Taneja and K. S. Arul Selvan
2. Mobile-ready and Integrated Dialogic Communication on Indian Political Party Websites: An Analysis 13
Vishal Nayak and D. S. Poornananda
3. Facebook Addiction Propensities among the Youths: A Study of College Students in West Tripura District 22
Deepak Upadhyaya, Shivajyoti Das Baruah, Nanigopal Debnath, Ivan Das, and Sayantani Roy
4. People's Perception about New and Traditional Media in terms of Consumption Pattern, Credibility and Objectivity 33
Nitin Kumar and Rajesh Kumar
5. New Media and Vernacular Press: A Study on the Status of the Online Vernacular Journalism in Assam 40
Manoj Deori, Neena Baruah and Abhijit Bora
6. Framing Disability in Contemporary Bollywood Cinema 52
Dev Vrat Singh and Neha Pandey
7. Episodic Reporting of Environmental Issues and Audience Apathy: A Systematic Review of Studies on Coverage of National and Regional Dailies 62
Sriveda Baswapoor and Shikha Rai
8. ICT Based Media Support Services Provided to the Learners of ODL Programmes During Covid-19 Pandemic 77
Vijayakumar P., Mukesh Kumar, Meetali and Deepshikha
9. Participatory Communication for Solid Waste Management and Sustainable Development: A Study of First Garbage Treatment Plant in Himachal Pradesh 84
Archna Katoch
10. Social Media: A Platform for News or Disinformation 93
Rahul Mahajan
11. Effects of Social Media on News Consumption: A Study of Female University Students of Delhi 99
Nadim Akhter
12. A Study on Scope and Effectiveness of MOOCs for Agricultural Education 106
Praveen Kumar Jain and M. K. Salooja

13. Development of Haryanvi Cinema: A Journey Five Decades (1968 – 2020) <i>Rashmi Singh and Sachin Bharti</i>	114
14. Command on English Language and Content Writing: An Essential Strategy for Media Education <i>Jimmy Sharma</i>	120
15. The Historic Dawn of Hindi Cinema and Our Society <i>Kirti Sisodia</i>	127
<i>IIMC Glimpses</i>	136
<i>Author's Guidelines</i>	151



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Newspaper Representation and Frames of Climate Change in India: Content Analysis of National English Dailies

AAKRITI TANEJA¹ AND K. S. ARUL SELVAN²

ABSTRACT

The issue of climate change in the media landscape has witnessed a shift from global warming to the umbrella term of climate change. The stakeholders involved in tackling climate change have delved into the nitty-gritty of regulatory, institutional as well as individual practices, with media situated at the epicentre of the debate. The playfield of newspaper representation of climate change, thus, emancipates the discourse undertaken by newspapers in India, a country with the fourth-highest carbon footprint across the globe. From the purview of frame analysis, this study delves into exploratory research on the prominent themes and frames in the arena of climate change using a mixed-method approach. The time frame of this study is six months, conducted in 2018, that is, July to December. In essence, the study reflects upon the discourses of climate change portrayal by the three most circulated English language newspapers in India.

Keywords: Climate communication, Media representation, Framing, Indian newspapers

Introduction

With the recent developments in the arena of climate policy and climate activism across the globe, the debate on climate change has escalated exponentially, including the importance laid on the issue in the form of Sustainable Development Goal 13. The playfield of climate science and politics has its imprints on that of the media as well since the media acts as a conduit between policymakers, scientific community and the public. However, the dichotomy between climate communication and media asserts the vulnerability of a country to climate change and the issue of attention that media renders to the issue (Schmidt *et al.*, 2013; Painter & Schäfer, 2018).

In 2018, Germanwatch Index ranked India as 14th most vulnerable country to the impact of climate change, a fact that stands at an opposing stance with India being the fourth largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world. India's media system is of vital importance for comprehending the role it plays in communicating climate change wherein it has been concentrated in the arena of politics and media which congruently formulate into direct and indirect partisan media systems and networked media systems, segregated across state lines on the relationship between politics and media ownership (Chakravarty & Roy, 2013). Following a free-market approach, Indian media, therefore, has the agency and structure to set the agenda and communicate their ideologies,

similar to that of most Western countries with influence from the socio-political sphere (Carvalho, 2007; Boykoff, 2007; Hulme, 2009; Chakravarty & Roy, 2013).

Therefore, an array of heterogeneous narratives is feasible to Indian media in order to situate climate change pertaining to its ideologies (Thaker, 2017; Ghosh & Boykoff, 2019). In this connotation, media 'represents' climate change and 'frames' the issue in a certain manner (Schäfer & O'Neill, 2017), especially in the most vulnerable countries. This outlook delves into media's role of disseminator of information wherein it acts as the agency that shapes public and policy agenda on the issues of climate change, thereby influencing the stakeholders involved in combating climate change. Henceforth, the relevance of Indian media is at juxtaposition with climate communication in the context of how it is being represented especially in the milieu of climate politics, climate change impacts and climate science (Dutt *et al.*, 2008; Jogesh, 2012; Ghosh & Boykoff, 2019; Keller *et al.*, 2019).

Therefore, the conundrum of climate change communication is at a nascent stage in India, as opposed to the country's vulnerability to climate change and its media discourses. In cohesion with the playfield of media representation of climate change in India, the focal point of this research lies in the arena of media frames of climate change in India. This research, thereby, undertakes a mixed-

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method approach to ascertain how Indian elite media constructs the issue of climate change in an empirical manner.

Review of Literature

Discourse of Media Portrayals of Climate Change

Media representation of climate change arises from the themes of climate politics, claim-makers (including scepticals, contrarians and deniers), effects of climate change and climate change impacts (Jogesh, 2012; Gurwitt *et al.*, 2017). While in Anglosphere countries, sceptical voices are prominent in terms of media coverage of climate change; the issues of national and energy security in Western countries and food and water security are dominant in developing countries (Painter & Schäfer, 2018), thereby, leaning towards the scientific certainty of climate change.

The broader discourses of media portrayal of climate change align around episodic versus thematic coverage of climate change (Carvalho, 2010; Schmidt *et al.*, 2013; Painter & Schäfer, 2018); attribution of responsibility (Olausson, 2009; Post & Schäfer, 2018); domestication (Carvalho, 2010; Keller *et al.*, 2019); and, scientific certainty and anthropogenic climate change versus scientific uncertainty of climate change (Billett, 2009; Painter, 2013; Kellet *et al.*, 2019).

The elements of similarity across media in Anglosphere developed, non-Anglosphere developed and developing countries (including India) resonate with episodic framing of climate change in alignment with climate politics, wherein extensive focus has been laid on international climate policies and summits, as opposed to national or regional policies (Schmidt *et al.*, 2013; Gurwitt *et al.*, 2017). However, while in most developed countries, the media highlights climate change from a global perspective (Shanahan, 2009), India, Brazil and other the other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have a domesticated approach in terms of media portrayal of climate change (Shanahan, 2009; Mittal, 2012; Freeman, 2017; Keller *et al.*, 2019), which also, in turn, reflects on mitigation rather than adaptation to climate change. Similarly, on the issue of attribution of responsibility, the media in developed countries attribute responsibility of climate change to developing countries and developing countries' media attributes responsibility of climate change on developed countries and their carbon emissions (Jogesh, 2012; Mittal, 2012; Post & Schäfer, 2018).

Media portrayal of climate change amongst the three categories of countries varies significantly on

the issue of scientific certainty, anthropogenic climate change and scepticism around climate change. On one hand, media in the US and UK heavily rely on climate scepticism, thereby, negating anthropogenic climate change (Boykoff, 2007; Painter & Schäfer, 2018). On the other hand, non-Anglosphere developed and developing countries underscore the essence of anthropogenic climate change and scientific certainty (Olausson, 2009; Billett, 2009; Shanahan, 2009; Freeman, 2017; Painter & Schäfer, 2018). In cohesion with the representation of climate change, the media also frames the issue in a particular manner, thereby drawing light upon certain aspects.

Prominent Stakeholders in Communicating Climate Change

The prominent stakeholders involved in communicating climate change are being referred to as claim-makers (Trumbo, 1996). According to Horta *et al.* (2017) and Keller *et al.* (2019), scientists and scientific organizations are the prominent sources of information. Information on climate change by the media is also largely driven by environmental NGOs (Boykoff, 2011; Thaker, 2017). However, citizens are not considered to be key stakeholders in communicating climate change from the mainstream media's perspective (Carvalho, 2010).

Framing and Frame Analysis in Climate Communication

Entman (1993) elaborated the aspect of media frames with the idea of selection and salience, stating that media frames are selected as per the audience and their salience is judged upon by how their reaction might be. The content contains frames, which are manifested by the absence or presence of certain keywords, stock phrases, images, sources of information, etc. that reinforce the message that is to be relayed.

According to Kitzinger (2007), frame analysis can be used to examine the production media coverage, to analyze content and to explore how frames influence people's reactions. Therefore, for this research study, the scope of frame analysis does not limit itself to exploring how media represents climate change as an issue but also delves into the salience of the text, surmounting to the way of media representation.

Snow and Benford (1988) introduced three core framing tasks that amplify the process of decoding the rationale for framing. They are:

- a) *Diagnostic Framing*: Involves identification of the problem and attribution of blame or causality
- b) *Prognostic Framing*: Suggests solutions along

with identifying tactics, strategies and targets to meet the solutions

- c) *Motivational Framing*: Elaborates the arms or rationale for action.

Specifically, concerning climate change, Broadbent *et al.* (2016) proposed to analyze media framing of climate change from the outlook of observing the validity of climate science, scale of ecological risk, scale of climate politics and the support for mitigation policy in a country in order to analyze the ways media frames climate change. Additionally, Schäfer and O'Neill (2017) illustrated four framing approaches in climate communication: stakeholder framing, journalistic framing, content framing and multimodal framing, wherein, the approach signifies the process of “frame building” from the perspectives of what the stakeholders quoted, perception of the journalists, text of news reports and visual imagery. In addition, generic and topical frames are being employed by scholars to analyze climate change framing as well.

Media Framing of Climate Change

The prominent approach to framing in climate change communication has been content-oriented (Lück *et al.*, 2016; Schäfer & O'Neill, 2017); while media frames on climate change have transcended from scientific to socio-political framing (Lück *et al.*, 2016; Schäfer & O'Neill, 2017).

The connotation of framing and the perspectives vary between developed and developing countries as well where developing countries are framed in need of help from the developed countries to combat climate change by the media of developed countries, especially on the lines of ‘alarmist’, ‘catastrophe’ and ‘resolve’ (Hulme, 2009; Painter, 2013; Broadbent *et al.*, 2016), which also reflect on the framing of scientific uncertainty by the media of developed countries, specifically in the context of the US media (Trumbo, 1996; Painter & Ashe, 2012). In the case of the UK media, the framing sways from scientific certainty to conflict frame (Carvalho, 2007; Painter & Ashe, 2012). While, in the case of Swedish media, Olausson (2009) connotes the frames of scientific certainty for local reporting, similar to that of France, Brazil, China and India (Painter & Ashe, 2012).

Moreover, previous studies have reflected the equity of responsibility on climate change been framed on similar lines, which reflect on the consequences and impacts of climate change more than climate victimhood in Denmark and France (Dirikx & Gelders, 2010); Norway, China and Ghana (Midttun *et al.*, 2015); ASEAN countries (Freeman, 2017); Turkey (Günay *et al.*, 2018); and India (Mittal,

2012; Kurian & Pandey, 2017; Keller *et al.*, 2019). The conundrums of framing climate change still have its footprints in the case of the national position of the country as well as conflict framing across countries, especially in non-Anglosphere developed and developing countries including the ASEAN countries and India (Dirikx & Gelder, 2010; Pandey & Kurian, 2017; Freeman, 2017).

Research Gap and Rationale of Research

Plentiful research studies have reflected on the aspect of media framing of climate change in the Western context (Schäfer & O'Neill, 2017). However, the themes and topics of climate change in the developing countries are classified in the category of ‘Global South’ (Shanahan, 2009). Additionally, while the developing countries, especially in the Global South, are considered to be the most vulnerable to climate change impacts (Schmidt *et al.*, 2013), yet the studies conducted on climate change in the Southern developing countries are limited in scope (Schäfer & Schlichting, 2014; Gurwitt *et al.*, 2017; Painter & Schäfer, 2018). Existing studies on media representation of climate change in India also vary in terms of prominent themes and frames (Mittal, 2012; Keller *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, limited research studies and the elements of difference amongst the findings reflect a research gap that needs to be bridged.

Henceforth, the rationale to conduct this research emerges from the dearth of research studies conducted, focusing on the investigation of the context of media frames of climate change, which reflect upon the media representation in India.

Aim, Research Objectives and Questions

The aim of this study is to analyze the volume of media coverage of climate change, the recurrent themes and topics through which media represents climate change and the dominant frames being employed in India.

In light of the aim of this research, the objectives of this study are:

RO 1: To analyze the coverage of climate change issues in national English dailies.

RO 2: To explore the themes and frames of climate change in these newspapers.

The research questions of this study are:

RQ 1: What is the nature of media coverage given to the issue of climate change?

RQ 2: What are the dominant frames of climate change used by these newspapers?

RQ 3: What are the prominent aspects of climate change represented in Indian newspapers?

Research Design and Methodology

Research Methodology

Drawing on content analysis, this study helps in understanding the realm of media representation of climate change in a nuanced manner. Although extensive studies have been conducted using the quantitative content analysis method, however, to justify the depth of analysis for this study, textual analysis is essential. According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017), the objective of qualitative content analysis is to systematically transform the text into a highly organized and concise summary of key results. The data from news reports assisted in formulating categories in order to analyze it at each step, especially “from the manifest and literal content to latent meanings” (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

The prism of qualitative content analysis or textual analysis for this research is frame analysis. Frame analysis is imperative to analyze the content and the ways of media representation in the discourse of research paradigm (Entman, 1993; Kitzinger, 2007). In addition, quantitative content analysis is conducted on the data collected through frequency measurement in order to support the textual analysis.

Data Collection Method

According to Boykoff and Lueddecke (2016), elite news media influence the public with regard to their perception and level of concern about climate change. In addition, elite media influences policymakers’ agenda and mitigation efforts and policies as well. Citing India’s English-language daily newspaper, the Hindustan Times *Hindustan Times* as an example, Boykoff and Lueddecke (2016) enunciate the role of contemporary elite news media in terms of readership, articulation and ownership, thereby, becoming synonymous with mainstream media in the present context.

Therefore, this research partakes in climate change coverage through widely-circulated, nationally-ranked English language newspapers, which constitute as ‘elite media’ in India. Three English-language national dailies analyzed were *Hindustan Times* (circulation 9,57,176; henceforth, HT), *The Times of India* (circulation 9,48,696; henceforth TOI) and *The Hindu* (circulation 3,27,888). The rationale for the selection of aforementioned English newspapers was the highest in circulation amongst English daily newspapers in Delhi, as per the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) statistics of 2017-18.

This study involved a content analysis of news reports through sampling and coding the relevant articles from July 2018 to December 2018, that is, six months. The time frame of this study was chosen due to the extensive list of events (see Appendix 1) on climate change in India in the year. Moreover, 2018 was the fourth warmest year since 1880, as per National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Another rationale for the selection of July 2018 to December 2018 is the release of IPCC Assessment Report in October 2018 which highlighted the climate emergency at a non-reversal stage in the upcoming 12 years, thereby instigating extensive debates on climate change.

The study involved an online archival search on Media Cloud by using the keywords ‘climate change’, ‘climate’, ‘greenhouse gas’ and ‘global warming’ since these are the most prominent keywords. The unit of analysis was news reports, which consisted of news articles, editorials, features, guest columns, letters to the editor and commentaries. However, the sample of the study did not include advertorials. The total number of news reports analyzed for this research are 349, including 92 in *TOI*, 117 in *HT* and 140 in *The Hindu*.

Data Analysis

Language of the news reports was gathered from the Word Cloud tool available on Media Cloud itself. The coding sheet for the same was developed, as per the themes, topics and frames of climate change highlighted prominently in the review of literature.

Themes and Frame Analysis: While the prominent themes and topics were adopted from Keller *et al.* (2019) as well as developed as per the news reports, frame analysis of the news reports was conducted through a manual-holistic method. According to Schäfer and O’Neill (2017), the manual-holistic approach to frame analysis refers to an approach where a generic frame-set is employed on different topics.

Aspects of texts taken into consideration are the type of language, nature of media coverage (type of news story, volume of coverage, news beat), nature of media representation (topic and theme) and quoted stakeholders. These identity key cues were analyzed from the prism of frames, in cohesion with the key cues for frame analysis partaken by Kitzinger (2007).

For this study, five generic frames developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) were adapted. The prominent frames being highlighted by Semetko

and Valkenburg (2000) include Attribution of Responsibility, Human Interest Frame, Conflict Frame, Morality Frame and Economic Frame. In order to adapt the frames in the Indian context, the frame analysis by Pandey and Kurian (2017) on climate change was added for the analysis, including the frames of Scientific Certainty, National Position and Human Development, as suggested by the review of literature. Therefore, eight frames-sets were employed to analyze the newspaper framing of climate change in India.

Prominent Themes and Topics: According to Jogesh (2012) and Keller *et al.* (2019), the prominent themes and topics on climate change employed by Indian media are in the sets of Climate Politics, Climate Science, Climate Change Impacts and Climate Change and Society with topics ranging from project funding and economic sustainability to health and pollution. The topics have been derived from the findings of Keller *et al.* (2019) and Ghosh and Boykoff (2019) as well.

Data Analysis Procedure: In order to empirically place the analysis of data collected, quantitative content analysis was combined with that of frame analysis, which was further analyzed from the perspective of the prominent themes that emerged from the review of literature.

For empirical validation, the chi-square test was undertaken on the frequency of *Themes* and *Frames* of newspaper representation of climate change analyzed by the researchers. In the case of *Themes*, the chi-square value was found to be $X^2(8, N=349) = 11.359$, $p < 0.05$ which proved to be not significant. Similarly, in the case of *Frames*, the chi-square value was found to be $X^2(14, N=349) = 16.983$, $p < 0.05$ which also proved to be not significant. Therefore, no statistical difference was found in the discourse of newspaper representation of climate change between *TOI*, *HT* and *The Hindu*.

Inter-coder Reliability: Cohen's Kappa was undertaken to assess the inter-coder reliability of the data analyzed. Two researchers conducted the content and frame analysis independently. A sample of 1/3rd of the 349 news reports, from the three newspapers on a ratio basis, was drawn randomly for Cohen's Kappa on the themes and the frames of newspaper representation of climate change were analyzed. In the context of the *Themes*, the measure of agreement was found to be 0.861 ($p < 0.001$). While, in the aspect of the *Frames*, the measure of agreement was found to be 0.726 ($p < 0.001$), reflecting upon strong agreement in both cases.

Limitations of the Study

The foremost limitation was the online archives of newspapers since it was difficult to access the physical copies and might have induced limited news reports. Third-party websites had to be used for accessing news reports from July 2018 to December 2018. The second limitation was in the form of region-wise variations across the editions of the newspapers, which could not be segregated due to online accessibility restrictions.

Data Analysis

Nature of Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change

Volume of Newspaper Coverage on Climate Change

The volume of coverage varied in accordance with the month of publication as well as the newspaper. While December 2018 had the most number of stories on climate change across the three newspapers, September and October witnessed an upsurge in the coverage of climate change across the three newspapers (Figure 1). However, *TOI* dramatically reduced its focus on climate change in November, while *HT* had a stable coverage on the issue of climate change. Notably, the focus on climate change was low in July and August across the three newspapers.

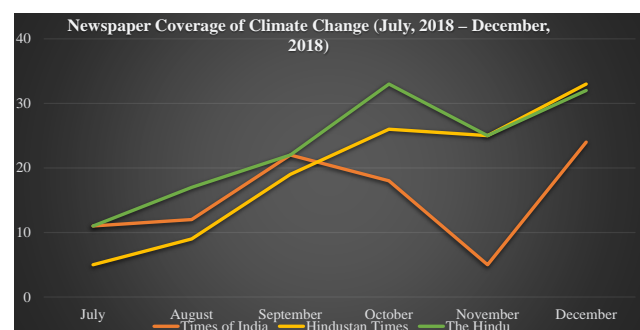


Fig. 1: Volume of Newspaper Coverage on Climate Change

Type of News Report

Across the three newspapers analyzed, news articles were the prominent type of news story, with a reliance on science-oriented news articles (Figure 2). Most importantly, *The Hindu* was the only newspaper that emphasized upon publishing different types of news stories, including letters to the Editor. *TOI* emphasized upon news articles majorly, with lesser number of guest interviews and editorials; and no guest columns. *HT* except for letters to the Editor included all types of new stories to cover climate change, especially editorials and guest columns.

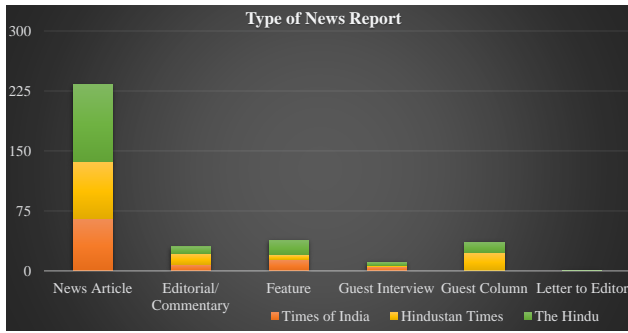


Fig. 2: Type of News Report on Climate Change

News Beat

The dominant news beat on the media coverage of climate change was Environment, followed by Politics (Figure 3). The frequency of environment beat and politics was consistent across the three newspapers, however, in context with Science and Technology and Economy and Business, the variation was extensive. The remaining themes, that is, Lifestyle and Entertainment, Education and Crime and Health were not dealt with in the context of climate change in detail in any of the three newspapers.

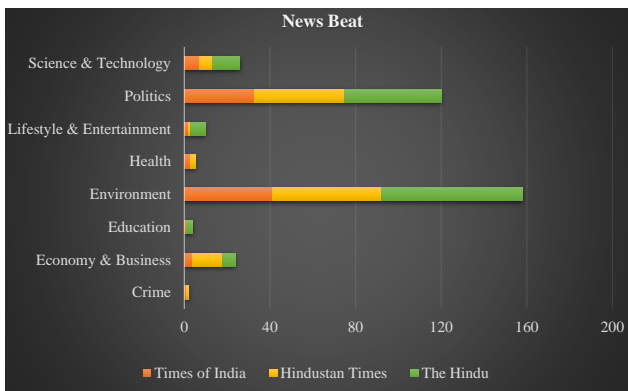


Fig. 3: News Beat of News Report on Climate Change

Sources of News Reports on Climate Change

The important source of media coverage across the three newspapers was essentially the reliance on beat reporters employed by the media house itself (Figure 4). Although climate change stories were acquired from many international (constitutes AFP, AP, Reuters and Bloomberg) as well as Indian wire agencies (constitute PTI, IANS and ANI), PTI was the only news wire which gained prominence. Moreover, HT and The Hindu laid emphasis on guest columns and commentaries as well, in comparison with stories acquired via news wires.

Indian Media Representation of Climate Change

Language of Climate Change in Indian Newspapers

The language of climate change in Indian newspapers, that is, TOI, HT and The Hindu emphasizes immensely on the aspect of climate

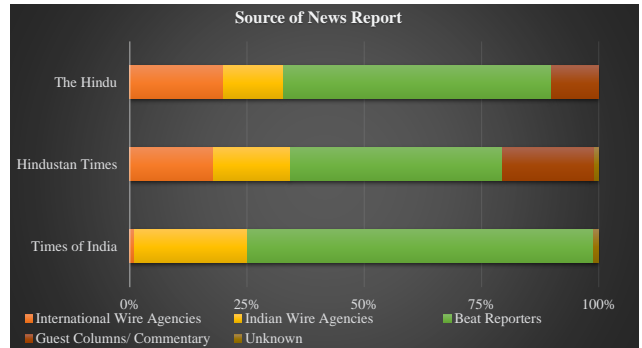


Fig. 4: Source of News Reports on Climate Change

politics across the three newspapers with words such as ‘BJP’, ‘Congress’, ‘election’, ‘Delhi’, ‘Trump’, ‘Pakistan’, ‘Paris’, etc. being prominently used and highlighted across the three newspapers.

However, the distinction between the three newspapers arises in the usage of words that are slightly less prominent across the newspapers. While TOI highlights words such as ‘summit’, ‘Modi’, ‘emissions’, ‘crore’, (Figure 5) HT emphasizes on ‘IPCC institute’, ‘warming’, ‘rainfall’, ‘scientists’, ‘warming’, ‘flooding’ (Figure 6) and The Hindu brings words such as ‘Kerala floods’, ‘media centre’, ‘resilience’, ‘corporation’, etc. to the forefront (Figure 7).



Fig. 5: Word Cloud of News Reports on Climate Change in The Times of India

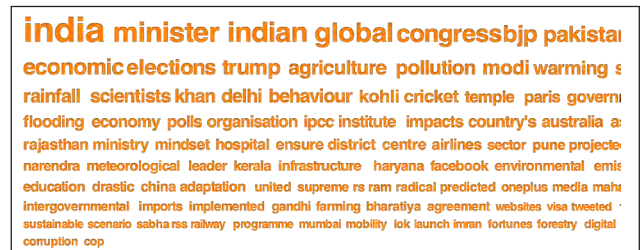


Fig. 6: Word Cloud of News Reports on Climate Change in Hindustan Times



Fig. 7: Word Cloud of News Reports on Climate Change in The Hindu

Therefore, there is a clear distinction in the usage of words between the three newspapers analyzed. While *TOI* significantly focuses on climate politics, *HT* lays emphasis on politics and impacts of climate change, whereas, *The Hindu*, although subtly edges on climate politics, also underlines climate science and climate action.

Themes of Newspaper Representation of Climate Change in India

Reflecting upon RQ 3, the prominent theme in the media representation of climate change is ‘Climate Politics’, followed by ‘Climate Change Impacts’ and ‘Climate Change and Society’. While Climate Politics was widely used across the three newspapers consistently, the theme ‘Climate Change Impacts’, which underlined the aspects affected by climate change, was the second most prominent theme as well. *TOI* and *HT* drew attention to the theme ‘Climate Change and Society’ as the third prominent theme, however, the third most prominent theme highlighted in the news reports published in *The Hindu* adhere to the theme Climate Science, which majorly focuses on scientific research on climate change and scientific measurement of climate change (Figure 8).

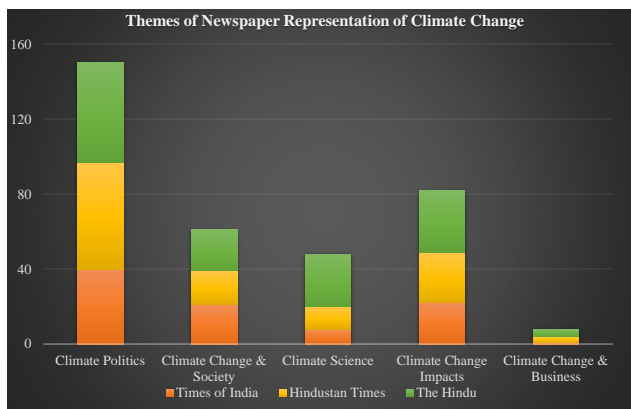


Fig. 8: Themes of Newspaper Representation of Climate Change

Nonetheless, the theme ‘Climate Change and Business’ was the least used theme across the three newspapers as compared to the other four themes of climate media representation.

Topics of Newspaper Representation of Climate Change in India

The most prominent topic across the themes and topics of climate change analyzed was reflected as ‘International Summits’. In context with the topics underscored by the three newspapers collectively under the theme of ‘Climate Politics’ were ‘Climate Change Action’, and ‘Economic Sustainability’, followed by ‘Scientific Research on Climate Change’

under the theme ‘Climate Science’, which was extensively undertaken by *The Hindu* as compared to *TOI* and *HT*.

Interestingly, even though the theme ‘Climate Change Impacts’ was the second prominent theme across the five themes analyzed, the topics employed by the three newspapers were widely fragmented. The topic ‘Weather Changes’ was the only prominent topic under the theme of ‘Climate Change Impacts’.

Geographical Relevance of News Reports on Climate Change

Out of the 349 news reports analyzed, 158 news reports emphasized upon national relevance of the news (Figure 10). The news value on climate change, therefore, catered to reports which essentially pertained to a larger audience, with regard to the aspect of domestication of climate change. As far as the theme is concerned, Climate Politics as a theme was dominant in the aspect of national relevance, global relevance as well as the relevance of the other nations in lieu of climate change. With regard to regional relevance of news reports, equivalent representation of Climate Politics, Climate Change and Society and Climate Change Impacts was observed. Additionally, the majority of news reports published in *TOI* and *HT* were of national relevance, *The Hindu* laid greater emphasis on global news reports on climate change.

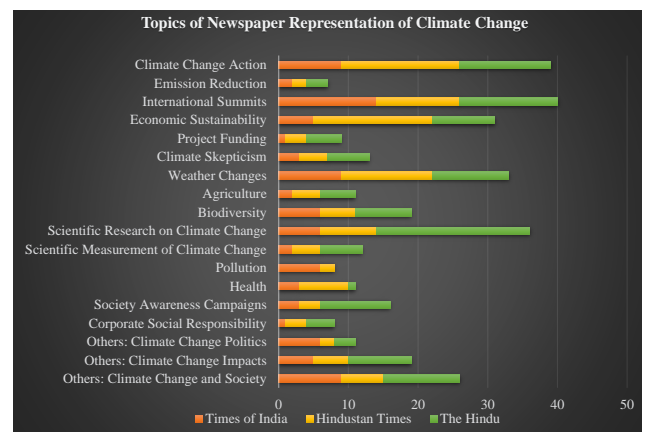


Fig. 9: Topics of Newspaper Representation of Climate Change

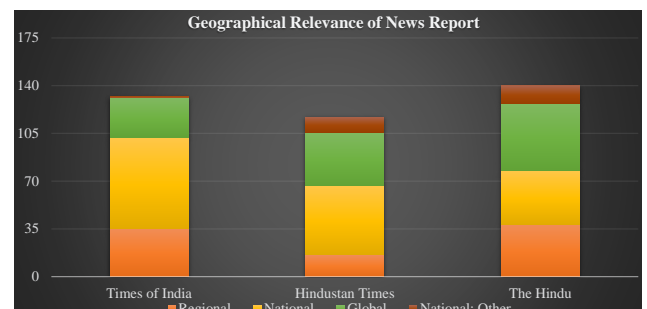


Fig. 10: Geographical Relevance of News Reports on Climate Change

Frames of Climate Change in Indian Newspapers

The most noticeable frames of climate change employed by Indian newspapers are Attribution of Responsibility and Scientific Certainty Frame (Figure 11). The two aforementioned frames are reflected upon in about 57% of the total news reports analyzed across the three newspapers. The remaining 43% of the news reports centre around the six remaining frames, that is, Conflict Frame, Economic Frame, Morality Frame, Human Development Frame, Human Interest Frame and National Position Frame, wherein, the Morality Frame is the least used frame across the three newspapers. Therefore, symmetry amongst the three newspapers analyzed on the variable of Frames is observed.

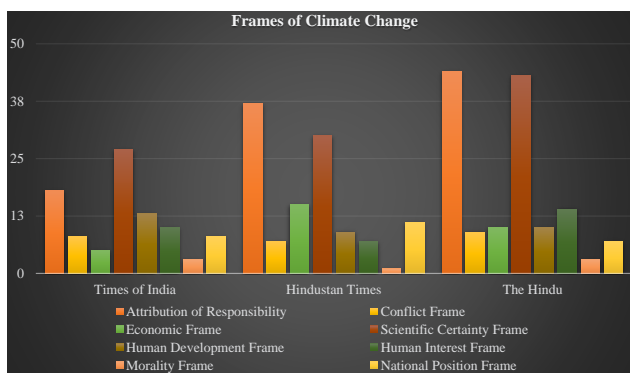


Fig. 11: Frames of Climate Change in Indian Newspapers

Therefore, in lieu of RQ 2, it can be said that the attribution of responsibility frame and scientific certainty frame are the prominent frames being employed by *TOI*, *HT* and *The Hindu*.

Stakeholders Quoted in News Reports on Climate Change

The dominant stakeholders being quoted by *The Hindu*, *HT* and *TOI* are policymakers and scientific organizations, individuals and academicians. On one hand, *TOI* and *The Hindu* have extensively quoted policymakers, more than scientific organizations, individuals and academicians; on the other hand, *HT* has relied on scientific organizations, individuals and academicians as stakeholders quoted for news reports on climate change. Similarly, the news reports in *HT* have significantly quoted international organizations as compared to that of *The Hindu* and *TOI* (Figure 12). Whereas, in the case of educational organizations, *The Hindu* has quoted twice the number of educational organizations as compared to *TOI* and *HT*.

Furthermore, it has been observed that citizens, who are considered a major interest group in the debate of climate change especially in context with anthropogenic climate change, have not been taken

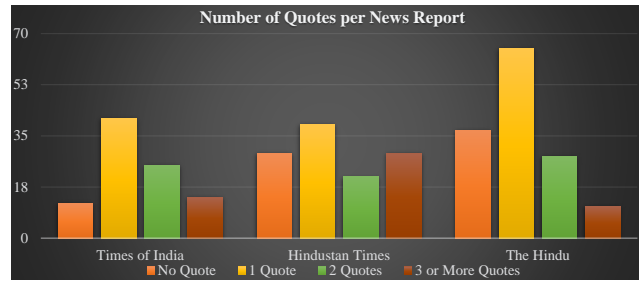


Fig. 12: Stakeholders Quoted in News Reports on Climate Change

into consideration widely by either of the three newspapers. A similar parallel can be drawn with that of corporates.

With regard to the number of quotes per news report, *TOI*, *HT* as well as *The Hindu* have quoted only one stakeholder in their news stories, which constitutes to about 40% of the total news reports analyzed (Figure 13). The maximum number of news reports with only one quote have policymaker as the quoted stakeholder. Furthermore, about 22% of the total news reports analyzed do not have any quotes from the stakeholders mentioned above, especially *The Hindu* with 37 news reports out of 140 news reports without any quote. However, *TOI* as well as *HT* have quoted either 2 stakeholders or 3 or more stakeholders in about 50% of their news reports respectively.



Fig. 13: Number of Stakeholders Quoted Per News Report

Data Interpretation and Discussion

Nature of Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change

The volume of media coverage of climate change, as observed by Keller *et al.* (2019), has been steadily on the rise, across the three newspapers: *HT*, *TOI* and *The Hindu*. However, the increase in volume of newspaper coverage on climate change in September 2018 can be attributed to the Global Climate Action Summit held in the same month. Moreover, India also initiated a Rs. 650 billion project to reduce greenhouse gases in September. Similarly, the upsurge

in newspaper coverage of climate change in October 2018 can be attributed to the release of IPCC's annual report, which essentially highlighted the vulnerability faced by India with regard to climate change. This aspect of climate change coverage also reflects upon the prominence of 'Climate Politics' as a theme.

In the same manner, no major event with regard to climate change occurred in November, which might have led to negligible coverage on climate change by *TOI* in the month. The maximum newspaper coverage on climate change is observed in December 2018 which coincides with the Lancet Countdown Report, Global Climate Risk Index conducted by Germanwatch as well as the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP 24) held in Katowice. Therefore, climate coverage by *TOI* is observed to be immensely event-driven, while, the media coverage of *HT* and *The Hindu* was also somewhat event-driven since the upsurge of coverage was witnessed in August.

Therefore, in lieu of RQ 1, the nature of news coverage of climate change in Indian newspapers reflects in partial congruence with the findings of review of literature, that is, an increase in the volume of coverage of climate change as well as the aspect of event-driven coverage of climate change. This observation stands in echo with the representation of spatial-temporal magnitude of climate change in the media across developed as well as developing countries (Boykoff, 2007; Schmidt *et al.*, 2013), which has also been ascertained in the breadth and span of media coverage of climate change in India, as highlighted by Dutt *et al.* (2008), Billett (2009), Jogesh (2012), Mittal (2012) and Keller *et al.* (2019). Therefore, the episodic and topical coverage of climate change by the media in India has been reflecting across different spans of time, socio-political structures and ideologies over the years.

Newspaper Representation and Framing of Climate Change in India

The issue of newspaper representation of climate change by Indian newspapers can be assessed from the perspective of the review of literature, with the spotlight on aspects such as episodic media representation, equity of responsibility, domestication of climate change and scientific certainty versus climate scepticism.

The episodic media representation of climate change underscores the emphasis on mitigation over adaptation as has been observed in both developed as well as developing nations (Schmidt *et al.*, 2013; Painter & Schäfer, 2018), which in this case is also prevalent in India. In this case, climate change

impacts such as floods and their effect on human development were also observed across the themes and frames employed by *TOI*, *The Hindu* and *HT*. Therefore, the temporal-spatial magnitude of climate change was given prominent space and claim-makers in the form of policymakers in the Indian context. Moreover, the emphasis on water and food security in the three newspapers resonates with the findings of Painter and Schäfer (2018) and Shanahan (2009), which portrays domestication of climate change impacts and the effect on society and human life. Similarly, the *Human Development* frame and themes of Climate Change Impacts and Climate Change and Society concurrently observed across news reports in *TOI*, *The Hindu* and *HT* address weather changes, floods and pollution as the key topics of discussion, enunciating the domestication of regional impact of climate change in India, in tandem with the review of literature. The tone and language of the news reports analyzed under *Human Development* frame and climate change impacts, as well as climate change and society as themes, also reflect 'alarmist' and 'catastrophe' elements, contradictory to the observations of Hulme (2009), Painter (2013) and Broadbent *et al.* (2016). Furthermore, *TOI*, *HT* and *The Hindu* have reflected on climate change impacts on humans, flora and fauna, yet have not highlighted the anthropogenic nature of climate change saliently, as much as they have emphasized upon the scientific certainty of climate change, therefore, in direct contradiction with the findings of Billett (2009), Painter (2013) and Keller *et al.* (2019). Additionally, despite emphasizing on the impact of climate change, quotes from citizens and environmental NGOs are missing in the newspaper coverage, thereby creating a disbalance in communicating the impact.

In essence, the *Scientific Certainty* frame also reflects on a domesticated approach with major claim-makers as scientific organizations or individuals in *The Hindu*, while in *TOI* and *HT*, the aforementioned frame has been encompassed from a global perspective. Additionally, climate science as a theme has been underlined by *The Hindu* assertively, emphasizing extensively upon scientific research conducted in the domain at both global and national level. Scientific research in the arenas of weather, biodiversity, carbon footprint, agriculture, etc. has been covered by the three newspapers evidently, juxtaposing the certainty of climate change and opposing sceptical voices in entirety, as has been observed by Billett (2009), Shanahan (2009) and Jogesh (2012). The only sceptical voice represented in the Indian newspapers is that of the US President Donald Trump, who is also

visible as a key stakeholder under the *Human Interest* frame.

Another prominent political figure observed in the *Human Interest* frame is that of Sushma Swaraj, the Former Minister of External Affairs of India, which also coincides with the climate politics theme, international summits and *National Position* frame. Climate politics have been noticeable in the media coverage of climate change in India (Dutt *et al.*, 2008; Billett, 2009; Jogesh, 2012; Mittal, 2012; Keller *et al.*, 2019) and so have been policymakers as the prominent stakeholders quoted across elite media. The subjugation of international summits, as highlighted above, have been focused upon as well, leaning towards the episodic framing of climate change. In the case of an Indian government official or policymaker being quoted in the news reports analyzed, the reference is synchronous to the official position of India with respect to climate change and the *National Position* frame. Although Billett (2009) analyzed the national position frame on the lines of the North-South divide, however, the same has not been observed in the present context. The *Attribution of Responsibility* frame asserts climate responsibility to India and its governance itself and in certain instances, equity of responsibility of emissions and economic sustainability on developed nations. Majority of the news reports argue upon attributing responsibility upon the policymakers to initiate action with regard to policies and climate resilience through infrastructure and finance. Therefore, the politicisation of climate change is discernible amongst elite newspapers of India at regional, national and global levels of communication.

In contrast, while asserting equity of responsibility, Indian elite newspapers have also reflected upon the responsibility of developed nations and international organizations (including United Nations, World Bank, etc.), to economically support India in order to bear the costs of climate change impacts on human development, climate change action and infrastructural viability in India. Consequently, the *Economic* frame and *Conflict* frame have drawn out international organizations and Indian policymakers as the dominant stakeholders quoted in a global context. The tone of language employed under the *Economic* and *Conflict* frames are also negative in nature, thereby, creating a sense of the North-South divide. Such instances analyzed amongst the news reports stand in contradiction to the notion of “co-benefits” approach (Thaker, 2017), which underscore the simultaneity of economic and ecological development, in reference to its representation in the Indian media.

Therefore, the overall core framing task, in context with the core framing tasks introduced by Snow and Benford (1988), reflects on the aspect of diagnostic framing homogeneously by the three Indian newspapers analyzed in media representation and framing of climate change. The diagnostic perspective of climate change reflects in connotation with the four aspects of analyzing media framing of climate change (Broadbent *et al.*, 2016).

First, *TOI*, *HT* and *The Hindu* have highlighted the validity of climate science by emphasising upon the *Scientific Certainty* frame and Climate Science theme along with quoting scientific organizations and individuals as key stakeholders, however, have not been able to establish the anthropogenic nature of climate change. Second, in the case of scale of ecological risk, although the three newspapers have extensively underlined the *Human Development* frame on the lines of the themes of Climate Change Impacts and Climate Change & Society, yet alarmist and catastrophic undertones in the language does not convert into providing possible solutions to the climate emergency in India. Third and lastly, the scale of climate politics and mitigation policy act in sync with each other with the accentuation of *Attribution of Responsibility* and *National Position* frames at regional, national and global levels amongst policymakers and international organizations as prominent stakeholders. However, despite identifying the salience of climate change issues and its policy formulation, the solutions are not outlined by either of the three newspapers analyzed creating a disbalance in the diagnosis-prognosis framing of climate change.

Conclusion

The newspaper representation of climate change in India partakes in multitudes of facets and dimensions. While the focal point of newspaper representation of climate change for this study is frame analysis, the essence of this study is the textual analysis of the news reports from the standpoint of tone, perspective and a girth of the nature of media attention to climate change for three newspapers, that is, *TOI*, *HT* and *The Hindu*.

The elements of similarities across the three newspapers analyzed on the aspects of nature of coverage, frames of climate change and newspaper representation are extensive. However, the difference lies in the claim-makers, or the stakeholders as well as the geographical relevance of the news reports, yet, the variance between the newspapers is extremely minute upon in-depth analysis.

From a domesticated perspective of climate

change, the three newspapers analyzed reflect upon climate change impacts on society and frame it in reverence with the causal-effect relationship. The nationalistic perspective of climate change amongst the three newspapers divulges its official position with regard to mitigation policies. While, the global relevance of climate change in its newspaper coverage in India demonstrates equity of climate responsibility, international climate politics and economic sustainability.

Therefore, the significance of climate science, ecological risk and climate politics in assessing the framing and representation of climate change in Indian elite newspapers stimulate a unique positioning from the findings of Billett (2009), Jogesh (2012), Mittal (2012), Thaker (2017) and Keller *et al.* (2019). The juxtaposition of science, politics and impact in the frame of reference of climate change digress and merge on the diagnosis of climate emergency amongst the three elite newspapers across parameters of news beat, geographical relevance, themes, topics, sources and stakeholders and frames, but are substantially homogeneous in nature, empirically evident from the chi-square test as well.

However, newspaper representation of climate change in India, from the purview of frames, also indicates self-attribution of responsibility with an outlook on climate politics along with the case of scientific certainty of climate change as a phenomenon, which entails the immediate need to act.

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APPENDIX 1: Events on Climate Change in India in 2018*

- July 2018: Nilgiri Tahr in the Western Ghats will become unsuitable as global warming intensifies
- July 2018: The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) came up with the country's first state energy efficiency preparedness index to achieve India's climate commitments
- September 2018: India plans a Rs. 65,000-crore project to reduce greenhouse gases from agriculture.
- September 2018: At the Global Climate Action Summit, mayors and government functionaries of Indian cities announced to scale up their actions to combat climate change and to protect people from hazardous climate impacts.
- September 2018: Himachal Pradesh became the first state in India to get its Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) profile done. The agriculture department in Bihar with support from the Borlaug Institute for South Asia (BISA) also launched a project to develop 100 climate-smart villages in the state.
- October 2018: Release of IPCC's Annual Report
- December 2018: Global Carbon Emissions jumped to an all-time high in 2018 and almost all countries contributed to the rise, with emissions in China up 4.7 per cent, in the US by 2.5 per cent and in India by 6.3 per cent in 2018.
- December 2018: The 2018 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change, published in *Lancet*, said an average person experienced an additional 1.4 days of heatwave per year in 2017 compared to 2000. The research was conducted by the University of York.
- December 2018: At the Conference of Parties (COP 24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Katowice on December 16, nearly 200 countries agreed upon and adopted a rulebook to implement Paris Agreement. But India and many other developing countries said the "balance" that they would have liked to see in the agreement was missing.
- December 2018: India ranked 14th in the Global Climate Risk Index done by Germanwatch. It was released at the annual climate summit in Poland's Katowice.



Mobile-ready and Integrated Dialogic Communication on Indian Political Party Websites: An Analysis

VISHAL NAYAK¹ AND D. S. POORNANANDA²

ABSTRACT

With the rise in mobile technologies, political public relations practitioners must be sensitive to the patterns of website usage by their stakeholders through their mobile devices. Using content analysis, this study analyzed the five dialogic principles of dialogic communication on national and regional Indian Political Party Websites (IPPWs) accessed from mobile phones along with their mobile readiness. While most political parties did not have a strict mobile website, 93% (n=13) of the party websites were analyzed to have their desktop websites optimized for web viewing and social media integration. The study also analyzed the usage of five dialogic principles and found that unlike previous studies on western websites (political and corporate), which found high emphasis on dialogic loop principle, Indian political party websites score just above average on this principle. In addition, there is no evidence of a statistically significant difference in national and regional party websites utilizing the five dialogic principles. The findings of the study, overall, suggest that IPPW's integration of dialogic loop strategies has been limited and just on the surface. Despite the increasing adoption of dialogic principles on corporate websites, Indian political parties still do not seem to be leveraging the public relations potential of websites to the fullest extent.

Keywords: Dialogic theory, Dialogic communication, Political Party Websites, Publics' response engagement, Public Relations

Introduction

The mobile phone industry in India has witnessed tremendous growth since the introduction of mobile devices in the country. India's mobile phone subscriber base has increased from 0.03 million in 1995–1996 (Singh, 2008) to 1.2 billion in 2019 (Kaka *et al.*, 2019). Today, mobile phones help users navigate the Internet for relevant information (Campbell & Kwak, 2012) and offer increased accessibility options than computers (Mitchell, *et al.* 2012). It is not surprising that, with their tremendous growth, mobile phones are becoming increasingly important (Kaka *et al.*, 2019). Parallel to this development, internet penetration in India has also experienced astonishing growth since its introduction in the country in 1995 (20 years of Internet in India, 2015). In March 2019, researchers at the McKinsey Global Institute released a study establishing India as one of the fastest-growing markets for digital consumers, second only to China, with 560 million internet subscribers in 2018. The report also says that mobile services already cover 554,530 of India's 597,608 villages. In addition, the Kantar IMRB ICUBE 2018 report found that 97 per cent of users use the mobile phone as one of the devices to access the internet (Internet users in India to reach 627 million by 2019-end, 2019).

As digital multimedia permeates India and as more people go online, the literacy gap between the digital rich and poor has steadily reduced (Rangaswamy & Arora, 2015) leaving no arena of public and private life unaffected by mobile and internet technologies. Madichie and Hinson (2014) say that a wide range of public as well as third sector organizations have realized the need to engage their audience based on the principles of dialogic communication. With the seamless integration of internet and mobile technologies in the past few years in India, political communication has also been transformed as the world witnesses political parties supplementing their printed communication with web-based cutting-edge technologies (Kaushik, 2015).

Consequently, this study aims to investigate how interactive a political party website is to facilitate the politico-citizenry relationship that could foster a better relationship between the two stakeholders i.e., the political parties and the citizenry, for socio-economic well-being. A further review of the literature indicates that discourses about the dialogic concept has mostly been limited to developed economies leaving developing countries out of the debate, thus prompting the authors to investigate the dialogic potential of the IPPW. This study adopts Kent and

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Taylor's (2002) dialogic public relations theory to investigate the driving factors that facilitate online dialogue between political parties in India and their targeted publics focusing on the performances of their websites on a mobile platform. Despite mobile communication being a fast-spreading medium, little research in public relations in general and political marketing, in particular, has been conducted about mobile devices and political marketing.

Following the introduction section, a literature review is presented to develop the theoretical and conceptual foundation for the study. In the third section, the research design is specified, followed by the fourth section, which presents the study's results and key findings. The fifth section offers a discussion on results, a conclusion and practical/policy implications.

Literature review

Dialogue is a crucial aspect of public relations (Pieccka, 2011). The central objective of public relations is to foster a relationship and a dialogue across discrete stakeholder classes. Building relationships with the public by means of inducing positive outcomes in terms of trust, loyalty and favourable feelings (Hennig *et al.*, 2002). Dialogue, as a process of communication, assumes an important role in the relationship-building efforts of organizations (Kent & Taylor, 2016). As Grunig and Grunig (1992) explain, organizations usually set up structured systems, processes, and rules for two-way symmetrical public relations. Dialogic communication, on the other hand, refers to a distinct type of interaction—which is highly relational one. In this sense, Kent and Taylor (1998) view dialogue as a product rather than a process—one that emphasizes on relationship building as the key public relations activity. According to them, dialogic communication is any “negotiated” exchange of ideas and opinions. To this effect, they propose five dialogic principles for a website; a) the usefulness of information, b) ease of interface, c) conservation of visitors, d) the dialogic “loop” and, e) generation of return visits. While the first three elements are a prerequisite for building website dialogic potential, the dialogic “loop” and return visits contribute in directly creating this potential.

Many studies have confirmed the importance of the five principles of dialogic theory and their place on a company site. McCorkindale and Morgoch (2013) analyzed the five dialogic principles of Fortune 500 websites accessed using mobile phones. The study found that most companies did not have mobile-based websites and also it was discovered that more

non-mobile websites featured dialogic principles due to their targeting of multiple stakeholders. In contrast, using a modified Kent and Taylor's (1998) dialogic principles, Olinski and Szamrowski (2017) analyzed about 367 Public Benefit Organizations (PBO) in Poland and found that such organizations only marginally use the five principles of dialogic communication on their websites.

Ryan (2003) argues that the relationship between an organization's adoption and utilization of dialogic principles in their website are directly proportional to building interactive relationships with their stakeholders, and/or diverse publics. Consequently, the authors of this study posit that this relationship between dialogic principles and fostering trust/loyalty is also applicable to political parties and their official websites. Many research findings on dialogic communication can be applied to political party websites as well. Hinson (2011) says that the internet's unique capacity for cheap information dissemination as well as timely information disclosure is a boon to any organization. Esrock and Leichty (2000) believe that a single website can have multiple sections, each targeted at a different audience, which is clearly what political parties must cater to (Kaushik, 2015). Madichie and Hinson (2014) mention Biloslavo and Trnavcevic's (2009) study where the internet has proven to be a useful and effective source of information in state security institutions such as the Police while their own study on sub-Saharan Africa Police Service Websites covering countries from Angola to Zambia found that the websites have performed reasonably high on the employment of dialogic principles (Madichie & Hinson, 2014). Thus, it is reasonably justified that even dialogic principles must form an integral part of political marketing and political public relations where party websites serve as an ideal platform for deploying these dialogic principles.

One of the earliest instances of political parties embracing new media technologies was launching their websites with quite a few facilities in terms of different kinds of information (Kaushik, 2015). Gibson *et al.* (2002) say that in the mid-1990s political parties in the US, UK, Australia and Germany went online since mid-1995 for six main reasons: (i) provide information to public and traditional media, (ii) targeting the young audience, (iii) campaigning, (iv) symbolic significance, (v) efficiency gains, and (vi) voter/member feedback/participation. Very few studies exploring the role of a party's mobile website's in political marketing have been conducted. Using a 90-point checklist, Kaushik (2015) studied eight

major Indian party websites and found that majority of these sites have diverse information regarding their respective party history, manifesto, photo gallery, current events, speeches, and contact but they lack essential elements such as date of upload, feedback/suggestion option, party membership information, mobile applications, public forum, and so on. The study did not investigate the mobile readiness of the party websites.

Campbell and Kwak (2010) found positive associations with mobile usage with civic and political participation but found these participations moderated by mobile communication competence. The study reported that individuals with a high level of comfort in using mobile technology utilize it for information exchange and are more politically engaged than those who report being less comfortable with the technology. Campbell and Kwak (2012) believed that mobile devices help build, sustain and improve communication among stakeholders through the implementation of dialogic communication and mobile readiness. However, studies investigating the mobile readiness of a website and the relevant frameworks to be adopted for evaluating mobile websites are rare in the literature (Al-Khalifa, 2014).

Scholars have provided frameworks for assessing how websites of various verticals respond to the increasing demand for the mobile web. Al-Khalifa (2014) developed and applied a framework that consists of four categories: interface, navigation, content and services offered, and technical aspects. Zarifopoulos and Economides (2009) developed a mobile online banking evaluation framework of six categories: interface, navigation, offered services, content, reliability, and technical aspects. In the e-commerce field, Lee and Benbasat (2004) developed a framework that consists of context, content, community, customization, communication, connection, commerce, mobile setting and mobile device constraints. However, a framework for the study of mobile-readiness of political party websites from a political marketing point-of-view is yet to be fully developed.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study draws heavily upon Kent and Taylor's (1998) strategic framework for relationship-building on the web. The five principles for successful integration of interactivity in website development adopted in this study are – ease of interface, the usefulness of the site, dialogic loop, conservation of visitors and return visits (see Figure 1). To investigate how well

IPPWs have fared in employing dialogic principles of communication into their websites, the dialogic framework adopted from Kent and Taylor (1998) and modified from Kim *et al.* (2010), McCorkindale and Morgoch (2013) and Madichie and Hinson (2014) proves a conceptual tool for such analysis.

From Figure 1, the current study's framework has five components, each having various sub-components. The first component is 'Ease of Use', comprising of five sub-components that have been selected keeping in mind that the public who visit a political party website should find it relatively easy to navigate the site and can have easy access to information. Along with standard features like a site map, effective search engine, low reliance on graphics, links to other sites which have appeared in other studies (McCorkindale & Morgoch, 2013; Madichie & Hinson, 2014), the unique feature of this study is the incorporation of a fifth subcomponent - Language Switch Option. This is introduced by keeping in mind India's linguistic diversity, which boasts of about 22 scheduled languages as set out in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution as of May 2008.

The second component in the framework is the usefulness of the site in this study, it details how useful the information is to the political party's public. According to Taylor *et al.* (2001), the usefulness of information can be conceptualized both at a general level and divided into specific public groups. Websites often target a variety of publics to provide useful information to each of their diverse stakeholders (Esrock & Leichty, 2000) and are constructed as tools for customer communication to foster relationship-building (Knezevic *et al.*, 2011; Woodside *et al.*, 2011). Kent and Taylor (1998) stress that websites should provide information with value and this information must be easily accessible rather than solicited. Keeping this in mind, this study has ten subcomponents deemed necessary as providing information of value with 'Maps and Directions', 'Executive Bios', 'Audio/Video Capabilities' and 'RSS/Embedded Party SM Feed' as additional components compared to previous studies.

A third conceptual component relates to the dialogic loop –which deals with the level of interactivity of the website. Kent and Taylor (1998) contended that the dialogic loop is the most important feature of any website as it advocates the incorporation of interactivity. Dialogic loop refers to the process where the website not only provides useful information to its stakeholders but also provides them with the opportunity to voice their opinions and feedback on issues they deem as pertinent to their

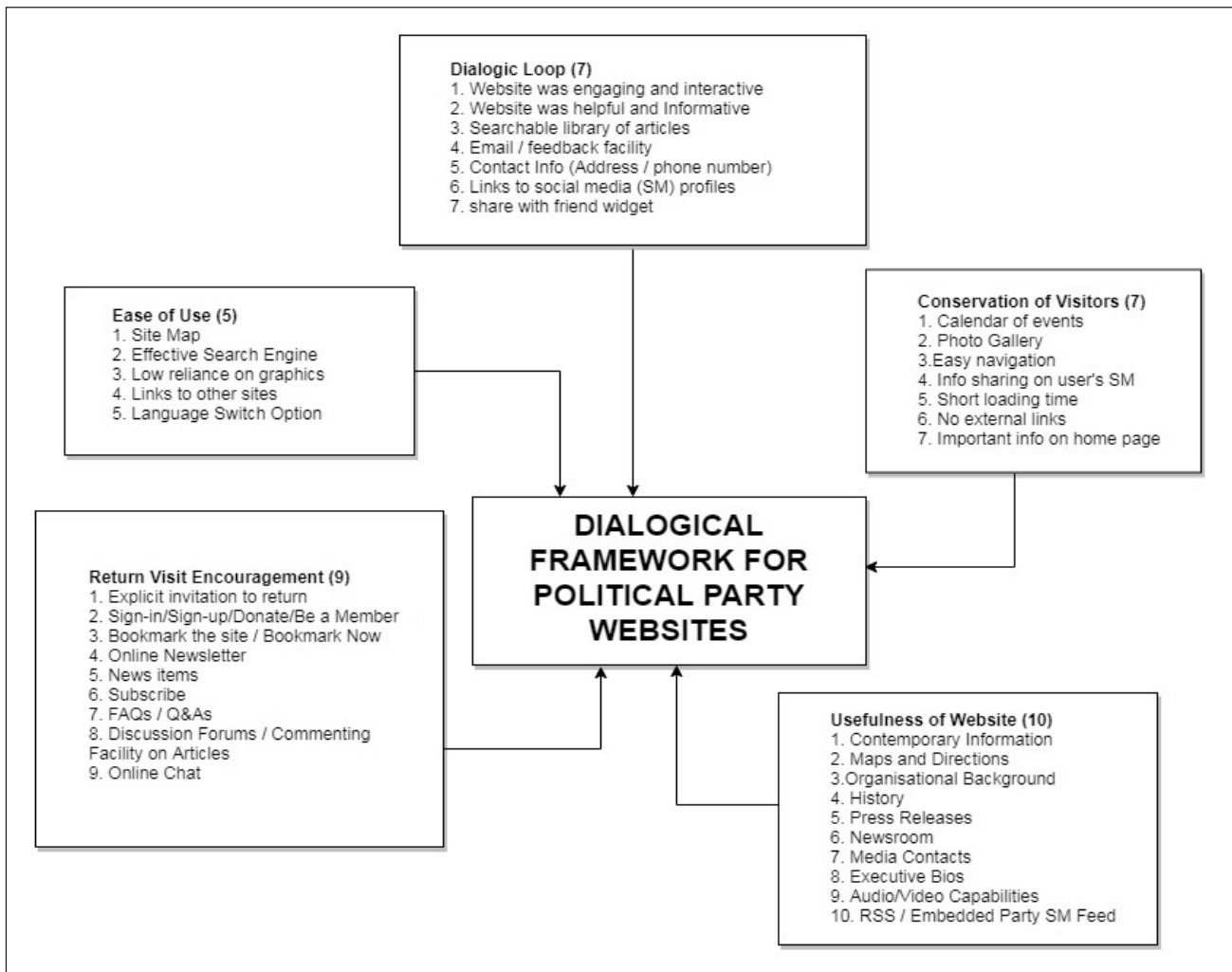


Fig. 1 Classification system of the dialogic principles.

Source: Adapted from Kent and Taylor (1998), Kim, Nama and Kang (2010), McCorkindale and Morgoch (2013) and Madichie and Hinson (2014)

daily lives hence becoming a platform to serve the public relations goals of an organization as well as consider the 'interests, values, and concerns' of the stakeholders (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Adopting from previous studies (Kim *et al.*, 2010; McCorkindale & Morgoch, 2013; Madichie & Hinson, 2014), the present study proposes seven subcomponents within the dialogic loop found pertinent to political public relations: website was engaging and interactive, website was helpful and informative, searchable library of articles, email/feedback facility, contact information (address/phone number), links to Social Media (SM) profiles and 'share with a friend' widget.

The fourth component is 'conservation of visitors', which involves websites deploying relevant features to encourage visitors to return to the site in future. According to Kent and Taylor (1998), the site should make every attempt to retain visitors by making dialogic communication as the primary objective of the interaction and not merely as marketing or

advertising. They also warn the designers to be careful about the misleading outcome of multiple links in the essence of saying that websites should contain only limited links to outside sites and provide workable links to the homepage in every webpage of the website. Organizations must include strategies that would encourage repeat interactions between organizations and their public (Waters & Tindall, 2010). Subcomponents from previous studies (Kim *et al.*, 2010; McCorkindale & Morgoch, 2013; Madichie & Hinson, 2014) like 'short loading time', 'few external links', 'important information on home page' and 'easy navigation' have been supplemented by 'calendar of events', 'photo gallery' and 'information sharing on user's social media profiles for the current study.

The fifth component is the generation of return visit which revolves around the website's ability to generate return visits. Along with updated information (Kent & Taylor, 1998) return visit also depends on

integration of contact/feedback forms and e-mails that provide opportunity for visitors to request information (Waters & Tindall, 2010). Taylor *et al.* (2001) recommend website managers encourage visitors to bookmark the site thus increasing the likelihood of return visits. In this study, the authors have adopted subcomponents from Kent and Taylor (1998); Kim *et al.* (2010), McCorkindale and Morgoch (2013) and Madichie and Hinson (2014) like ‘explicit invitation to return’, ‘bookmark the site/bookmark now’, ‘online newsletter’, ‘news items’, ‘subscribe’, ‘FAQs/Q&As’, and ‘discussion forums/ commenting facility on Articles’. One of the subcomponents from the above studies ‘sign-in/ sign-up’ has been reworked to add ‘donate/ be a member’ as it is an important feature in political marketing and political public relation. A completely unique feature of this component is the ‘online chat’ - a technical feature that uses automated chatbots which is becoming an essential part of digital communication (Jonke & Volkwein, 2017).

While studies have applied dialogic theory to websites and social media, research has not applied dialogic theory to mobile devices and much less to political party websites. This study will explore the mobile-readiness of the Indian political party websites and apply the five principles of dialogic theory to the mobile websites. Such a study adopting a dialogic theory of public relations to political marketing in the Indian context will add to the growing body of political marketing research in India.

Research questions

RQ1: How mobile-ready are top Indian political parties websites?

RQ2: How well do Indian political parties integrate the dialogic principles on websites accessed from smartphones?

RQ3: Based on the dialogic principles, what differences, if any, exist between national parties and regional parties in the utilization of the dialogic theory on their mobile websites?

Methodology

A content analysis was undertaken to determine how dialogic principles were presented based on these websites accessed from mobile phones. Wilson (2011) says that content analysis can be used qualitatively or quantitatively for systematically analyzing written, verbal, or visual documentation. Krippendorff (2003) posits that content analysis is a technique in the broader research tradition that helps the researcher make replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use. To determine how mobile-ready

websites are as compared to non-mobile websites, a purposive sample of the top seven national parties and the top seven regional parties was selected based on vote share performance in the 2019 General Elections in India. Two criteria were applied in selecting the sample: a) all national parties, as declared by the Election Commission of India, whose candidates have won a minimum of at least one seat have been selected and b) seven regional parties were selected on the basis of the number of seats won and vote share gained in the 2019 General Elections in India. The sample is illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Vote share in the General Election 2019

Party	Vote Share	Seats 2019	Party	Vote Share	Seats 2019
BJP	37.36%	303	YSRCP	2.53%	22
INC	19.49%	52	DMK	2.26%	24
AITC	4.07%	22	SENA	2.10%	18
BSP	3.63%	10	BJD	1.66%	12
CPM	1.75%	3	JDU	1.46%	16
NCP	1.39%	5	TRS	1.26%	9
CPI	0.58%	2	LJP	0.52%	6

Source: Election Commission of India and websites of political parties

Wilson (2011) says that quantitative analysis incorporates a hypothesis/research question and a predetermined coding scheme designed to test the same. The authors coded the websites of 14 Indian political parties on smartphones using an Android device and an iPhone to take into account the potential dissimilarities between platforms. The authors adopted responsive design framework of Karlins (2015) to determine the mobile-readiness of a website. If a mobile-ready site was available, it was coded as a mobile-ready site whereas the desktop version of the site was not accessed even if the link was provided. The coding was done at one shot in one day in October 2019. A supplementary analysis of the 14 websites was also done in February 2020 to ensure that the elements on the websites have not changed drastically since the original coding. The secondary coding showed that the coded elements of the websites did not change much, other than incorporation of recent news and images, which did not affect the overall conceptual framework.

A mobile-ready website is adapted and used specifically for easy mobile access whose elements are qualitatively different from the desktop/laptop world. Karlins (2015) mentions four basic differences between a mobile browsing experience and desktop/

laptop browsing experience: a) mobile viewports (the size of the browser window) are smaller than those in desktops and laptops, b) mobile browsing experience is both indoor, as well as an outdoor activity hence lighting conditions, may render many colour schemes inefficient, c) slower processors on mobile as compared to desktop/laptop and d) touch vs keyboards and mouse input. A non-mobile site would appear the same regardless of whether a user accessed it on a mobile device or a computer. Karlins (2015) suggests a 'responsive design' that goes beyond simply resizing different elements for a better mobile browsing experience and offers different colour schemes, navigation infrastructure, and even different content.

Thirty-eight specific items were coded from the websites based on five dialogic principles: "ease of interface," "conservation of visitors", "return visit engagement", "media access" and "dialogic loop". The classification system of the dialogic principles in this study was slightly modified to be compatible with the study of political marketing from previous studies applying the dialogic principles to websites (Kent & Taylor, 1998; Kim *et al.*, 2010; McCorkindale & Morgoch, 2013; Madichie & Hinson, 2014).

Results

RQ1: Of the 14 sites coded 93% (n = 13) had mobile-ready websites. All websites coded featured audio and video on their respective websites of which all videos were working. Although none of the websites had in their URL the "m." feature signifying a website particularly designed for mobile experience, the websites were found to be mobile-ready and

satisfied the parameters set down by Karlins (2015) as part of the 'responsive' design.

RQ2: Using Kim's *et al.* (2010) formula, the calculation for the scores of the five dialogic principles was first dichotomously coded as yes or no for the inclusion and exclusion of the item. The scores were then calculated by dividing the number of websites that were recorded as a present by the total number of sites within the category. That number was then converted to a percentage. A higher percentage indicated high integration of the five dialogic principles on political party websites.

Mean	47.14	51.02	64.28	62.14	35.72
Standard Deviation	26.73	13.39	14.56	16.26	15.21
Confidence Level (95.0%)	15.43	7.73	8.41	9.39	8.78

Results indicated that conservation of visitors (M = 64.28, SD = 14.56) and usefulness of website (M = 62.14, SD = 16.26), were similarly employed by the websites. However, return visit engagement (M = 35.72, SD = 15.21), ease of use (M = 47.14, SD = 26.73) and dialogic loop (M = 51.02, SD = 13.39) were used less frequently when compared to the other two. Unlike previous studies conducted on western websites (political and corporate), which found the high emphasis on dialogic loop principle, Indian political party websites score just above average (M=51.02, SD=13.39) on this principle. An analysis of variance (Table 3) conducted on the five groups revealed that a statistically significant difference exists in the treatment of five dialogic principles on party websites.

Table 2 Score card of mobile-readiness and dialogic principles use (n=14)

	EU (5)	D.L (7)	Cons (7)	Use (10)	Ret (9)	EU%	D.L%	Cons%	Use%	Ret%
BJP	3	4	6	9	4	60	57.14	85.71	90	44.45
INC	1	3	5	6	3	20	42.85	71.42	60	33.34
BSP	3	4	3	6	2	60	57.14	42.85	60	22.22
NCP	3	4	6	6	3	60	57.14	85.71	60	33.34
CPI	1	2	3	4	4	20	28.57	42.85	40	44.45
CPM	3	4	4	6	1	60	57.14	57.14	60	11.11
AITC	5	5	4	9	5	100	71.42	57.14	90	55.56
YSRCP	4	4	4	5	4	80	57.14	57.14	50	44.45
DMK	0	2	4	4	1	0	28.57	57.14	40	11.11
SENA	2	3	4	7	5	40	42.85	57.14	70	55.56
JDU	2	3	4	7	3	40	42.85	57.14	70	33.34
BJD	3	5	6	8	5	60	71.42	85.71	80	55.56
TRS	1	4	5	5	2	20	57.14	71.43	50	22.22
LJP	2	3	5	5	3	40	42.85	71.43	50	33.34

Table 3 Differences in the treatment of five dialogic principles on IPPWs

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
Column 1	14	660	47.14286	714.2857		
Column 2	14	714.2857	51.02041	179.4124		
Column 3	14	900	64.28571	211.9309		
Column 4	14	870	62.14286	264.2857		
Column 5	14	500	35.71429	231.3119		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	7610.029	4	1902.507	5.940781	0.000388	2.51304
Within Groups	20815.95	65	320.2453			
Total	28425.98	69				

To determine which principles had statistically significant differences, the authors employed an independent sample t-test (Table 4) among the respective principles. The t-test results show that the principle of conservation of visitors was employed at a much higher rate when compared to the ease of use, dialogic loop and return visitor encouragement but there was no difference between the employment of the principle of conservation of visitors and usefulness of the website, both of which scored above average in deployment.

RQ3: A t-test was performed on independent groups to see if there is any statistically significant difference in National and Regional party website utilizing the five dialogic principles. Based on the dialogic principles, the difference existing between national parties and regional parties in the utilization of the dialogic theory on their mobile websites was not found to be statistically significant. In other words, both regional and national party websites are similar in their efforts to integrate the five dialogic principles on their websites.

Discussion and conclusion

This study has suggested how political public relations practitioners in individual IPPWs can communicate with their stakeholders in order to provide a holistic platform for two-way dialogic communication. This study revealed that Indian national and regional parties as a whole have optimally prepared mobile-ready websites since a majority of the parties had them. Overall, there was no significant difference in National and Regional parties deploying the dialogic principles on their websites. It is noteworthy that the mobile-ready websites of Indian National and Regional parties primarily tailored their mobile-ready sites focusing on one specific stakeholder – the voter. However, this does not mean that they have ignored other stakeholders such as journalists or funding agencies. More than three-quarters of the party websites on both national and regional levels included media information that was tailored to journalists and analysts.

Table 4 Differences between five dialogic principles employed on IPPWs

	Ease of Use	Dialogic Loop	Usefulness of Website	Return Visit Encouragement
Ease of Use	0			
Dialogic Loop	0.633	0		
Usefulness of Website	0.0872	0.05932	0	
Return Visit Encouragement	0.1789	0.00894	0.00014	0
Conservation of Visitors	0.048	0.019	0.72	0.00002

Table 5 Differences between five dialogic principles employed on National and Regional party websites

Item scale or value	National	Regional	t	df	P(T<=t) two-tail
Ease of Use	54.29	40	1	12	0.34
Dialogic Loop	53.06	48.98	0.55	12	0.59
Usefulness of Website	63.26	65.3	-0.25	10	0.8
Return Visit Encouragement	65.71	58.57	0.81	11	0.44
Conservation of Visitors	34.92	36.51	-0.19	11	0.85

Regardless of whether the site was of a national and regional party, the websites overall did not focus on return visit engagement as much as they focused on the other dialogic principles. None of the 14 websites had “bookmark the site/bookmark now”, “FAQs/Q&As” and “online chat” facility whereas only one national and one regional party had a commenting facility on articles. Though below average in overall numbers, the regional parties are far better at offering an explicit invitation to return than the national parties. However, nearly three-quarters of the parties included a sign-in or sign-up link and kept their news items updated, with regional parties faring much better in this case as well.

The findings of the study, overall, suggest that IPPW’s integration of dialogic loop strategies has been limited and just on-the-surface use. Despite the increasing adoption of corporate websites (Ki & Hon, 2006), Indian political parties still do not seem to be leveraging the public relations potential of websites to the fullest extent. The authors believe that significant improvements can be made to national and regional party websites, in general, to make them more dialogic. Less than a quarter of the parties relied heavily on graphics, which helped contribute to nearly half of the sites having a quick loading time (less than 8s). Social media is a crucial aspect of the dialogic loop and this study investigated the inclusion of social media widgets and links and hence found that though 13 out of 14 parties had social media widgets or links that would allow users to share with their friends, but none of the parties had a “share with a friend” widget. More than two-thirds of the national and regional party websites included a link to their social media platforms on their websites, which allows users to engage in dialogic communication.

One limitation of this study is that the investigation was conducted in an urban setting where the internet speeds are relatively robust. Future research should continue to explore the perception of mobile-ready political party websites not just limited from an urban perspective but also from the viewpoint of a rural setting where the internet speeds are relatively below average with frequent disruptions in mobile data services. However, the authors believe that, during the time of the study, the features and performance of IPPWs has not been affected by the financial backing of the parties and the technology employed has been uniformly similar throughout the sampled websites.

This study contributes to the growing body of political public relations research in numerous ways. The authors acknowledge the theoretical underpinning by numerous papers published in the political

public relations research, yet none of these actually investigated a public institution such as a political party, which makes this study an original effort in a bid to lay certain groundwork for future research. Another contribution is in terms of originality/value, where we posit that adequate dialogic communication is part of the continuous campaign aspect of political marketing discourse. It is as much a political marketing thing as it is an ideological means of engaging with the various stakeholders from social marketing to political marketing initiatives, political parties, therefore, need to reach out to the populace in diverse ways and through multiple technological platforms.

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Facebook Addiction Propensities among the Youths: A Study of College Students in West Tripura District

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of the information technology-enabled services, especially Internet and Social Networking Services (SNS), is one of the most crucial technological advancements of the 21st century. Internet has become indispensable in the present times. The invention of the Internet is undeniably a boon as it has brought in a wealth of information for students. Many scholars across the world have opined that youths could be addicted to the Internet if it is used over a prolonged time in a problematic manner, just as one gets addicted to a substance or gambling or shopping. Along with the fast-paced arrival of the digital age, the latent propensities of Internet addiction among youths and adolescents have emerged as the newest form of 'technological addiction'. This study is an endeavour to look into propensities of getting addicted to Facebook addiction among college youths in the West Tripura district.

Keywords: Students, West Tripura District, Internet Addiction, Facebook Addiction, Young's Internet Addiction Test, Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale and Social Networking Sites

Introduction

The term "addiction" is generally used to define substance addiction, like chewing tobacco, smoking or drugs where the addicted person experiences deterioration in physical and mental health condition due to prolonged abuse of intoxicating substances. In other words, "addiction is a state of constant engagement in a substance or behaviour which rewards the user, despite its debilitating consequences" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Internet Addiction (IA) may be defined as an emerging type of addiction that does not involve the use of a substance but it is basically a behavioural addiction in nature. The expression 'IA' was first used by Goldberg (1996) to refer to "behaviours of individuals who demonstrated certain undesirable consequences arising from excessive Internet usage in their lives" (Yu & Shek, 2013).

Paying tributes to the originator of IA studies, Fernandes *et al.* (2019) quoted Young (1998) who proposed IA as "a broad term that integrates a variety of behaviors and impulse control problems". In contrast with substance addiction, IA is regarded as a form of "severe psychological dependency or a

behavioural addiction to the Internet" (Kandell, 1998; Griffiths, 2000). Subsequently, "Internet Addiction Disorder", was coined by Young (1998) and she enumerated some diagnostic criteria of IA such as tolerance, withdrawal, craving, and negative life consequences.

Most of the studies proceeding with IA were conducted in Europe and the USA (Young, 1998; Griffiths, 2000). According to Griffiths, IA may happen due to excessive human-machine interactions that use it in a problematic manner (Griffiths, 1995). Most of the IA literature acknowledges that adolescents and students are likely to be the victims of IA or Social Networking Sites (SNS) addiction. Being inquisitive by nature, college-going students, often expect enjoyment from whatever actions they are occupied on the Internet and their chances of getting addicted to the Internet are utmost.

Griffiths (1998) considers IA to be a "kind of technological addiction (such as computer addiction or TV addiction), and it's a subset of behavioural addiction" (e.g. compulsive gambling addiction or gaming addiction). However, there is no consensus among the researchers on using common terminology to describe the condition of IA (Kim & Haridakis,

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2009). Prior literature alludes to the use of different terminologies to describe the condition of IA. The commonly used expressions in the literature are: “Internet Dependence” (Lu, 2008), “Internet Addiction” (Ghassemzadeh *et al.*, 2008; Young, 1998), “Compulsive Internet Use” (Greenfield, 1999; Meerkerk *et al.*, 2009), “Problematic Internet Use” (Caplan, 2002), “Pathological Internet Use” (Davis, 2001) and the like. Whatever may be the nomenclature used to describe the construct of IA, the causes and consequences are similar.

Several instruments have been developed for assessing IA. According to Dhir (2015), Young’s *Internet Addiction Test* (Young, 1998) is the best. The *Compulsive Internet User Scale* developed by Meerkerk *et al.* (2009) is also commonly used. Both the scales have been used by researchers to conduct IA studies because of their robustness (Dhir, 2015). Empirical studies indicate that problematic Internet use could upshot problems like loss of sleep or sleep deprivation among the youths (Griffiths, 1996), hamper academic pursuits, cause disequilibrium in personal and professional life (Young, 2004). With time, studies in this domain are expanding corroborating dysfunctional behavioural manifestations among college students.

Recent studies have established that people are not addicted to the Internet, rather to specific services offered “through the Internet”, like the SNS. With metamorphosis, youths are addicted to Facebook or WhatsApp in the truest sense of the term. Caplan (2002) mentions that the concept of IA ignores what people are doing when they are online, for instance, either they are engaged in gaming or Facebook or viewing YouTube through the “medium of the Internet which is the actual cause of addiction and rather than the Internet itself”. Clinicians and scientists all over the world have begun taking cognizance of the subtle issues involved in IA. With growing research, the concept of IA has also gone deeper, unfolding layers of the construct. Researchers have confirmed that people are actually addicted to services over the Internet. According to Griffiths, the term IA should be substituted by another word that would be more encompassing and reflect addictions in “specific online activities” like Facebook or WhatsApp or YouTube or any SNS addiction that is emerging as newer forms of IA (Pontes *et al.*, 2015; Fernandes *et al.*, 2019; Billieux, 2012).

Fernandes *et al.* (2019) have urged the researchers on deciding upon the correct usage of the term “IA” or “problematic Internet use” since there are dozens of different terms used by various scholars. Quoting

Pontes *et al.* (2016), the authors are of the opinion that “using the term IA is a mistake and the expression must be abandoned, even though it has become widely used by researchers in different countries”. The authors also support the views of Billieux, (2012) who reiterated that IA is an umbrella terminology that may manifest as addiction to specific activities like playing online video games, Facebook or online gambling, and so on.

Among all SNS apps, Facebook is the most preferred SNS by college students. It is used throughout the globe for umpteen reasons including social, recreational and business expansion (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Omar & Subramaniam, 2013; Dhaha, 2013a; Dhaha, 2013b). Undoubtedly, Facebook is also the most enticing SNS as it constantly updates itself. In fact, such features of Facebook have fuelled addiction propensities among the youths (Sofiah *et al.*, 2011). The company itself declares that Facebook’s mission is to empower individuals with “the power to share and make the world more open and connected”. Facebook is an embodiment of digital empowerment to many individuals who can “overcome the fear of missing out”.

Review of literature

Dhir (2015) mentions that presently researchers across the developed and developing countries are turning their attention to an emerging field in IA, like Facebook addiction. He suggests that individuals become “addicted to specific activities on the Internet, rather than to the Internet as a medium itself”. As Facebook is one of the ‘specific activities’, Dhir (2015) mentions that it is equally addiction oriented. It has also been reported by Griffiths (2000) and Ryan, (2014) that problematic, frequent and excessive use of online SNSs by the youths might have similar addiction propensities just like substance addiction would have upon us.

LaRose *et al.* (2010) have defined SNS addiction as “a failure to regulate usage, which leads to negative personal outcomes”. With advancement in IA research study, there is a shift in the focus from “general Internet addiction” to “specific Internet addiction” in the literature. Several studies have shown that IA could have several manifestations such as; online gaming addiction, online gambling addiction, cybersex addiction, and addiction to computer-mediated communication like Facebook or WhatsApp (Ryan *et al.*, 2014). This shift in the prognosis has resulted in emerging Facebook addiction research studies across the world in a big way as a subset of computer-mediated addiction. Literature from the Western

countries like the USA, EU, Australia, Turkey, and a few from Asian countries like China, South Korea, Malaysia, India and Japan corroborated that excessive use of some SNSs like Facebook could also be a cause of addiction for some people, especially youths who are in the age group 18 to 24 years. The SNS through the Internet has been proven to be an addiction just as Internet was thought of by early researchers (Ryan *et al.*, 2014; Dhir, 2015). Scientific studies mention that excessive or problematic Facebook usage may lead to syndromes like 'Facebook Addiction Disorder' which is very similar to any kind of substance abuse or drug abuse. Facebook or any SNS is an entertaining platform that relieves youth to deal with boredom. However, over a period of time such indulgence of youths on the Internet or accessing SNS like Facebook, which Omar and Subramaniam (2013) exposit as "process gratifications," the youths and adolescents eventually become addicted to it.

The exponential growth and popularity of Facebook amongst youths and students is a matter of concern among IA literature. Facebook addiction was a common phenomenon among the youths in the West. It is spreading its tentacles in developing countries like India. A recent study conducted in a health university in India has also corroborated that individuals who tend to use Facebook "way too much"; may land up getting addicted to Facebook (Masthi *et al.*, 2015; Dhir, 2015). Recent studies from India have shown minor stages of Facebook addiction among Indian students (Prakash, 2017). The literature further mentions that the segments of population who may be at-risk are youths, especially 18 to 34-year-old who are very net savvy (Prabharakaran *et al.*, 2016; Gedam *et al.*, 2016).

Relevant literature in India has been so far mostly devoted to studying the '*Usages and Gratifications*' of SNS among the youths. Relatively little research has been focussed on dissecting the varying approaches to explain the magnitudes of Facebook addiction. Being the third-largest Internet user nation (after the US and China) the youths and students of India may be addicted to various SNS platforms on the Internet and instant mobile messaging apps (Masthi *et al.*, 2015). However, there are fewer studies that have attempted to dissect the contours of Facebook addiction among the college-going youths of far-flung Northeast Indian State of Tripura. It is not known whether the college students of West Tripura district are digitally enabled by the Internet or addicted to it. Hence, such a study is the need of the hour from where generalizations could be drawn whether the youths of West Tripura are Internet addicted or Facebook addicted, and who are

most likely addicted to it - male or female students?

The peer-reviewed literature on the subject of IA (e.g., Dhir, 2015; Ryan, 2014 and others) mentions that people obsessed with problematic Internet use will be exhibiting the following symptoms such as increasing cravings, recurrent thoughts of getting online again, feelings of depression, unsuccessful attempts to cut down, and prevailing negative state of mind. Such symptoms are reported by Facebook addicted youths as well.

The literature further reveals that people, who are addicted to the Internet or Facebook, will have feelings of both joy and guilt. They may have feelings of joy in the sense, that the social networking site is an enjoyable activity and they may feel guilt-ridden for procrastination. Such cohorts of students are often reported to be neglecting responsibilities like academic studies and use time judiciously. The Uses and Gratification theory mentions adolescents use the Internet-based apps like Facebook uncontrollably, either to relieve stress or to cheer up. The youths feel anxious or irritable when not being online or when others advise them to keep away from the Internet (Young, 2004). They tend to prefer to maintain relationships with strangers, rather than family members. The emergence of different SNS and dating sites are on the rise because of such propensities of the youths. This leads to a vicious cycle of negative addictions. The more a medium is personal in nature, the more its usage may lead to behavioural addiction, and Marshal McLuhan correctly said 'medium is the message'. It was reported by Statista (2020) that the year 2019 has recorded more than 48% of web pages were accessed solely on the smartphone all over the world during the period and this data rose beyond count during the pandemic in 2020. Smartphone addiction is also on the rise as it fulfills many of the addiction criteria.

The above trend has also been supported by Emanuel *et al.* (2015) in their study conducted at Alabama University with a representative sample of 404 undergraduate students. It was found that one in every fifth student, i.e. about 50% regarded themselves as completely hooked on to their smartphones and addicted to SNS. It was further reported that female students felt safer when they had their smartphones along with them, more than their male counterparts. It was revealed that female students were psychologically and emotionally happy when they are connected with friends on Facebook and felt distressed when they lost connection. On the other hand, more male students would check their Facebook accounts every now and then to gauge the likes and

comments. The above study has revealed an important fact that people are not addicted to their smartphones, but they are addicted to Facebook or information and entertainment content through the internet. The same study reported that 64% of the students stated that they have the fear of missing something when their smartphone is turned off or Internet connection is lost. Likewise, the authors mentioned about a Rutgers University study found that nearly half (49%) of the respondents kept their smartphones nearby when they slept so that they can check Facebook as soon they receive “likes” or new “comments”. It was also found that 30% of the students reported that they checked their Facebook messages even during meals at home or with friends or family or in the classroom. These are some of the manifestations of Facebook addiction among students.

Hence, whenever there is a discussion about IA, we cannot leave behind Facebook addictions. Evidences have been that found Facebook addiction is supplementary to IA and vice versa to each other. It has been reported that about 12% of avid Internet users are youths and college students. It is also found that many of the avid Internet users are addicted to Facebook or any other SNS (Alabi, 2012; Wolniczak *et al.*, 2013; Wu *et al.*, 2013). This has been validated in many studies on IA with youths and students as representative samples (e.g. Kandell, 1998; Chou *et al.*, 2005; Morahan-Martin & Schumacker, 2000; Cha *et al.*, 2011; Nalwa & Anand, 2003). However, some of the studies have committed the mistake of looking hastily into IA from one angle. The erudite scholars have studied IA as addiction to the “medium of Internet”, rather than to specific services offered through the platform of the Internet like SNS, where people are getting addicted to in an actual sense of the term. Instead, it would be worthwhile to mention that, if one endeavours to look into the ‘specific internet activities’ (like Facebook or WhatsApp) where people are often found to be addicted in the real sense of the term. Problematic use of the Internet by the students or problematic use of different SNS apps or ‘specific services like Facebook’, are the real causes of addiction to the Internet. But it cannot be generalized as Internet addiction as it would be a loose terminology. In this regard, scholars like Kuss and Griffiths, 2011; Echeburua & de Coral, 2010; Widyanto and Griffiths, 2006; Young, 2004; Kardefelt-Winther, 2014; Kuss *et al.*, 2014; Griffiths, 2012; Dhir, 2015; and others have criticized the usage of term “IA” and said that is a narrow construct which was valid during the initial stages. But now it has to be more encompassing. Hence the scholars have

suggested that future researchers should look beyond IA, which is basically an addiction to the ‘messages or specialized services like Facebook or any SNS’ and not to ‘the medium’. The SNS activities are more enticing than the medium through which people access the Internet. Hence Facebook addiction would be the correct terminology to be used in place of the loose term IA.

Empirical studies have mentioned that there are dozens of adverse effects of problematic Facebook usage like sleep deprivation, as of time for essential activities like games and sports, lack of appetite, missing food, craving for fast food, distorted sleep cycle, procrastination of studies, skipping of games and outdoor activities etc. (Young, 2004; Dhir, 2015; Ryan *et al.*, 2014). Facebook addiction is manifested when an individual is having an irresistible desire to log on to Facebook several times in a day and do not have control over it. It is used for a longer duration than initially intended at the cost of leaving aside important activities (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). It has its adverse impact on the psyche of the individual which extends to cognition, mood and emotional functioning (Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013; Przepiorka & Blachnio, 2016; Zaremohzzabieh *et al.*, 2014). Different studies have pointed out that Facebook addiction is associated with certain prominent traits like low- self-esteem or narcissism (Fioravanti *et al.*, 2012), depression (Kim *et al.*, 2006), sensation seeking (Velezmoro *et al.*, 2010), loneliness (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014) and shyness etc. (Kim *et al.*, 2009).

Literature has likewise highlighted that similar to IA, Facebook addiction is also linked with hosts of health, psychological, relational and emotional problems (Echeburua & de Corral, 2010; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Marino *et al.*, 2017; Marino *et al.*, 2018). Studies mention that people, who are addicted to the Internet, are also likely to be addicted to social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube. Facebook addicted youths often miss a lot of things; prominent ones being social needs; contact with family and friends in real life. In extreme cases, the Facebook addicted persons prefer staying in contact with virtual friends, to escape realities of life (Dhaha, 2013b).

On the other hand, Kim *et al.* (2006) have pointed out there exists an association between IA and suicidal tendencies among adolescents. Such horrible situations are on the rise which has been aptly exemplified when students got themselves engaged in virtual games like the ‘Blue Whale’- a video game that prompted suicidal tendencies into dysfunctional

users. IA is as worse as other forms of substance addiction such as drugs and alcohol, and often it leads to school dropouts (Brady, 1996). Khantzian (1997) noted substance abuse is common among IA youths, which is a means of coping with stress.

People addicted to Facebook continue to fall prey to it despite the awareness of the adverse consequences of prolonged use. As an SNS platform, Facebook is immensely engrossing; its “problematic use” is commonly reported among students. Literature reveals that a situation when the students cannot resist the temptation of logging on to Facebook to check how many likes and dislikes or what comments they have received in their Facebook posts and the desire is insatiable. The consequences of Facebook addiction are more psychological disorders than physical in the initial stages (Lee, 2009). In this context, Facebook addiction shares some similarities with IA or gaming addiction (Przepiorka & Blachnio, 2016).

It would be needless to reiterate that Facebook addiction “through the Internet” is getting its roots firmly established in the present times. Griffiths (2012) argued that people become addicted to micro activities or different services available over the Internet. Facebook addicted youths cannot resist the temptation to give up accessing Facebook use. It was observed by Griffiths (2013) that particular and specific activities on the Internet are more addiction oriented than the Internet itself.

To sum up, it has been found that research studies around the world have pointed to the addictive qualities of Facebook which was previously misunderstood as IA (Dhir, 2015; Ryan, 2014; Griffiths, 2013). Though intended to be used as a tool of communication, Facebook addiction disorder causes many mental health problems like depression, anxiety and negativity among the youths. It is inversely related to the well-being of the users (Eraslan-Capan, 2015). Since its launch in 2004, millions of people are becoming loyal users of Facebook, being well aware of its addiction susceptibilities. Someone has rightly said, ‘Facebook were a country, it would have the largest population on earth (Sam and Thakurta, 2019). In a recent survey, about 48% of all social media users are reported to check or update Facebook before going to bed and 56% strongly feel like checking several times a day (Evangelista, 2007). This user base has no precedent in the history of mankind where people are enrolling themselves willingly to be a subject of a vast empire of a new kind of supra-nation (Sam & Thakurta, 2019). The irony of the fact is that the company’s technologies are changing the patterns of

an individual’s behaviour and pushing them into the quagmire of addiction.

Materials and methods

The study was explorative and data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The sample design of the study was a stratified and purposive sample of college students in the West Tripura district. There are eight districts in Tripura but the West Tripura district was selected as because there is a maximum concentration of higher educational institutions in the West Tripura as well the capital city of Agartala is in the said district. A well-designed questionnaire based on the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) was adapted for the study. The sample size of the study was fixed at 1190 young students from 17 colleges of West Tripura district. For this purpose, 70 students were purposively selected from each college who have been using Facebook for more than a year and are having functional Internet connection in their smartphones as inclusion criteria. The respondents were administered the questionnaire in classroom setting seeking due permission from the college authorities. Before the survey, they were explained about the study and were asked to respond to it honestly and give their self-assessment in an ethical manner. Only those respondents were considered for the study who voluntarily gave their consent to participate in the study. Finally, 1132 valid questionnaires were considered after rejecting the defective questionnaires. The survey was conducted during the months of August 2017 to December 2017. To analyze the data simple tabular methods were used. Secondary data was also collected from different books, journals, reports and e-resources for the sake of the study.

Results and discussion

There are few studies carried out in Tripura on this issue and hence the present study was aimed to throw some light on the unexplored problem of Facebook addiction and fills the gap in scare literature highlighting the impact of demographic variables like age, gender and academic stream on addiction to Facebook. A well-designed questionnaire was prepared to collect the basic demographics of the participants which included name, gender (male or female), age (<18 and 18-24 years), residence-rural-urban, etc. To assess the levels of Facebook addiction among the students was the main objective of the study and hence the BFAS scale designed by Andreassen *et al.* (2012) was adapted. However, for the sake of ease, the BFAS was translated in Bengali since the students

would have fewer problems in understanding it. The BFAS consists of six primary elements of addiction: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. It is a self-rated 6-item Likert scale with each item scoring from 1 (*very rarely*) to 5 (*very often*). According to the BFAS, a score between 0 and 10 is normal, but a score between 11–14 indicates the possibility of Facebook addiction and a score of 15 and above indicate confirmed Facebook addiction. The internal consistency of the BFAS in the present study was found to be 0.83, and 3-week test-retest reliability was 0.82. However, the BFAS has been modified in the present study so as to include some additional questions which explore more about Facebook usage patterns (duration of usage, likes, and comments received in-site games, probable correlates, items assessing academic impacts, etc.).

The study was basically aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there differences among the students of West Tripura District in terms of Facebook addiction with respect to academic stream of the respondents?
2. Are there differences among the students of West Tripura District in terms of Facebook addiction with respect to gender of the respondents?
3. Are there differences among the students of West Tripura District in terms of Facebook addiction with respect to age of the respondents?

The below table displays that there exists a highly significant association between the academic stream of the respondents and their problematic Facebook use ($p < 0.01$). Where the majority of respondents were active on Facebook (66.4%), most of them belonged to the Arts stream (53.8%). Thus, it is found that there exists a difference among the students of West Tripura District in terms of Facebook addiction with respect to academic stream of the respondents.

The below table shows that there exists a highly significant difference between the males and female students in terms of Facebook addiction ($p < 0.01$). The male students possess a higher mean (101.23) value than female students (95.38). Hence, the second research question was assessed. It was found that there exists a significant difference among the students of West Tripura District in terms of Facebook addiction with respect to gender and age of the respondents. The Facebook addiction status of the male students was higher than female students in West Tripura district. The students belonging to 18-24 years old were more likely to be addicted to Facebook. However, the computed mean score of females (95.38) lies below the BFAS scale average, so it can be stated that women are not having a much higher degree of Facebook addiction.

Summary of results

Thus, it has been found that in terms of Facebook addiction, the difference between the age groups is not

Table 1 Association between the academic stream of respondents and active status on Facebook

Distribution of stream of academic pursuit			Respondents active on Facebook		Total	χ^2
			No	Yes		
Academic stream of the respondent	Science	Count	67	171	238	27.48**
		% of Total	5.9%	15.1%	21.0%	
	Arts	Count	241	368	609	
		% of Total	21.3%	32.5%	53.8%	
	Commerce/Management	Count	21	68	89	
		% of Total	1.9%	6.0%	7.9%	
	Professional/Vocational Courses	Count	22	92	114	
		% of Total	1.9%	8.1%	10.1%	
	Any Other	Count	29	53	82	
		% of Total	2.6%	4.7%	7.2%	
	Total	Count	380	752	1132	
		% of Total	33.6%	66.4%	100.0%	

**Significant at 0.01 level

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 The t-tests showing Facebook addiction across the Gender and Age groups

Variables		<i>N=1132</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	542	101.23	19.91	1130	4.70**	0.000
	Female	590	95.38	21.96			
Age	<18	259	99.81	20.96	1130	1.42	0.16
	18-24	873	97.70	21.25			

**Significant at 0.01 level

Source: Field Survey

found to be significant ($p > 0.05$). However, the below 18 years group has a higher mean (99.81) than the 18-24 years group (97.7). Thus, the students belonging to 18-24 years old were more likely to be addicted to Facebook. Likewise, there exists a significant difference between the male and female students in terms of Facebook addiction ($p < 0.01$) in the West Tripura district. The females had higher mean Facebook addiction scores than men. Women were found to be more online than males. Hence, there exists a significant difference among the students of the West Tripura District in terms of Facebook addiction with respect to gender and age of the respondents. Further, it has been found that there exists a highly significant association between the academic stream of the respondents and their problematic Facebook use ($p < 0.01$), students belonging to Arts faculty might be using Facebook in a problematic manner. The partial correlation coefficients were found to be highly significant between Facebook addiction and each of duration of Facebook usage, being encouraged by "Like", being encouraged by Sharing, Watching Video Clips, Game-playing tendency, and Friend request-sending tendency among the participants.

Based on personal interviews, it has been found that the majority of the students (37%) stated that they believe problematic Facebook use has sometimes affected their studies. The majority (39%) stated that "sometimes" they had a hard time concentrating in class due to Facebook. The higher the activity on Facebook, the higher is the chances of getting addicted to it.

It was also found that Facebook activity is significantly associated with the location of residence (rural/urban area), most of the participants in the present study were found to reside in rural areas. And the location of residence was significantly associated with Facebook's active status. Facebook activity was not found to be significantly associated with the type of residence (own house/rented). Internet activity was not found to differ between students residing in rural

and urban areas. Also, most of the participants in this study have been found to stay in their own houses and not in rented houses. However, the type of house was not found to be significantly associated with the Facebook activity. Rural residence and rented houses signify, in a general sense, poorer socioeconomic status as compared to people living in urban areas or having their own houses. The higher the socio-economic status, the higher is the affordability and higher is the chances of getting addicted to Facebook due to higher Facebook usage. Hence, this notion justifies higher activity in people living in their own houses but does not concur with the higher activity found in participants hailing from rural areas

Facebook activity was also significantly associated with the caste of the participants. The activity is not found to be significantly associated with the relationship status (single/married) chosen by the respondents on Facebook. It is significantly associated with the privacy settings on Facebook. Facebook addiction is significantly predicted by the duration of Facebook usage.

Conclusion

The ways of human communication have drastically changed with the explosion of the internet and social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp and the like. Indians have grasped the opportunities offered by the expansion of Internet. The digitally-enabled population in the country has been rapidly growing. It is now estimated that there are more than 687.6 million Internet users in India as of January 2020 (Statista, 2020). The number of Internet users in India has increased by 128 million (+23%) between 2019 and 2020. As per the latest estimation, Internet penetration in India stands at 50% as of January 2020 (Statista, 2020). The chances of getting addicted to Facebook are evident. Jafarkarimi *et al.* (2016) confirmed that among the four emerging youths' age groups (e.g. 18-20; 21-23; 24-26; 27-29) no significant difference was found. In their study, scholars like Balci and Golcu (2013) reported that about 27.7% of the

participants were found to be addicted to Facebook and the mean age of the participants was 21.1 years.

The SNS in general and Facebook, in particular, have diffused quickly and deeply penetrated students' life in both developed and developing countries across the globe and it is needless to say that Facebook has become more of an addiction than a fun activity among a large number of college students in India as well. The students of a developing country may be digitally divided but certain social networking sites or social media platforms are those sites that have very fast diffusion in the developing countries as much as in developed countries. Obviously, the circumstances that led to the quick dispersal of Facebook in India are not far to be located but which is of particular concern is that it has given rise to a new phenomenon called Facebook addiction, particularly among the students. The presented literature survey has revealed that repetitive use of SNS activities, like Facebook, brings about an addiction to non-substance issues as well, and it consequentially creates several behavioural problems among the youths. This is why Facebook addiction is a growing concern among conscious parents, politicians, academicians, world leaders, healthcare professionals, and mass media. However, Facebook is not the only social media platform that happens to lure the youths and captivate them to the point of reducing participation in many social activities in the real world, including negligence to classwork. Research on the other SNS will supplement what literature has reported that excessive indulgence with Facebook may result in heralding a battery of negative effects on work, health, study and personal relationship of the youths who are most susceptible to its addictive nature. Are not other SNS equally addictive? It is recommended that further research can be expanded to other social networking websites like YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and its addictive tendencies among youths and students and there is a need for the development of respective scales and so on.

A partial correlation analysis was also conducted between Facebook addiction among the college students of the West Tripura and various Facebook related variables. Facebook addiction has below average correlation with each of: 1. Duration of Facebook usage; 2. Being encouraged by number of "Likes" received in their Facebook posts; 3. Being encouraged by "Sharing" of the Facebook posts; 4. Game playing tendency; and 5. Friend request-sending tendency, when controlled (partial out) of the other variables. However, it has been found from the above Table that all the variables have a positive and

highly significant partial correlation ($p < 0.01$) with Facebook addiction.

The difference in Facebook addiction has been noted in this study to be significant across the two sexes, with the males having a higher mean value. A recent study has reported that 53% of males and 43% of females are addicted to Facebook in their statistics in November 2019 (Shetter *et al.*, 2017). According to Statista reports, Facebook released its official data on the US in January 2009 wherein it was reported that 54% of Facebook users were female; whereas, only 46% were male users (Statista, 2020). Following this, Internet addiction is mostly found among young males; however, the rate is rising among female users too (Lam *et al.*, 2009). Different studies have supported the fact that females are more involved in social media networking than males. It was also reported that women have more online friends, and they spend more time being online than the males' counterparts (Terres, 2010; Arora & Okunber, 2016). Whereas, Maldonado *et al.* (2001) and Mamun *et al.* (2019) have established that women spend lesser time on the Internet than men. It has also been reported that women use the Internet more for communication and maintaining relationships purposes. But men were inclined to less rational activities on the Internet. Women receive more 'friend requests' Facebook and the rate of acceptance is also high among them. While women are usually more drawn to social and interactive aspects of the Internet, men are more drawn towards video games (Torres, 2010). Many of the studies are inconclusive at this juncture.

On the other hand, scholars like Zhang *et al.*, (2008); Mahmood and Farooq (2014), and Alabi (2012) claimed that male students reported higher levels of IA, which concurs with this study. It is also to be noted that male students use the Internet differently than females (Chou *et al.*, 2005) and that males are found to be at 50% more risk of developing Internet dependence syndromes like Facebook addiction more than the female students (Lam *et al.*, 2009).

However, Alzougool (2018) found no significant difference in Facebook addiction between male and female participants. Again, Jafarkarimi *et al.* (2016) found that men and women were equally addicted to Facebook. Besides, Mamun *et al.* (2019) found no significant difference between the gender groups in the context of problematic Internet usage among Bangladeshi students. However, among Indian students, male and female students do not differ significantly in terms of the time spent online (Gadekar *et al.*, 2012).

The present study endeavoured to look into

the correct terminology, what age group of students and who (male or female) are getting more addicted to Facebook addiction among college youths in the West Tripura district. However, this is not the end of the road. Future researchers may consider dissecting the different aspects of addiction to social media in general and WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube as platforms of emerging addiction, in particular. There is a need for inventing specific scales to dissect the addiction of each of the SNS platforms and the existent BFAS may be inadequate as it considers only Facebook addiction. The pioneers of IA studies like Griffiths (1999) have echoed such concerns as Internet fuels others addictions and Facebook addiction would be the proper terminology to be used in the case of the present study as it is measured by BFAS. Future IA studies should look into micro issues rather than the umbrella terminology of IA. Future researchers would do well by dissecting what common people are doing on Facebook, rather than looking into college students Facebook usage as a tool of addiction at the micro-level since Facebook is also undergoing the metamorphosis as an SNS platform and newer versions of Facebook applications are ever enticing. It seems that the proposition - change is the only constant, is adopted in letter and spirit by the Facebook incorporation to survive in the competitive business environs of present times.

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People's Perception about New and Traditional Media in terms of Consumption Pattern, Credibility and Objectivity

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ABSTRACT

The new (digital) media scape in which we live today and the changes it has brought about to our media consumption patterns require that the traditional media (Radio, Television and Newspapers) make additional efforts to adapt to a multi-platform universe, to capture the various audiences that have progressively been shifting their attention and preferences to new venues, by utilizing both traditional and new media in an integrated way. In current times, the old relationship between broadcaster and audience has changed radically. Even though many of us still listen to music on the radio, watch television on the TV set, and are drawn to the intimacy of a printed newspaper, yet our roles as the audience are evolving with the change in the media universe. It is the audience who chooses the broadcasters of news and entertainment and at the same time the most convenient times for those broadcasts. On top of that, the audience is now in a position to produce its content (user-generated) and can make it freely available. However, the new media with Internet technology in the core is a "double-edged sword" that, on the one hand, connects the virtual information environment with the reality while leading to a range of problems. On the other hand, new media has caused many negative impacts on Indian society, such as fabricated media reports, lack of social responsibility, and distortion of ethics. This paper attempts to study as to how the masses are using both forms of media and what are the driving forces behind their choice for the various mediums i.e., Traditional and New (Digital) Media.

Keywords: New media, Traditional media, News credibility, Objectivity of news

Introduction

On the relationship between mass media and society, McQuail (1983) proposed an interactive perspective, that mass media is a primary moulder of society as well as a reflector of it. According to him, "Society produces demands for information and entertainment to which media respond. It provides resources and time needed for the growth of media industries and the freedom to operate. Mass communication in turn stimulates change, accelerates and demand its own services, contributes to the climate of cultural and political freedom in which media can itself better operate, diffuse new ideas and innovations. The two influences are so found together that neither mass communication nor modern forms of society is conceivable without the other and each is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the other" (p. 79). In short, as per his thinking, the mass media (traditional and new media) may equally be considered to mould, mirror and follow the social change.

Credibility is the most precious asset of a mass medium, whether traditional or new. Irrespective of ideological orientation, the mass media's effectiveness in serving as watchdogs or mobilizing public opinion in support of national cause solely depends on – its credibility. Eastin (2001) says, "Nowadays millions of people have access to new media and the number

is growing. Characteristics of the Internet such as interactivity, open standards, and global reach make it uniquely easy that anyone could publish on it; in other words, there is less control on the Internet than traditional media. Increasing the amount of information on Internet will decrease the chance of discovering false information" (p. 244). Generally, the news on Internet is abundant and easily available nowadays, however, its credibility is still very low (Lu & Andrews, 2006). People now have the opportunity to create/circulate/publish news on their own and can have feedback and different version of the same story facilitated through the Internet, which is seen as free from control. Anyone with a blog can be a reporter and anyone with a cell phone can be a videographer and anyone on Facebook, Twitter and a thousand other platforms can be a news editor, or at least a curator (Rosenstiel, 2005).

However, with increasing media availability and use of new media by people, credibility and objectivity of news and information made available through different media are being intensively debated among the people in general and intelligentsia in particular. Therefore, the issue of credibility and objectivity in relation to both types of media, viz., traditional and new needs to be studied systematically. This study attempts to examine as to how the masses are using both forms of media i.e., Traditional (Radio,

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Television and Newspapers) and New (Digital) Media and what are the driving forces behind their choice for the various mediums.

Literature review

There have been several studies in many countries concerning consumption pattern, credibility and objectivity of different forms of media. In a study by Swift (2017), the Americans seem to have a low and declining confidence in the new media. The study was conducted in the year 2017, found that 27% of the Americans have high confidence in newspapers while only 24% in television news. The study cites that in the year 1999, i.e., 17 years ago, it was 37% for the newspapers and 36% for the TV news. The percentage of people with high confidence in Internet news also dropped from 21% in 1999 to 16% in 2017. The issue of credibility and trust in new media has become relevant when people at large accuse the media of reporting factually incorrect or distorted news and information (Nakamura, 2017). Even some section of practising journalists has grown sceptic as to whether freedom of the press in the US itself is in danger, and have made a clarion call for improving credibility and objectivity in the media (Jensen, 2017; Rampell, 2017).

In a research study conducted by Osborn (2001) on 'Ethics and Credibility in Online Journalism', he concluded that persistence to conventional ethics and credibility can help to ensure the success of new media in journalism. He noted that when print was the only medium for the journalists, a lot of time was available for deep and proper research, editing, and publication. As mass media progressed, and new forms of print and broadcast media appeared, the deadline for journalistic reflection shrank. The Internet allowed news and information to move at a tremendous pace, just as the speed of the electron or electromagnetic wave. Osborn (2001) says, "In this medium, everyone is a potential publisher, allows for even less argument or comment by the journalist and editor. So speedy and anonymous identity provided by the new media can play fast but might be loose with journalistic ethics. The new media has created a fourth kind of journalism, earlier were radio, television, and print journalism" (p. 2).

Flanagin and Metzger (2000), disclosed, "However, the Internet differs from other media used for information. The way people get news/information from Internet/new media can affect its reliability, credibility, and verity as a source of information. The Internet's (new media) structure is designed specifically not to be centrally controlled. Indeed,

anyone can be an author on the Internet". McNair (1998) in his book '*The Sociology of Journalism*' argues, "Objective journalism is only journalism, with different hierarchies and styles of news values, shaped by and specific to particular societies at particular times" (p. 240). He further adds, "The claim of journalistic objectivity is essentially an appeal for trust, even in situations where the facts of a situation may not be fully known" (p. 242).

Schweiger (2000) in his study, 'Media credibility – experience or image?' found, "German media users rated newspapers as being more credible than television or new media. At the time when the study was conducted, the Internet was relatively new to users and the majority of participants were non-Internet users. While newspapers were generally found to be the most credible medium, the lines between television and new media (online news media) were not very much clear. Television was rated as more serious, skilled, critically well-researched, and professional, whereas the new media was found as more thorough and impartial" (p. 37-59). Kovacic *et al.* (2010) in their paper 'Credibility of Traditional vs. Online News Media: A Historical Change in Journalists' Perceptions?' concluded, "The majority of journalists still thought that the traditional news media were the most credible. The majority of respondents held a conservative view in the matter of journalistic credibility and its criteria, as they put forward the traditional criteria of quality journalistic work to rate journalistic credibility" (p. 113-130). Rao and Ravi (2015) in their paper 'Audience perception of the credibility of local news channels' concluded, "Competition is driving the TRP wars so the credibility factor seems to take a back seat. Everything is fair to get one more viewer to switch to your channel. Ethics are confined to the textbooks to be taught in Journalism Schools and not practised in newsrooms" (p. 10). They added, "The more harsh and noisy debates on primetime are better for TRPs. Factually, more people in cosmopolitan cities like Bengaluru are switching to DD News/Doordarshan is a point to be noted by the decision-makers in regional news channels. It is also true that audience for local language news channels is increasing faster than that for English news channels. Credibility depends upon the culture that practices in newsrooms of TV channels. Unless that changes for the better, credibility will be low" (p. 10).

Kiousis (1999) in the research paper explained that news credibility perceptions to be influenced by media use and interpersonal discussion about news. He found that people rated newspapers more credible than new media or television. Online news was rated more

credible than television. Like other studies conducted for print and broadcast news media, he found that credibility rating of a medium was associated with its use. He found links between media use and public perceptions of newspapers and television news credibility. Singh (1997) says, "It is almost established that the unusual is chosen over the normal. It is not news when a dog bites a man, but it is news when a man bites a dog. What happens today is more newsworthy than what happened yesterday; what happens close to home is more newsworthy than what happened thousands of miles away. What is said by a prominent person, a celebrity, is more newsworthy than what is said by an unknown. Whatever is more dramatic and conflictual is more newsworthy than the routine. All these 'the unusual, the topical, the near-at-hand, the voice of the celebrity, the conflictual' are journalistic conventions; it is they that define news. There is no clear definition of news; the professional journalist smells it out with his nose for news. He defines it on the basis of his news judgement. Thus, even the concept of news is subjective" (p. 67). As Brinkly pointed out, "News is what I say it is" (Altschull, 1984, p. 131). The way audiences approach journalism has changed tremendously in the digital culture. Traditional journalism, resting on taken-for-granted values such as credibility and trust, is facing new challenges, and when it comes to getting news from social media, audiences can place their trust in people who are members of their social circles (Hermida *et al.*, 2012). New media by and large is a free and uncontrolled source of information. However, on the other hand, countries like China and Saudi Arabia have proven that this freedom can be controlled too. Generally, new media is an alternative outlet for content that does not fit into the conventional framework of the traditional media forms. Many advertisements that are otherwise censored for television are put online in an uncensored fashion (Rozario, 2013).

Research questions

- What is the consumption pattern of the masses in Traditional and New Media for getting news and information?
- Between Traditional and New Media, which is considered a more credible and objective source of news by the masses?
- To what extent the advent and expansion of New Media have impacted popular perception regarding objectivity and credibility of different sources of news?

Methodology

Quantitative method and a survey as a research tool have been used for this study.

Population

The Universe comprises all the people of Lucknow, who are 18 years or above and are exposed to both, Traditional Media (Newspaper, Television and Radio) and New Media.

Sampling

The sample size was 500 selected by purposive sampling method. Out of this total sample size, 400 valid responses were received while administering the questionnaires, which were analyzed for the present study. Out of a total of 400 valid respondents, 218 were males and 182 were females. The researchers tried to select the respondents from different occupations as well as from different age groups.

Tool

A questionnaire in relation to research questions has been used as a tool for this study.

Findings and interpretations

Data and information collected through administration of questionnaire were analyzed at length. Different key areas in relation to the research questions have been analyzed and a detailed analysis is presented hereunder.

Media consumption patterns for getting News and Information

Television consumption pattern

More than half (53.25%) of the respondents accepted that they watched TV news occasionally and 39.75% said that they were regular viewers of TV news channels. About 4.75% of respondents did not use to watch TV news and 2.25% of respondents did not respond.

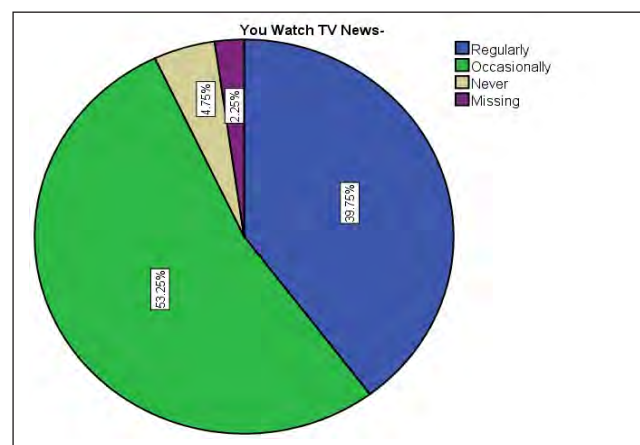


Fig. 1

Radio consumption pattern

Table 1

		Fre- quen- cy	Per- cent	Valid Per cent	Cumu- lative Percent
Valid	Regu- larly	35	8.8	9.0	9.0
	Occa- sionally	61	15.3	15.8	24.8
	Never	291	72.8	75.2	100.0
	Total	387	96.8	100.0	
Miss- ing	9	13	3.3		
Total		400	100.0		

Three-fourth of valid per cent (75.2) never listened to Radio news, i.e., huge numbers of listeners do not get news from Radio. Only 8.8 % of respondents listen to it regularly, while 15.3 % accepted that they listen to it occasionally (Table 1).

Newspapers consumption pattern

It is obvious from (Figure 2) that more than three-fourth (76.0%) of the respondents read Newspapers regularly. Only a few (3.75%) of the respondents never read it, while 16.75% of the respondents read it occasionally. About 3.5% of the respondents did not answer.

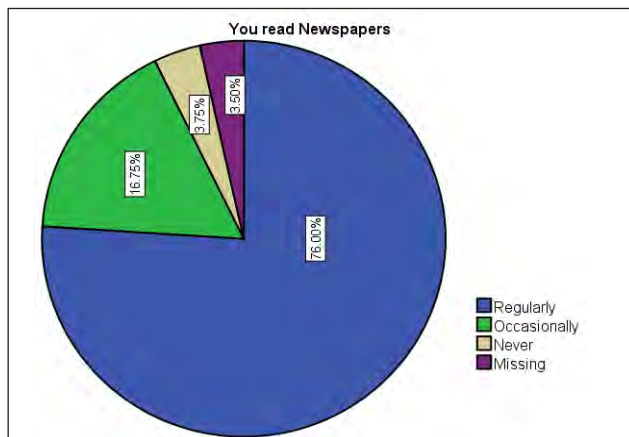


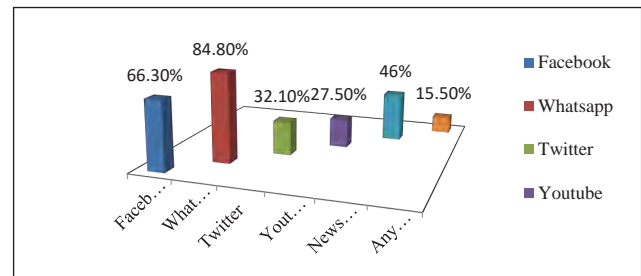
Fig. 2

New media consumption pattern (Facebook, WhatsApp, News portals etc.)

Table 2

		Fre- quen- cy	Per- cent	Valid Per- cent	Cumu- lative Percent
Valid	Yes	374	93.5	96.1	96.1
	N0	15	3.8	3.9	100.0
	Total	389	97.3	100.0	
Miss- ing	9	11	2.8		
Total		400	100.0		

Almost all respondents (96.1%, valid) or 93.5% of the total accepted that they got news from new media (Table 2). Their responses regarding from which one(s) did they get news are the following:



The respondents who accepted that they used new media for getting news (374 in numbers), further explained different sources of getting it. Most of the respondents (84.8%) got news from WhatsApp. About two-thirds of the respondents (66.3%) accepted that they got news from Facebook. While one-third (32.1%) of the respondents also use Twitter for this purpose. A very few, i.e., less than half of the respondents (46%) searched news-based website portals. Around 15.5% of the respondent said that they got news from other sources like Instagram, Blogs, V-chat etc., and 27.5 % of respondents got it from YouTube (Figure 3).

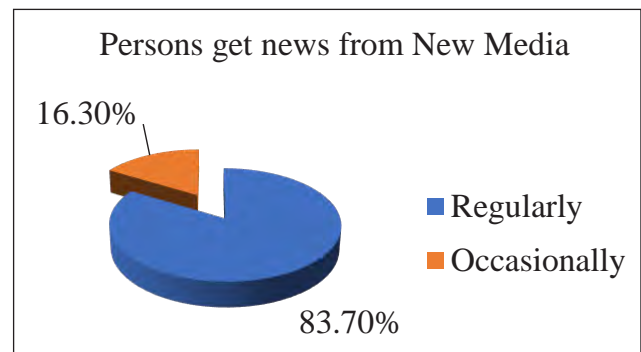


Fig. 4

When asked again, whether they used it regularly or occasionally, that a huge number of respondents (83.70%) got news regularly from new media via WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and other news based websites etc. While remaining 16.30 % of respondents used it occasionally for news purposes (Figure 4).

Credibility and objectivity of different forms of media

Comparison of Credibility between New Media and Newspapers

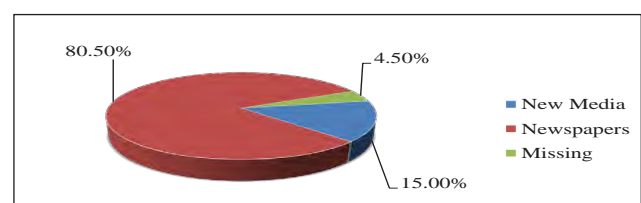


Fig. 5

Newspapers were more credible than the new media; it was found when the researcher asked the respondents about the same. More than 80.5% of the respondents agreed that newspapers were more credible than new media. But 15% of the respondents did not think so, they opined that new media were more credible than newspapers. About 4.5% of the respondents were silent (Figure 5).

Comparison of Credibility between TV News channels and Newspapers

The respondents found newspapers more credible than TV news channels. About 57.6% of valid respondents thought that newspapers were more credible while remaining 42.40% of valid respondents

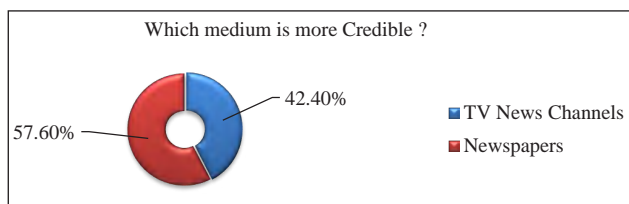


Fig. 6

thought that TV news channels were more credible. 1.5% of the respondent did not respond (Figure 6).

Comparison of Credibility between New Media and Television

It is obvious from (Table 2) and (Figure 2) that a huge per cent (77) of the respondents accept that television is a more credible medium than the new

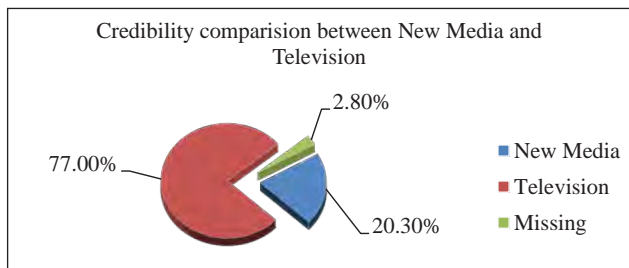


Fig. 7

media for getting news while 20.3% of the respondents accepted it’s opposite. About 2.8% of the respondents were silent.

Comparison of Credibility between New Media and Newspapers

Newspapers were more credible than the new media; it was found when researcher asked the respondents. More than the four-fifth (80.5%) of the respondents agreed that newspapers were more credible than new media. But 15% of the respondents did not think so, they opined that new media was more credible than newspapers. About 4.5% of the respondents were silent (Figure 8).

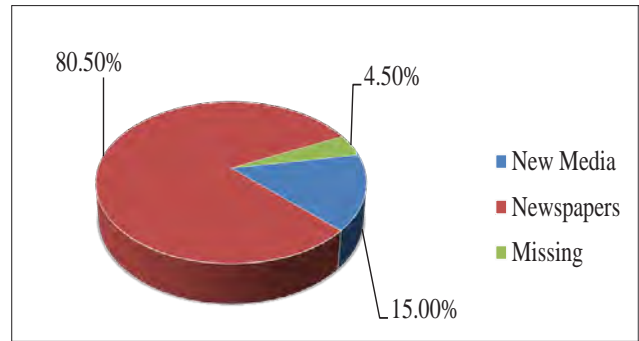


Fig. 8

Belief in news sources when conflicting or different reports of the same news story

Table 3

Source	Frequency	Percent
DD/AIR	23	5.8
Newspapers	157	39.3
Foreign TV/Radio (BBC TV/Radio etc.)	42	10.5
Private TV Channels	126	31.5
New Media (Messengers, Apps/websites etc.)	27	6.8
Others	8	2.0
Missing	17	4.3
No. of Respondents	400	

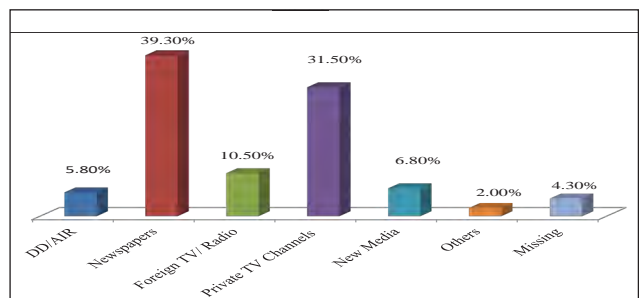


Fig. 9

With 39.3% of the respondents, newspapers were the most credible sources of news whether they get conflicting or different reports of the same news story. Respondents also believed in private news channels (31.5% of them) in a similar condition. About 6.8% of the respondents inclined to believe in new media when they got different versions of the same story in different media. While 5.8% and 10.5% of the respondents believed in DD/AIR and foreign TV/Radio, respectively, when they got conflicting reports of the same news. The fewer number of respondents who believed in foreign Radio/TV might be because

of the less respondents who listened/viewed foreign radio/TV channels. About 4.3% of the respondents did not answer while 2.0% of the respondents said that they chose other sources in similar situations (Figure 8, Table 3).

Credibility of Different Media

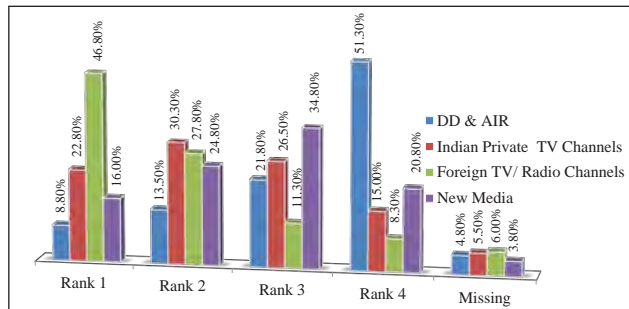


Fig. 10

Respondents were asked to rank 1, 2, 3, and 4 according to the credibility of Doordarshan/All India Radio (AIR), Indian private TV channels, Foreign TV/ Radio channels and New Media in descending order. Foreign TV/Radio channels were considered the most credible among the respondents (46.8% of the respondents ranked 1 and 27.8% of the respondents ranked 2). After foreign TV/Radio, Indian private channels were accepted to be more credible than New Media and DD/AIR (30.3% of the respondents ranked 2 and 22.8% of the respondents ranked 1). On the other hand, new media were more credible than DD/AIR but not as credible as foreign TV/Radio & Indian private channels were (34.8% of the respondents gave rank 3 and 16% of the respondents gave rank 1) while DD/AIR were the least credible among the all given media (51.3% of the respondents gave rank 4 and only 8.8% of the respondents gave rank 1). Therefore, it could be inferred that foreign TV/Radio channels, Indian private channels, New Media and DD/Air are credible respectively in descending order (Figure 9).

Summary and conclusion

Majority of the people still find printed newspapers as the most credible and reliable medium of news and information. Thus, newspapers still command a greater degree of respect and enjoy more credibility and objectivity as compared to TV channels and New Media including the Public Service Broadcasters, DD and AIR and Indian private news channels. Today, when 24-hour news channels are telecasting breaking news/news flashes and live feeds, giving immediate coverage and information of news and events, newspapers still hold the place of honour in terms of news credibility and objectivity. Similarly, even though the use of new media is increasing, it has not found a favourite place

in the minds of the people as far as news is concerned.

Despite being the most credible medium, newspapers are also seen as biased due to commercial/ financial or owner's business interests. People observed that new media have been used for propaganda and campaigns by vested interests/groups or individuals etc. Thus, credibility/objectivity of all media is under suspicion, which is not a good trend, and different media platforms and groups must look into this emerging popular perception at the earliest. About reporting during elections in India, newspapers are considered more objective and fairer than DD/AIR and New Media. However, a high percentage of respondents find no medium objective or fair. This indicates political biasedness in media functioning still exists in our country.

For objective and credible coverage of news, masses largely feel that there should be self-censorship for media persons. A general opinion emerged that the Code of Ethics for the journalists should be devised and defined by journalists and media practitioners themselves. There is a dominant feeling among the people that a freebie or any government-sponsored facility to a journalist does affect the credibility of the journalist or medium. Thus, a need for some ethical code or self-regulation for journalistic practices was felt.

Radio is on the decline as a source of news. For those who listen to the radio, a huge majority still rely upon BBC radio for more credible and objective news. Thus, it may be concluded that among those who depend upon radio as a credible source of news, BBC Radio has found a favourite place.

This study also suggests that as compared to DD/AIR, Indian private news channels and New Media, the foreign TV/Radio channels hold more credibility among the people. Ranking of different media was done based on people's responses. In this ranking, foreign TV/Radio was ranked first followed by Indian private channels, New Media and DD/AIR in that order. Thus, foreign media enjoys people's trust more than domestic media which should be a cause of concern for media practitioners in India, including policymakers.

To sum up, the credibility of news depends on how it is produced, what issues have been raised and with what intention and effect in mind and how the audience/readers react to its/their way of presentation. In a particular medium, different news items may have different reactions about their credibility among different audiences/readers in different situations. Thus, it may be concluded that despite emergence, expansion and penetration of different forms of

media, their credibility is at stake for which all organs of media should make a concerted effort to restore it.

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New Media and Vernacular Press: A Study on the Status of the Online Vernacular Journalism in Assam

MANOJ DEORI¹, NEENA BARUAH² AND ABHIJIT BORA³

ABSTRACT

Being the fourth pillar of democracy, the media has a very crucial role to play in the welfare of a nation, especially of a democratic nation like India. By providing the people with information about various issues related to the other three pillars – the Judiciary, the Executive and the Legislative – the media not only maintains the balance of democracy but also plays the important role of influencing the public, helping in formation of a public opinion, and thus acting as a crucial factor in changing socio-political values. The advancement in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought about far-reaching changes in the way the media functions these days. With an advent of the internet, the audience seeks more than just news; it also looks for other information, entertainment and infotainment. And this influence of ICT is seen to have extended to regional media outlets as well marking a great phase of transformation of regional media. In linguistically-diverse country like India, the importance of language journalism cannot be underplayed. The latest technology has enabled even the language press to publish and broadcast content on the internet. This clearly points to the fact that English is no longer the only language of the web doing away with the erstwhile limitations of language. With this newly added advantage, journalism can be turned into something more productive and reaching a wider audience. With the language barrier now out of the way, journalists can use the internet to disseminate news, information and other similar. Based on the primary and secondary data collected during the course of this research, the authors intend to study the trends in online Assamese journalism, implementation of ICT tools by journalists writing primarily in the Assamese language, their social media usage for journalistic endeavours. This paper also attempts to study the levels of awareness among the journalists about online laws, ethics governing the Indian press and at the same time will also try to understand the degree of digital literacy among the community of journalist of Assam.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Online ethics, Social media, Language journalism

Introduction

A brief history of Assamese journalism

With a history of around 175 years, print journalism in Assam has a rich legacy. Assamese print journalism has made an invaluable contribution towards the development of the Assamese society and the nation as a whole during this period, however, the industry has also seen many ups and downs in its struggle for survival. Today, it is in a relatively healthy state and the Assamese society is looking forward to a similar journey for at least another century of meaningful contribution towards society and nation-building.

It was in January 1846 that the first-ever Assamese newspaper, a monthly, Orunodoi was published from the Sivasagar mission press in upper Assam. This publication was a mixture of a newspaper and a magazine. This was a momentous event in history as it had opened up new vistas for more media efforts in the future. Starting with about

eight pages in the early years, it rose to around 16 pages later on, also incorporating photographs from January 1858. Though this newspaper was basically published as part of efforts by Christian missionaries to spread the religion among more and more people of Assam, it also declared its policy as being devoted to religion, science and general intelligence and maintained a secular view to focus attention on socio-economic problems of the state (Baruah, 1999). Its own declaration was – ‘*The Orunodoi*, A monthly paper, devoted to Religion, Science and General Intelligence, is printed and published at the Sibsagar Mission Press, by OT Cutter’. (Neog, 1998).

Some of the invaluable contributions of the paper include – publishing various aspects of historical dimensions about Assam, numismatic studies, economics and commerce, anthropological studies, creating awareness about various superstitions, the spread of education, introduction to the new age life, knowledge and intelligentsia, etc. It was also the age of a modernizing attitude - modern Assamese language

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and literature among others and its evolution and consumption to say the least. Beginning with a lot of promise and offering invaluable service to the nation, the paper was gradually published yet irregularly until it ceased publication in 1882. This was the end of an illustrious era. The first-ever Assamese print media venture, which marked the beginning of a long journey of mass media that continues to inspire with its legacy to date, had come to an end. It had established the modern Assamese prose, which Hemchandra Baruah perfected to a stable form in this paper, thus forming the base of modern Assamese literature (Sarma, 2013).

After Orunodoi, the second print media publication to be brought out from Assam was *Assam Bilasini*, from 1871 to 1883 (first phase) from Auniati Satra of Majuli, and again during 1913-24 as a weekly from Jorhat in its second edition. During the second phase, it was edited and published by Krishna Kumar Bhattacharyya, then government official from Jorhat; however, because of the newspaper's active support to the freedom movement Bhattacharyya was dismissed by the government from service without pension benefits. The paper also had to be closed down eventually because the publisher had to face a lot of harassment, including a hefty penalty of 2000 rupees for running the paper which was a major blow. The incident stands as testimony to the paper's contribution to the freedom struggle of the country.

Then came *Jonaki* in 1889, one of the most important journals in the field of Assamese literature. It was a monthly published by Assamese students based in Calcutta (present-day Kolkata). During the time, Kolkata was a hub of a considerable number of students from Assam, who went there for higher studies due to the lack of such facilities in Assam. A formal organization named *Axomia Bhaxa Unnati Xadhini Xabha* was formed with the motive of development of Assamese language and literature and under its patronage, the magazine was published from January 1889 under the illustrious Chandra Kumar Agarwalla as editor. The magazine sustained itself till 1903; it was published between 1889 and 1898 from Kolkata and then again between 1901 and 1903 from Guwahati. Though rather short lived, its contribution and legacy towards the development of Assamese literature is invaluable. Some other newspapers and magazines of the pre-Independence era include - *Asomiya*, a weekly launched in 1918 which went on to be published till 1958 – for a full four decades.

Following the implementation of the Press Act (1930), nine newspapers out of about 150 across the country had to cease publication for not paying the penalty for supporting the freedom struggle. And

Asomiya was one of them, though it was revived within three months. Under such circumstances, the publisher appealed to the public for donation for running the paper and was successful in his efforts, which is a unique example of its kind in the whole country.

Prior to this, *Abahan*, a magazine with pictures, published in Kolkata from October 1929 till 1945 was successful in creating an environment that is considered the 'golden age' of Assamese literature (Sharma, 1998). It is also acknowledged that during the difficult times for the language it was this magazine that took the lead in guiding it towards enrichment till the era of the Second World War, continuing the efforts started by *Jonaki*.

Thus, it can be said that all these newspapers and periodicals contributed their lot to society in their own capacity to a big extent. Considered from a larger point of view, they contributed immensely towards strengthening the base of the media industry in the state. So, it was from this strong platform of a glorious legacy that the media in the post-Independence era could begin its journey.

Media scenario after Independence

The evolution of print media in the state continued its strong journey even after 1947. Few newspapers of the pre-Independence era continued to be published. Notable among them are – *The Assam Tribune* founded in 1939 in Dibrugarh as a weekly which later shifted to Guwahati in 1946 and hence was converted to a daily.

One prominent weekly was launched in 1947 titled – *Janambhumi* which is still continuing in circulation. The group had also launched a daily titled – *Dainik Janambhumi* in 1972 after a quarter-century of existence of the weekly. Another popular daily was *Dainik Asom* in 1965 published by The Assam Tribune group which had established itself as a major media house of the region. This newspaper being the only daily in Assamese, along with *The Assam Tribune* being the only English daily of those days enjoyed a high circulation figure across the state. It is important to note that even with the launch of *Dainik Janambhumi*, both these Assamese dailies enjoyed a privileged position among the readers with no sign of any one of them trying to cut across the other's territory in an undue manner. Among the weeklies - *Asom Bani*, also from *The Assam Tribune* group was a highly-reputed name even during the early days.

Other notable publications of this era include – *Shantidoot* (1949), *Pratidin* (1982), *Tinidiniya Batori*

(1981), *Ajir Asom* (1987) from *The Sentinel Group*, *Natun Dainik* (1988), *Ajir Batori* (1991), *Ajir Sangbad* (1994), *Asomiya Pratidin* (1995), *Dainik Agradoot* (1995), *Sandhya Dainik* (1980).

Among the non-dailies were – *Asom Batori* (1963), *Saptahik Neelachal* (1968), *Ganatantra/Mahajati* (1962/1964), *Navayug* (1963), *Agradoot* (1971), *Sadin* (1989), *Budhbar* (1989), *Prantik* (1981), *Uruli* (1964).

Those in English included – *The Times of Assam* (1895-1947 and 1948-50), *Assam Express* (1969-1993), *News Star* (1982), *The Sentinel* (1983 till date), *The North-East Times* (1990), *The Eastern Clarion* (1991), *News front* (1991), *The North-East Observer* (1992), *The Frontier Sun*.

The decade of the 1980s: A sudden upsurge

The serene and usual media scenario of the state saw a major upsurge beginning with the early 1980s where new developments marked a new era in Assam's print media industry. Several newspapers, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies were launched in this decade and many of which are going strong even today. The Sentinel Group of Newspapers launched its flagship daily *The Sentinel* in April, while in 1987 this group had also launched the Assamese daily *Ajir Asom*. Today, Assam has nearly 40 dailies, around 60 weeklies/bi-weeklies which are formally registered with the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Government of Assam. This is in addition to several magazines and non-dailies, most of which are functioning to a satisfactory level in terms of both popularity and circulation.

There have been a few trends in this chain of developments. The first welcome development was the availability of such multiple outlets of news sources for the people, thus allowing wider choice and platform for expressing diverse views and opinions. This fuels the sacred right of the people in a democracy to express their opinions.

The contribution of the print media towards the nation-building process in Assam is of vital importance. As prominent journalist-cum-litterateur late Chandra Prasad Saikia (1998) had pointed out, literary ages in Assam are known by the names of prominent magazines published during various times – *Arunodoiage*, *Abahan* age, *Ramdhenu* age etc. These prominent magazines named here, along with several others have been instrumental in forming and shaping a class of litterateurs and editors of repute over time who have managed to shine above all others in their respective fields.

Language press and its social contribution

In vernacular journalism, basically meaning non-English language press, the language used to tell the stories are in various local languages of the region, catering to the non-metropolitan people. The vernacular press plays an important role by catering to people who are located in a remote geographical territory of a state or country. In encouraging the readers to read or listen and use these local languages, the vernacular press helps in preserving these languages. For a country of continental proportions like India with diverse ethnic demography, vernacular journalism is more potent in its reach than any other form of journalism. By catering to the needs and issues covering through these local groups, it helps in breaking the geographical, social and cultural barriers created by the bias in the content of mainstream media. It should be the prerogative of the media to engage with its audience in a language they can comfortably associate with.

The contribution of the print media in the state of Assam is immense. It successfully provided advocacy and leadership to the people in various times of crisis faced by the state, such as the language agitation of 1967, Assam Agitation of 1979-85, raising public opinion against the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act or IM (DT) Act that was ultimately repealed in 2005, and in recent times the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) etc. The media guided the people about the relevant steps to be taken when things were confusing, to say the least in all these aspects. Besides, at times of serious threats to the media itself, like the 1975 emergency period, print media in Assam has also shown adequate courage and strength by maintaining its stand. Besides, as has been already pointed out, Assamese language journalism has registered its share of contribution towards the freedom struggle of the country.

At present times in Assam, local language television channels have evidently seen a jump in numbers. In recent times, we have also experienced the rise of web news portals, blogs and social media news pages by journalists and media organizations in Assam. Today, as already mentioned, with the availability of such a broad array of print and other media outlets in the state, the audience is getting wider choices in terms of news and entertainment. This is definitely a good sign.

Causes of concern

However, there are a few aspects here that need introspection. While there are several newspapers and magazines published in Assamese, Hindi, Bengali, the major languages spoken in the state, there are only a

handful of such media published in languages spoken by numerous ethnic communities dotted all over the state. Only two languages from Assam (Assamese and Bodo) are included in the Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution.

The panel of accredited media outlets of the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) of the Assam Government has close to a hundred newspapers (dailies, bi-weeklies and weeklies). Out of this, the highest figure of 45 goes to Assamese followed by 28 in Bengali, 12 in English, six in Hindi, three in Bodo language, two in Karbi language and one in the Nepali language. So even though there might be unregistered newspapers in some other languages, they must be of a very negligible circulation and available only as a local entity.

Of course, there are several other publications in languages other than those listed by the DIPR which may not have been listed for various factors. A newspaper is not only a profit-oriented activity or a public service instrument. It is also an important tool to keep a language alive for the future. It is living proof then that more and more newspapers and magazines in a language can be a very good solution, not only for its survival but for its spread in future.

As of now, there are three Bodo language dailies, *Bodosa*, *S. B. Engkhong* and *Hayenni Radab*, and two Karbi language dailies, *The Arleng Daily* and *Thekar*, and also *Humro Prajashakti*, a Nepali language daily, being published catering to the ethnic communities. These are registered with the DIPR, Assam and they receive a good share of all Government advertisements. A weekly newspaper, *Haflong Khurang*, published from Haflong in Dima Hasao in the Dimasa language is quite popular among the locals though it is not registered with DIPR, Assam. Though there are several other major communities such as Mising, Rabha, Deori, etc., with each speaking its own distinct language, there are no newspapers published in these languages.

In the above context, there is the need to reflect on the reasons vernacular newspapers in the state are languishing behind in terms of circulation figures, where it cannot be overlooked that a print media publication in a particular language increases its visibility among the public, thereby contributing towards its survival in the long run.

So, what raises concern is the future of the vernacular languages with lesser numerical strength of speakers or readers. In the case of Assam, the question of survival of a host of languages spoken in the state other than Assamese, such as Bodo (the only

other language from Assam included in the Schedule VIII of Indian Constitution), *Mising*, *Rabha*, *Karbi*, *Dimasa*, *Tiwa* and *Deori*, etc., comes to the fore.

Yet, despite all the odds, it is commendable that the print media in the state has been maintaining its steady course.

In terms of adapting to the latest technological advancements as well, the print media of Assam has managed to rise up to the occasion each time at par with other media houses across the country. Several national dailies had also launched their editions in the North East (NE) region to cater to the people in the region. A few had, however, owing to several reasons, later withdrawn from the NE region completely closing their editions here.

The media has had to adapt to the digitization process as well in order to keep up with the changing times. There is one aspect that needs to be highlighted here.

Growth of online media

The evolution of new technologies with each passing day is changing the world and creating new experiences for us. The media industry is a product of the technological revolution that dates back to the invention of the printing press. The emergence of new media has compelled the traditional media, particularly the newspapers to fight for survival or surrender. At this stage, the conventional media not only have to incorporate these technologies but also need to learn to collaborate with them. Due to the advancement in web technologies, the Internet today has become one of the most extensively-used media. Its ability to integrate all other forms of media in the same platform makes it the most dynamic and popular among the masses.

With the advent of the internet, traditional news media were forced to enhance their news delivering techniques, for quicker access by the people. The new technology changed the approach to news altogether. Pens gave way to the keyboard. And traditional telephones gave way to smartphones. This trend cannot be overlooked as it showcases the way to the future of journalism.

Moreover, due to the situation raised by the pandemic, many print media houses were either closed down or compelled to undergo digitalization with an immediate effect to continue publishing. The new media has clearly become the most preferred platform for both content creators and content consumers and is likely to continue in the future.

As far as the language of the internet is concerned, it was believed that the knowledge of English language was essential to interact through this medium. In the

present scenario, it is no longer the same, and one does not have to necessarily know English to view, generate and share content on the internet anymore. With Unicode technology, the medium that supports languages of different regions and countries, the content on the internet has also become localized, which has helped in increasing the users of this media in a major way. This paper thus studies the status of the Assamese language journalism in the Internet era and reviews its challenges and opportunities in the present times.

Going digital in a big way

Alan Rusbridger, then Editor of *The Guardian*, London had in 2015, said ‘going digital’ was the only way forward for journalism, especially print journalism, and that the sooner media organizations accepted and adopted this, the better it was for their future. In an extensive interview with *The Frontline* (August 7, 2015) the veteran journalist had said, “What you say seems to make sense because in other sectors of the media the digital has really taken off—in cinema, video gaming, and so on. They are all firmly into the digital realm, and analogue is like history now. So, journalism, I suppose, is bound to get there sooner or later.”

On the other hand, the prevailing pandemic due to the COVID19 virus has compelled almost all sectors of the media to necessarily ‘go digital’. While the process of crossing over to the digital was taking place at a leisurely pace all this while, the pandemic hastened this process as it became mandatory to keep up with the demands of the audience and society during the pandemic period. Many print media organizations have seen a reduction in their circulation figures even as they were taking furtive steps to ‘digitally’ cater to their audiences and grow their digital reach.

At this point, another issue comes up for discussion. *The Hindu*, a leading newspaper of India, which already has a presence on the internet for several years now, has been pushing forward its ‘monetization policy’ even for the virtual edition. The group is allowing limited access to its free content beyond which it is asking readers to subscribe for the same at a reasonable price. Similarly, when this author accessed some articles and news items in *The Guardian*, they also appealed to the browsing person to support their endeavour in the field of truthful journalism.

The COVID19 scenario has brought about several far-reaching and important developments in the media landscape across the world. First of all, many of the print media organizations across the world have been

seen shutting down with an accompanying corollary of job losses to a big extent. Those who have managed to stay afloat without shutting down have been gradually reducing their print copies by emphasizing more and more upon their ‘digital’ presence, which seems to be the feasible alternative at present. Also, things seem to remain like that for the foreseeable future.

During the early phase of the COVID19 pandemic, a misinformation campaign on social media that the virus spreads through contaminated newspapers saw a sharp decline in the circulation of most newspapers. The print media has had to run a campaign to counter this non-existent threat, which seems to have reversed the situation to some extent, but not the desired level. And, even those consumers who have re-subscribed to newspapers would naturally continue to have the fear ingrained in their minds.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are:

- To discuss whether vernacular journalism in Assam is embracing the new media.
- To understand whether the Assamese vernacular media professionals can keep pace with the recent advancements and cope with the situation due to the pandemic.
- To understand the level of awareness and expertise of the Assamese vernacular journalism practitioners about the new media.

Literature review

The literature reviewed includes scholarly journals, books and authoritative databases. It also includes newspapers (online/offline), magazines, other books and other secondary sources. In the study the review has been dealt with under the following topics:

i. Assamese language press 2.0

The Vernacular Report 2012 also revealed that 45 million users access content in their local language. Around 64% of rural internet users use the internet in their local language. It is 24.3 million active users out of a total of 38 million. But this phenomenon holds true even for an urban audience where 20.9 million net users browse content in their regional languages. According to a study conducted in India by Google in partnership with KPMG (2017), India has 234 million language users online, compared to 175 million English users. From 2011 to 2016 there has been a growth of 41%, which resulted in Indian language internet users surpassing their English counterparts.

And it is expected to grow at an annual rate of 18%. Hence, local language internet users are expected to account for nearly 75% of India's internet user base by 2021. The study also indicated that among the local languages, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, Bengali, Marathi, Telegu, Gujrati and Malayalam were most popular among the users on the Internet.

Assamese being a scheduled language in India is mainly spoken by the people in the state of Assam, and it also has a script, which is derived from the Brahmi script. The tentative number of people speaking Assamese in Assam and neighbouring states of North East India is 14 million. While the all India tentative counting is about 14.3 million which also indicates the potential Assamese language users on the Internet. The Assamese script is very much similar to Bengali (the language is mainly spoken in West Bengal). This is as per a study conducted in India by Google in partnership with KPMG (2017) is one of the highly-adopted vernacular languages on the Internet. Because of the similarity between the Assamese and Bengali alphabets, the Unicode Consortium and Government of India at one point of time believed that the Bengali Code chart would serve the purpose of utilizing the Assamese language in PCs. In any case, there are contrasts, and these are distinguished, and the developers have redressed it. Efforts have been taken at different level, including academic researchers and at the government level for developing language technologies for the Assamese language.

Assamese and Bengali alphabets are similar in their canonical forms; it is possible to write Assamese language using Unicode Bengali encodings and ISCII (Indian Standard Code) encodings using the Bengali script, where the two Assamese alphabets dissimilar in a form with the current set of alphabets used in writing Bengali viz. **ৰ** (ra) and **ৱ** (wa) are included and another alphabet “khya/ক্ষ” not included. The included two are being shown here as Bengali alphabets. But it is possible simply to write Assamese using the Bengali script but not likely to do two other important functions in Assamese language using these encodings. Underlying technologies like UNICODE compliant fonts and keyboards, CLDR (Common Locale Data Repository), Corpus, Spelling Checker etc., have been developed so far (Sarma, S. K. *et al.*, 2010). As a part of the Government of India's efforts on the technological development of Indian Languages, Creation of Assamese Word Net (repository of words of a language) has been created. It has been contributed by many researchers and professionals in this field which is further growing

every day with more inputs (Hussain, I. *et al.*, 2011). A lot has been done on the technological front to provide support to the users to use the Assamese language in computers. The Assam state government's proposal in the Unicode conference has also resulted in some advancement in the process. It has proposed a list of 104 characters and symbols – 35 identical to Bengali ones in name and shape, 42 similarly shaped but with different sounds/uses, and 27 yet to be encoded.

ii. Fake News in the digital era

According to the UK Cambridge Dictionary, fake news is defined as “false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke”. In this context, it is important to understand that fake news is not a new phenomenon at all; it is as old as the newspaper industry. The first occurrence of fake news was reported in the 16th century (Standage, 1843). Recently, we have been hearing a lot about it due to the digital transformation of news from offline to online distribution and the rise of social media as a very new news distribution channel. Studies have revealed that social media is now becoming the primary source of fake news. These empirical studies also suggest that indirect news consumption on social media such as Facebook and Twitter, false news diffuses much faster and broader than true news (Acemoglu *et al.*, 2010).

With free and excessively-available online news content through e-newspapers, web news portals, social news sites and social media news pages, now the consumers can select contents online and no longer depend on buying the print editions unless it is exclusive. Apart from direct news distribution via news publishers' websites, a huge amount of online news consumption is channelled through algorithm-driven platforms such as search engines and news aggregators, and social media news pages. Algorithm-driven platforms mix articles from different publishers and rank them according to popularity criteria, often with a view to maximizing traffic and advertising revenue. What readers see does not only depend on their preferred news sources but also the preferences of close friends in social networks and many others. These spill-over effects help readers to get out of their “echo chambers” and widen their news horizon. On the other hand, it may confront them with news content that they dislike or distrust (Martens *et al.*, 2018).

In recent times, the numbers of social media news pages and web portals in the Assamese language have increased a lot with quite a good number of followers. The present study attempts to understand

the online news and information-gathering practices of the vernacular journalists in Assam to maintain the accuracy of the online news materials produced and disseminated by them on the internet, especially during the time of pandemic due to the COVID19 virus.

iii. ICT and Social media in the vernacular press

Technological advancement has a significant role in encouraging vernacular journalism on the Internet by also enabling its use in social media platforms. The Google-KPMG study (2017), has found that category wise, 22% of the total users adopted vernacular languages on the Internet to access digital news. And that there are eight other categories that can be classified based on the current adoption levels and expected growth in the user base. The highest of these categories have 33%. Hence, one can realize the market potential of the vernacular media as a vehicle for reaching the consumers in India's small towns and rural markets.

It may be mentioned here that the translation feature on Facebook is enabling people worldwide to communicate with one another on its Social Networking Platform (SNP). Twitter is another SNP that has immediately embraced this translation feature. Instagram is additionally offering a translation alternative for many comments and captions. The Web, however, being a worldwide media, the content localization has helped in typifying the ethos, complexity and magnificence of a language and culture. Language-specific content via social media denotes the start of a new period. Now and again, when social media have changed how news and data are sourced and shared, the capacity to utilize vernacular language in social media can only be a positive feature.

Multilingualism on the internet has been developing and is presently being grabbed crosswise over businesses. In the news business, audiences can be pulled in with the assistance of these advancements in the web when coordinated with social media. According to Gleason (2010), the interactivity of social media is transforming the way consumers receive and participate in news. For instance, Twitter allows "followers" to personalize their news and responds to news sources they "follow" with questions, ideas or concerns (Farhi, 2009).

Consumers participate in these platforms in the Assamese language written in English alphabets sometimes since now technology is helping to break the language barrier. These platforms make consumers feel more connected. They also continue coming

back for more when they are a part of an intellectual conversation about a news topic that interests them as it also increases transparency (Everett, 2011).

In terms of business also there are a couple of examples where print newspapers that have transformed into primarily online-based news sources have turned profitable. Advertising online is much easier to track and gives advertisers more flexibility than print (Everett, 2011). Although through various means, online news can also generate more money than print (Frye, 2003). Perhaps this is the future of newspapers and vernacular newspapers are also contemporary in this age of ICT and social media.

As indicated by Yahr (2008), blogs would contribute significantly to online newspapers' prosperity. Blogs give a lot of readers the possibility to interact that was impractical beforehand. It also allows interaction between individuals among the audiences as well as journalists and viewers. Readers feel increasingly associated and keep returning for additional information and comments. (Yahr, 2008) said blogs are not for everybody. With blog editors observing discussions, blogs can be a sound dependence on all news-related websites that can help increase audience numbers and also enhance the way how news is conveyed.

YouTube, which is the most popular video sharing site among all other social media tools, basically enables video journalists to edit and upload their content online. These videos can be embedded, shared in various other web-based platforms like blogs, websites, social networking applications (like Facebook & WhatsApp). It allows individuals to broadcast one's audio-video content to the masses. A study that analyzed the audio-video content in YouTube found out that, YouTube videos adhere to traditional production practices (e.g., editing techniques, audio quality), but break from common content standards (e.g., use of sources, fairness). The study finds that these increasingly relaxed content practices in YouTube are rewarded with a higher number of viewers, while adherence to traditional creation practices does not anticipate popularity. The study talks about these outcomes with regard to the likelihood of the new arrangement of systematized practice and addresses suggestions for the present and future state of journalism (Peer & Ksiazek, 2011).

With the rise of social media, citizen journalism has also gained prominence in the current news industry. Individuals and communities are running YouTube news channels and a few of them are indeed very popular among people. As the study suggests that, user-generated picture or video scoops lead television

bulletins and the front pages of newspapers, while a new category of opinionated blogging is redefining the frontiers of journalism itself (Newman, 2009).

iv. Digital literacy and online vernacular journalism

As a result of digitization, tremendous changes have occurred in the field of journalism also. The rise of technology has consequently brought new ways and innovations in the field and has remarkably affected the ways of gathering news as well as disseminating the same. Apparently, in order to cope in their work, the journalists need the understanding of these new technologies lest they will be challenged in the discharge of their duties, especially at the times when online news has become the new normal in the society due to the pandemic. As people are practiced social distancing and remained at their homes to keep themselves safe from the virus, work from home through the online mode had been and still is being widely practiced by different organizations and media is no different.

This paper attempts to understand the level of digital literacy among the online vernacular journalists in Assam. It also advocates the importance of using the Internet wisely for being ethically-right and factually-correct while disseminating any news or information.

Single source news is now a thing of the past. The internet has made it possible for media professionals to mix and match at will between newspapers, radio, television, press agencies and archives (Adum *et al.*, 2015). The internet has an innumerable amount of information. There is far more information on computers and other ICT platforms than one can possibly digest. Hence, it is of utmost importance to judiciously select the sources of information and undertake the fact-checking task for assessing the truthfulness of claims made by the source. It is commonly performed by journalists employed by news organizations in the process of news articles' creation. More recently, automated and online fact-checking services as well as techniques have emerged to counter such fake news that is disseminated on the internet. Along with the technical competencies, the paper also studies the fact-checking practices of the online vernacular journalists in Assam.

Methodology

The study aims to explore the status of online vernacular journalism in Assam in terms of use of technology and social media. The author chose to investigate the topic with survey and secondary research during the pandemic due to the COVID19 virus.

For carrying out the research study, all the District Information and Public Relations Officers (DIPROs) from the selected five districts of Assam (out of 33) of the DIPR, Assam were consulted. They were requested to provide a list of participants who are working in the vernacular media in their respective districts and many of them accredited by the DIPR. The authors provided a questionnaire to them so that the research participants could answer either in online and offline mode. Participants were able to complete the survey at their convenience.

The survey includes multiple-choice questions regarding the use of ICT and social media by their organization and participants themselves practicing in the vernacular press.

The study is conducted by applying a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Primary data was collected through the survey and interviews. Whereas the secondary data was collected from the existing studies and by doing an extensive content analysis of the online news portals and social medianews pages. The population of the study encompassed all the recognized vernacular media journalists in Assam under the Directorate of Information and Public Relation, Government of Assam. The samples were selected from the five districts, namely- Dibrugarh, Sonitpur, Majuli, Sivsagar and Golaghat. It is assumed that this study among the participants of these districts would also represent of other parts of the state. In view of the research goals, 102 respondents across these districts who practice online vernacular journalism were purposively selected. The instrument of data collection was mainly the questionnaire.

Conceptual Framework

The study is conducted by adopting the concept of Technological Determinism Theory to connect with the existing literature, to achieve assumptions that may guide the study and to prepare an appropriate research design. According to this theory, technologies such as writing or print or the computer have changed society. In its most extreme form, the entire form of society is seen as being determined by technology: new technologies transform society at every level, including institutions, social interaction and individuals. At the least, a wide range of social and cultural phenomena are seen as shaped by technology (Chandler, 1995). The study attempts to understand the changing trends in the Assamese vernacular press with the advent of technology and to comprehend the level of knowledge and awareness of the working vernacular journalists about the new media.

Findings

The survey data were collected from the journalists across Assam by circulating questionnaire in the Google forms which were bilingual i.e., in English and Assamese. A total of 82 respondents submitted their responses. Following charts and graphs are used to depict the result. The age group of the respondents are mainly between 22-49 years and 54% of the total respondents were accredited journalists, recognized by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Assam. The respondents were designated as bureau chiefs, correspondents, photojournalists, reporters, content editors, staff reporters, etc., in their respective vernacular news media organizations.

Conclusion and suggestions

As the media domain is moving towards

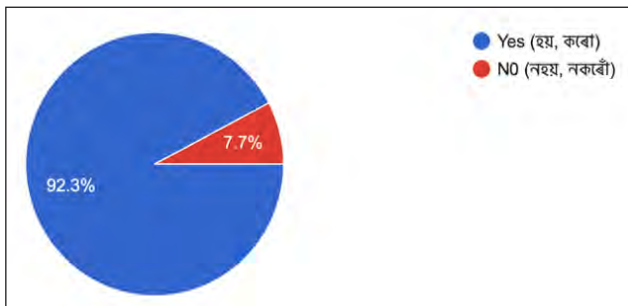


Fig 1. Respondents were asked whether they use the Internet to collect data for their report.

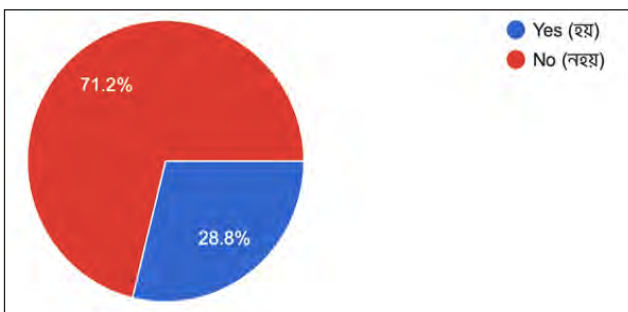


Fig 2. In order to understand their awareness level, the respondents were asked whether everything available on the Internet is true and correct.

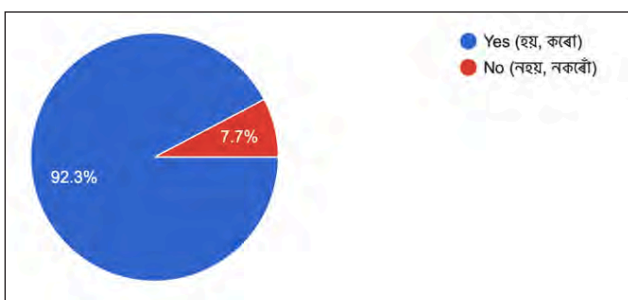


Fig 3. In order to understand their fact-checking practices, the respondents were asked whether they check the credibility of the data/information which they receive on the Internet.

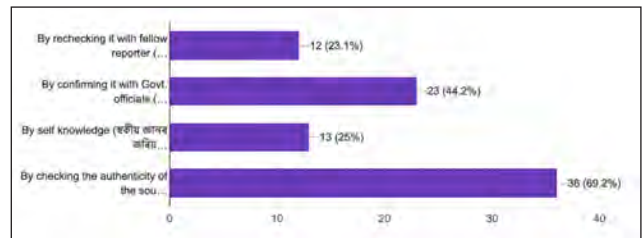


Fig 4. In order to understand how the respondents check the credibility of the data/information on the internet, they were asked whether they check the credibility by rechecking it with fellow reporters, by confirming it with the Government officials, by their self-knowledge or by checking the authenticity of the source.

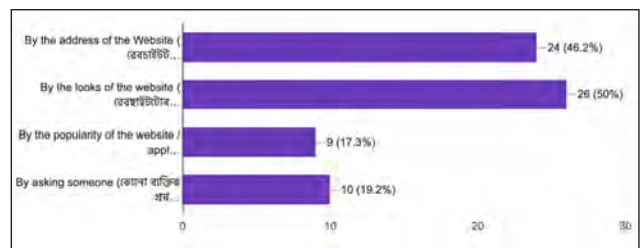


Fig 5. In order to understand how the respondents check the authenticity of a source on the Internet. They were asked whether they check it by the address of the websites, by the look of the website, by the popularity of the website/ application or by asking someone.



Fig 6. In order to understand which internet platform the respondents mostly use, they were asked where they upload the news content online.

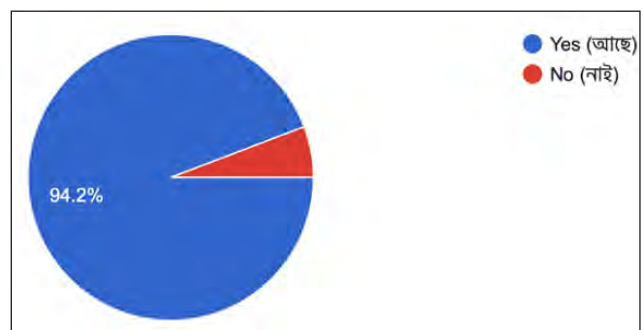


Fig 7. In order to understand the use of social media platforms by the vernacular news organizations, the respondents were asked whether their news organizations have social media pages.

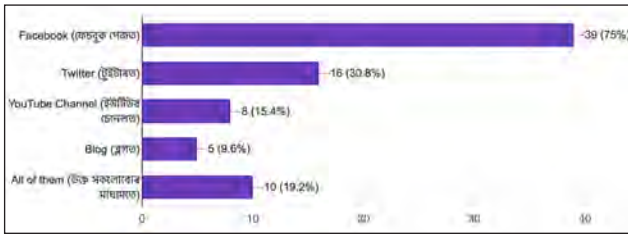


Fig 8. In order to understand which particular social media type is used in a major way to upload the vernacular news content, the respondents were asked to identify the social media types.

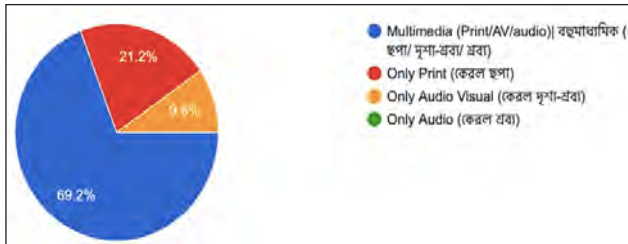


Fig 9. In order to understand which media is used in a major way to disseminate the content online, the respondents were asked to identify the media i.e., multimedia, only print, only audio and only audiovisual media.

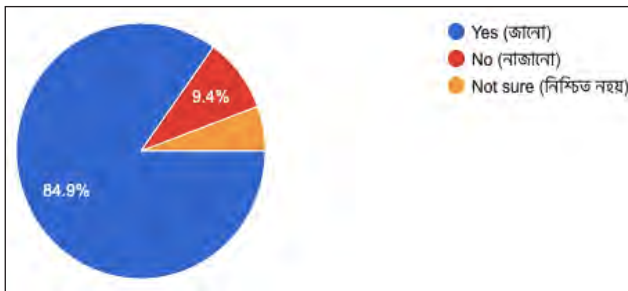


Fig 10. In order to understand whether the respondents know what Unicode is, they were asked to respond to the question in yes, no and not sure.

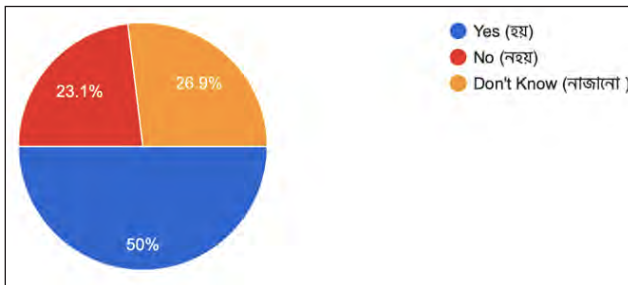


Fig 11. In order to understand whether the respondents know about the availability of Unicode in Assamese, they were asked to respond to the question in yes, no and don't know.

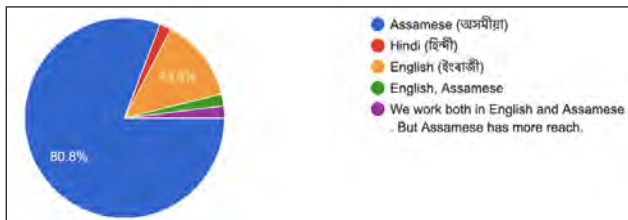


Fig 12. In order to understand the language preferences of the respondents for disseminating content online, they were also asked to respond by writing the name of the language or select from the given option.

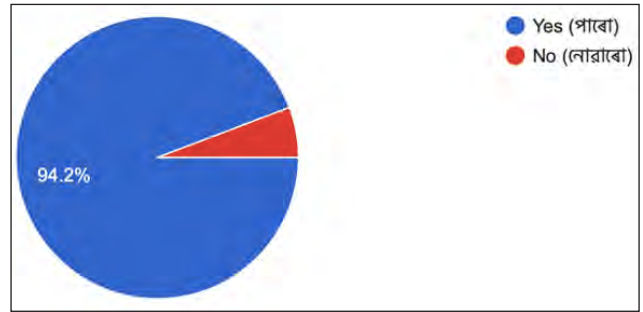


Fig 13. In order to understand whether the respondents can type Assamese text on their computers or mobile phones, they were asked to respond to the question in yes or no.

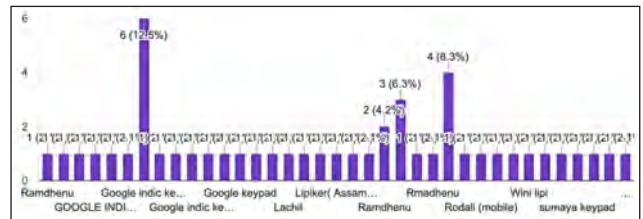


Fig 14. The respondents were asked to mention the name of the software/application which they use for typing Assamese text on their computers or mobile phones. The major online services and software the respondents mentioned were: Google Indic keyboard, Ramdhenu, Lachit (Assamese Keyboard), Rodali, Lipiker and Sumaya keypad.

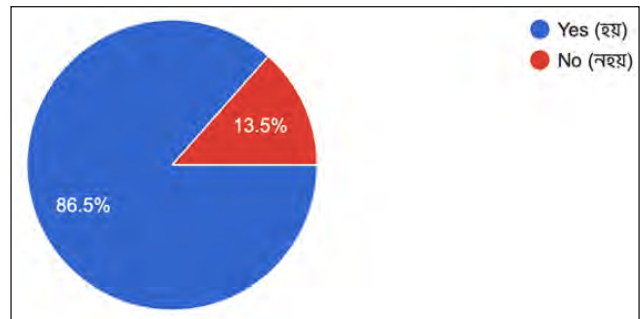


Fig 15. In order to understand whether the respondents are aware of online journalism ethics, they were asked to respond to the question in yes or no.

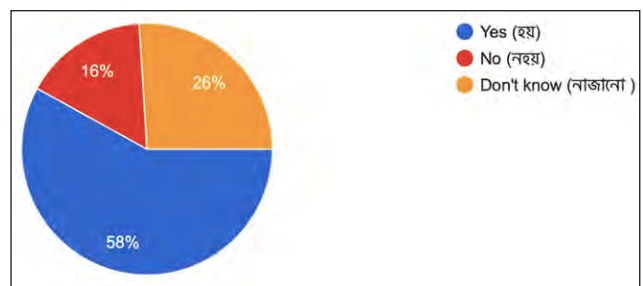


Fig 16. In order to understand the knowledge of the respondents on the Information and Technology Act, 2000 of India and its applicability on the online journalism practices, the respondents were asked to respond to the question in yes, no and don't know.

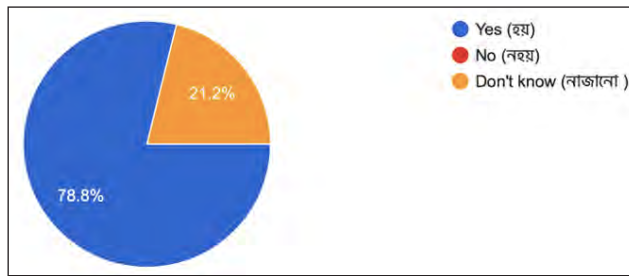


Fig 17. In order to understand whether the respondents are aware of the fact that whether or not the reporters and the online editors are legally responsible for their online content, the respondents were asked to respond to the question in yes, no and don't know.

localization of content on the Internet platform, the ability to read and write in local languages in the platform has played a significant role in the process. The vernacular press has also been impacted by the change. And the users have been able to practice vernacular journalism in the new media platform with the technological support provided by various services available in the form of software and other applications. The Assamese vernacular journalism is also adapting to the changes due to such technological advancement, but certain lacunae need to be addressed so that the medium can be more effectively used.

The unavailability of a separate Assamese Unicode is one such demand that many prominent Assamese individuals and government and non-government organizations have been campaigning for. The Assamese and Bengali scripts share a large number of characters, some pronounced the same way, others denoting different sounds. In Unicode's charts, these shared forms are defined as Bengali characters. Only a few characters exclusive to Assamese are listed as "additions for Assamese" – in the chart for Bengali. Assamese delegations have presented a proposal at the Unicode conference in London and some amount of progress has been achieved in this regard. It is assumed that the separate Assamese Unicode will definitely bring a huge technological change and its recognition in the digital platform will largely motivate the users and the community as a whole.

Similarly, some concerns about critical digital literacy also arise after analyzing the primary data collected through this survey. It is found that there is a need for training the language journalists in Assam to sensitize them about the effective use of the new media. A low but non-negligible percentage of the respondents were found to be ignorant of a few basic facts about the Internet that were asked in the survey. As more than 50% of the total

respondents were government-accredited media persons through DIPR, the concerned departments of the government hold the responsibility to extend their support in this regard. The government as well as the NGOs may come up with certain well-designed workshops and other formats of training programmes to provide support to these journalists in this regard. Such workshops and training programmes may primarily be focused on critical digital literacy to address the information disorder in the post-truth era as well as on the ethical and legal aspects of online journalism. As studies suggest that the new media platforms are as popular as the other formats of media, this platform cannot be neglected anymore, even in the form of a vernacular language.

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Framing Disability in Contemporary Bollywood Cinema

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ABSTRACT

Cinema is considered as one of the most powerful mediums when it comes to influencing the audience. India is the largest producer of feature films in the world with a global reach and the Bollywood industry contributes largest number of films in Indian cinema; hence portrayal of any issue in the Bollywood cinema becomes quite noteworthy. Studying the cinematic narratives of disability is important because it affects the way people understand, visualize and stereotype about physically challenged people in the real life. The dominant view of disability is based on the medical model that views disability as a functional limitation. According to this model, disability is a natural disadvantage suffered by disabled when placed in competitive social situations and it needs medical fixing. However, social model gives a modern alternative and stresses upon inclusion and acceptability of disability in society. This study aims at analyzing the representations and narratives of physically-challenged characters in contemporary Bollywood cinema. Previous studies show that Indian movies have been portraying differently abled characters with a tone of pity, sarcasm, dependency and ridicule. But the way disabled characters are being represented in movies after the millennium seems a bit different.

Keywords: Disability, Portrayal, Bollywood, Representation, Disabled, Cinema

Introduction

Disability in India is largely associated with wrong deeds of the past or previous life. Much of the literature on disability in India has pointed out the concept of *karma* in deciding societal attitudes towards disability. There is a widespread belief that disabilities are a curse of past sins.

In the ancient Indian texts like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, we see many characters who are disabled and they have largely been characterized as powerful but cunning and mischievous in nature. Some of them have been shown as beggars or in a state of extreme poverty, pain and grief. For instance, the character of the hunchbacked maid *Manthara* in *Ramayana* is very cunning and negative. Her deeds ultimately caused *Rama's* exile for fourteen years. In *Mahabharata* also, *Shakuni*, a person with bodily deformity, is shown to be very cunning. He is an extremely shrewd uncle of *Kauravs*, who is largely considered responsible for the entire war. The characterization of *Dhritarashtra*, the father of *Kauravs*, is also not in a positive shade. He is a blind king, who wants to see his elder son *Duryodhan* to become the next king unethically. His tremendous weakness for his son sets the ground for the war. The deep impact of these mythological texts on Indian society is beyond debate. In fact, in the contemporary

Indian society also people commonly use the words *Manthara* and *Shakuni* for those who resemble with these epic characters in their behaviour.

In the Hindu religious stories also there are many references to disabled characters and the approach of other persons towards that character, especially of Gods, reveals the religious stance on the issue of disability. In one of such stories, there is a story related to *Kartik Purnima* in which the disabled sister of *Lakshmi* is rejected by the Lord Vishnu himself declaring that there is no place for disabled in heaven and resulting to this rejection ultimately she is married to a tree named *Peepul* (figus religious or sacred fig). This indicates the plight of disabled persons in the mythological stories. The issues of marriage, having a family and employment for a disabled person are crucial even in the modern world. Also, there is a reference to *Ashtavakra*, who was the renowned intellectual person of his times, in *Advaita Vedanta* and his disability was cured with the help of his scholarship. The story tells about him that when he comes in front of the king for debate everyone laughs but surprised by his intellect.

Insensitive attitude towards disabled persons is commonly prevalent in Indian society. The acts of mockery or incidents of ridiculing the disabled in common life are not taken very seriously. It seems

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that biasedness against disabled people is quite deep-rooted in Indian minds and practices. Until the last decade, there has been no visible debate in the public sphere concerning the rights of the disabled. In *Bollywood* cinema also, during the last century, leaving some exceptions, characters with a disability had constantly been shown largely in negative tones. In this socio-cultural backdrop, it seems that negative representations of disabled characters especially in the popular culture have some specific cultural reasons which need to be looked into sincerely.

Defining Disability

A general definition of disability, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) manual is ‘any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being’ (‘Disabilities,’ n.d.). Definition of disability, according to Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, includes seven broad categories related to *blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, mental retardation and mental illness and locomotors disability*; whereas mental illness means any mental disorder other than mental retardation. Mental retardation means a condition of arrested or incomplete development of the mind of a person, which is especially characterized by subnormality of intelligence (Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995).

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments in which interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nations, 2006).

In the present study, disability has been defined as any kind of impairment in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Disability can be physical as well as mental, neurological and psychological. Physical disability includes seeing, hearing, speech, movement, multiple disorders etc., whereas mental, neurological and psychological disability includes dyslexia, asperser syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, amnesia, including all kinds of mental ailments etc.

Unlike western countries, the Disability Rights Movement (DRM) is not a very old phenomenon in India. It started in the late eighties and early nineties in the form of some scattered individual efforts in different manners.

Showcasing Disability on the Screen

Since its inception, many Indian films have dealt with issues related to disability. But the treatment of this subject has always been a matter of great concern and debate. Films are indispensable to the common man’s life in India having considerable influence on the evolving contemporary culture. *Bollywood* film industry like many other institutions in India has a responsibility to contribute to the welfare of the nation through a more realistic portrayal of any issue of social concern.

Previously most of the times the disabled characters shown in films were to create a sense of comedy or pity. Many film directors rely upon easy stereotypes about disabled people which used to be hazardous. These stereotypes turn the viewers to undesirable approaches towards disabled people and do not depict the actualities of the disability. However, nowadays, more and more directors prefer films stories centering around some disabled person. Similarly, actors also seem to be inclined towards playing the role of a disabled character. Although this trend is the result of survival pressures in the industry within which each has to perform best and present something unique to attract the viewers. Besides, playing the role of a disabled person has the potential for winning awards.

During the last one decade, disability studies have occupied an important place in the traditions of critical studies. Now disability is not just a concern of the medical sciences; it is linked to the questions of identity or challenging the definition of physical identity. Disability has found representations in media and visual culture but the representation is often a discourse of pity or used as a foil to its bodily “able” counterpart. Very often the representation is far removed from reality (Chatterjee, 2016). The issues related to portrayal of disability in cinema are important because these affect the way people understand, stereotype and visualizes differently-abled people in real life. The ways in which how individuals and groups are usually portrayed in popular media can have a profound effect on how they are viewed by society at large.

Significance of the study

Cinema is considered as one of the most powerful mediums when it comes to influencing the audience. India is the largest producer of feature films in the world with a global reach and the *Bollywood* industry contributes the largest number of films in Indian cinema; hence portrayal of any issue in *Bollywood* cinema becomes quite noteworthy. Studying the

cinematic narratives of disability is important because it affects the way people understand, visualize and stereotypes physically challenged people in the real life. *Bollywood* cinema is considered as the major source of entertainment for the common people which is responsible for bringing change in their practices and attitudes.

According to the Census of 2011, there were 26,810,557 people with disabilities in India. They comprise 2.26 per cent of the Indian population. Since the government has a plan to expand the definition of disability, many more people might be included in this category soon and this number might increase up to 4 per cent. The society and the government, both are now realizing the importance of addressing the needs and rights of disabled people in a convergent manner. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2014 is pending in the parliament which provides 19 conditions of disabilities alongwith an increased punishment for discrimination against disabled person.

As per the Census 2011 report, 92 per cent of the total households of the country reported no person with disabilities. It means in the rest of the households (nearly 2 crores) had one or more persons with disabilities. There were 26,810,557 persons with disabilities in the sub-continent of India. Out of the total disabled persons, 71 per cent (about 1.46 crore) live in rural areas while remaining 60.5 lakh are urban residents. Jammu and Kashmir has the highest proportion of disabled persons (12 per cent) followed by Odisha (10 per cent). Such a huge portion of the Indian population comes under the category of Persons with Disabilities (PwD), so the study about the portrayal of disabled characters in cinema acquires great importance.

Review of literature

The exploratory study of Venkatesan *et al.* (2015) uses evocative techniques to undertake viewer reminiscences for representations on or about persons with disability as depicted in Indian cinemas. Total 27 non-disabled multi-lingual college students were put through theme-based group discussions, brainstorming and focus group. Response analysis of attributed features for the film characters with the disability was undertaken on major themes. The result of the study indicated that the typical dimension of viewing the 'hero' as the protagonist with mental illness is the most remembered depiction by female respondents. The most frequently evoked images, themes, language, and terminology continue to reflect the dismal, negative, struggling, anguished or aggrieved stereotype of contemporary cinema

representation of persons with disabilities.

Chatterjee (2016) studies the representation of disability in Indian cinema by focusing on four Hindi films i.e. *Koshish*, *Sparsh*, *Black* and *Barfi*. According to his research article, unlike the traditional idea of disability as a sin or evil representation of disability in *Bollywood* seems to be more varied and diverse. He argues that modern Indian films provide space where life is possible without any dependence on disabled and this happens out of mutual love and understanding.

Pal (2012) has categorized various ways in which disability has been portrayed by the filmmakers. In few movies, people with disabilities were presented in a punitive tone. Besides, a couple of films characterized people with disability as disequilibrium, disabled people were also portrayed as dependent on others especially those who are not capable of taking care of themselves, who require treatment and assistance. The article argues that the stereotyping of disability has been done in a few important ways, and cites over 200 examples primarily from Hindi and Tamil cinema.

Mohapatra (2012) in his study found that the portrayal of disability in the early days was social but punishment and dependence were major themes. However, the new trend has started educating the audiences and it also persuades the people. Researcher argues that dissemination of knowledge about various disabilities for attitude and behaviour change among the audience is perhaps the best contribution to cinema. Bringing various diseases to the limelight against the common notion, the physical and mental deformity is the only cause of disability, is remarkable. Besides, the initiative of portraying the disabled as independent and equally able at par with their counterparts is a major contribution of *Bollywood* in rationalizing the new terminology of differently-abled.

Sundar (2006) states that mainstream Indian cinema rarely addresses the issue of disability, and it is still rarer to find a film on the plight of the disabled woman. She suggests that Indian filmmakers should refrain from showcasing disability just for the sake of a different plot.

A World Bank study commissioned by the Indian government '*Disability Glare on Bollywood*' says characterizations of disabled women in 'modern myth machine' *Bollywood* are not strong enough, though Indian films as a whole have tried to 'enhance' society's 'sensitivity'. According to the report, *Bollywood* shows the disabilities of a hero or heroine as typically acquired after birth, somewhat 'normalizing' the actor. Disabilities are often cured and the characters are from the better-off social strata with resources to

‘promote their integration’ into society. The survey in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu showed that ‘around half the respondents believed that disability was always, or almost always, a curse of God’. Only half the number of households surveyed said a disabled person marrying a non-disabled person was ‘acceptable’, while marriage between a disabled man and a non-disabled woman had ‘wider acceptance’, particularly if the man was well off. This report was written by Philip Keefe, Social Protection Specialist at World Bank and based on a survey conducted in many states as well as data provided by Census 2011 and the National Sample Survey 2002.

Fraser (2011) looks at the representation of disability in the recent Spanish film *Yo Tambien* through the lens of disability studies, understood as a political project. Rider (1994) says media is instrumental in shaping the cultures, future interests, attitudes, and beliefs when people with disabilities were portrayed, the portrayal was typically negative, inaccurate, and misleading, which unfortunately perpetuated negative stereotypes about people with handicaps.

Objectives

This study aims at exploring the nature of images related to disability in the contemporary popular *Bollywood* Hindi cinema in terms of the mode of characterization of differently-abled persons. This study attempts to analyze the portrayal of differently-abled characters, their social positioning in particular and peer-group responses to them in general.

Research questions

1. What is the nature of gender portrayal of disabled characters?
2. What are the various types of disabilities depicted most in the movies?
3. What kind of professional and occupational engagements are usually associated with disabled characters?
4. What is the nature of personality and characterization of disabled in relation to their behaviour and social position?
5. What are the societal responses towards the disabled characters?

Research methodology

A priori content analysis of nineteen *Bollywood* Hindi popular feature films produced from 2000 to 2015 and 24 characters among them are selected for this study. Instead of selecting movies based on popularity in terms of viewership or revenue, the technique of purposive sampling is adopted to select

the sample. Out of total films produced in *Bollywood* during the entire time frame of the sample, only those feature films have been selected for collecting data which are either completely based on the theme of disability or there is a substantial reference to this topic in the film. Each movie is studied independently in its entirety. A code-book is framed to record the data according to various variables and categories related to the nature of portrayal of the disabled characters in terms of gender, profession, nature of the disability, characterization, social positioning, peer-group responses etc. Researchers collect data after repetitive and intensive watching of the movies on the computer.

Sample size – Total 19 feature films and 24 characters

Category A: Completely based on disability theme (6) - *Koi Mil Gaya* (2003), *Black* (2005), *Iqbal* (2005), *Taare Zamin Par* (2007), *Guzaarish* (2010), *Margarita with a straw* (2014),

Category B: Having substantial reference to disability (13) - *Main Aisa hi Hoon* (2005), *Fanaa* (2006), *Tom, Dick & Harry* (2006), *Pyare Mohan* (2006), *Golmaal* (2006), *Golmaal Return* (2008), *Ghajni* (2008), *Kaminey* (2009), *Golmaal 3* (2010), *My Name is Khan* (2010), *Lafangey Parindey* (2010), *Barfi* (2012) and *Do Lafzon ki Kahani* (2016).

Theoretical framework

To look at the disability conceptually, academicians have propounded many theories and models i.e. medical model, social model, charity model, religious model etc. These different approaches help us to understand various existing conditions and complexities of disability debate and provide a framework for analyzing it.

The medical model connects disability with physical and mental limitations of an individual. It focuses on the impairment of a person and considers disability as a medical problem that needs to be fixed with the medical help only and ignores its social aspects. This approach helped in creating specialized infrastructure for disabled persons and various legislations to ensure their special treatment. Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation are three main elements of this approach. The media generally focuses on portraying impairment under the influence of the medical model of disability, where disabled people’s inability to interact in normal daily life is a direct result of their physical and/or mental impairment. In other words, the disability itself is often used as a hook by the writers and film makers to draw audiences into the

story. These one-dimensional stereotypes are often distanced from the audience - where characters are only viewed through their impairment, and not valued as human beings. The disability is portrayed as a kind of social stigma which is being socially constructed and presented by the films under the influence of the medical model.

The movie *Koi Mil Gaya* details about various difficulties in rearing up an autistic child. When the boy fails every time in examinations, the principal of the school calls his mother and explains his inability to continue him anymore. He also suggests that the presence of an autistic boy in the school will hamper other children's education so he advised the mother to better take him to a specialized school. But in *Taaren Zamin Par*, a teacher helps the parents to understand the difficulty of their special child suffering from dyslexia. In the movie *Koi Mil Gaya* disabled character conform to the medical model by extraordinarily overcoming disability; he is cured by an alien.

The charity model or tragedy model treats disabled as a victim of a certain condition, who deserves pity from other members of the society. Usually, after tragedies like war, famine, earthquakes etc., lots of people get disabled and many organizations collect funds for them with appeal for sympathy. Critics of this model say this approach is major cause of discrimination against disabled. Activists say disabled cannot be treated as icon of pity by the non-disabled. Lots of charitable trusts across the world are being run only on the basic appeal of care of humans by other humans and this is one of the basic human values. The attitude of the people towards *Laila* in *Margarita with a Straw*, where at one place her music band is given the first place only because of the lyrics written by a 'disabled woman'. However, she beats everyone in chess and is praised for her intelligence and not sympathized.

The social model considers the issue of disability more in the social framework and it talks about the social needs, positions and problems of disabled persons. According to this model, the disability is a social construct and basically a result of disabling environment, discrimination, negative attitudes and barriers against disabled. Instead of fixing the disability, it focuses upon removing barriers and changing attitudes of society so that disabled can have independence, choice and control over his/her situations. Unlike the medical model, it has an inclusive approach. The social model helps us in understanding the family lives and personal

relationships of disabled people. In *Margarita with a Straw*, the protagonist *Laila* feels uncomfortable when she has to be carried up the stairs because the college elevator is not working. This shows that people with disabilities want to work and function independently without being seen as a burden, given they are provided with proper infrastructure and access. In the movie *Iqbal*, the film shows great hope for the differently-abled people as *Iqbal* to overcome all the obstacles and goes on to make it to the Indian Cricket team.

Religious model defines disability as the result of past sins and it is inflicted by some external force in the form of punishment. In a study conducted in a few states of India, it was found that more than half of the population even today believes that disability is the result of past deeds. In India, disability stigmatizes the entire family, results in the social exclusion and lowering the status of the family. This approach is prevalent in all traditional, poor and illiterate societies in the world. In most of the old Indian movies, this approach used to be reflected.

Analysis and interpretation

Gender Status

Gender representations of the disabled in Indian films seem to be regulated by the socio-cultural, psychological background. A total of 75 per cent of the disabled characters are male whereas women characters are only 25 per cent (Table 1). Primarily, it can be said that film directors prefer to choose boys or men when it comes to the selection of some disabled character for their movies. Indian society usually does not accept a disabled woman as a heroine or lead character. Under the fear of this possible rejection by the audience, directors may tend to select male characters.

Table 1

Gender of the Character		
Gender	Frequency	%
Male	18	75
Female	06	25
Total	24	100

Previously also study conducted by the World Bank has revealed about *Bollywood* films play on gender differences. Men with disabilities 'are often loved by a devoted woman without disabilities'. But women with disabilities are rarely loved by men without disabilities. In rare cases, as in the film *Mann*, the man loves the woman even after the onset of the disability.

Character Placement

As the sample was chosen only of those movies either having the main theme of disability or one or two disabled characters are parts of it, so it is nothing but natural that in most of the movies, disabled characters have been placed as the first lead. First lead means where the entire story centres around the character or the film is his/her story. The second and third lead characters are those where disabled characters are having less prominence. For instance, in *Fanna* the lead character is Aamir Khan is not disabled but the heroine Kajal is blind. But she has the role of the second lead. As Table 2 shows in the sample of 24 movies in total, 79.16 per cent characters were in lead role, whereas the second and third leads were 8.33 per cent and 12.5 per cent respectively. The second and third lead characters were found mostly in those comedy films where there were two or three lead characters.

Table 2

Character Placement		
Character	Frequency	%
Lead 1	19	79.16
Lead 2	02	08.33
Lead 3	03	12.50
Total	24	100.00

It is not always necessary that directors should portray disabled people as characters with lead roles. In fact, the special treatment of disabled is not what is expected but they could be a part of any mainstream film. They need not necessarily be the lead of character, they could be as a father or brother of the hero/heroine, or they could be as other members of the society so that people recognize disabled people as normal people.

Nature of Disabilities

Until 1990, Indian film directors used to depict predominantly physical disability in their cinema but after that, this paradigm gradually changed and other kinds of disabilities were also explored by the filmmakers. Perhaps this was a reflection of the growing awareness in the society resulting from the disability movement and favourable government policies. Data in the Table 3 clearly shows that during the sample span substantial number of movies has been about the issues of mental, neurological and psychological disabilities. In such movies, the director has intentionally chosen very lesser-known mental disease as a subject. The entire movie centers around the patient of that disease and her/his experiences. These movies are research-based and quite intense in

terms of presentation. The actor/actress needs to have sufficient exposure to the real situations and mental conditions of that patient before acting for that movie. In some cases, the actor/actress has to stay with the real patient for quite a long period in his/her family for observations.

Table 3

Types of Disability		
Disability/ Decease Type	Frequency	%
Speech	6	25.00
Hearing	2	08.33
Seeing	5	20.83
Movement	1	04.16
Mentally challenged	1	04.16
Multiple disorder	3	12.50
Dyslexia	1	04.16
Asperser Syndrome	1	04.16
Autism	2	08.33
Amnesia	1	04.16
Cerebral Palsy	1	04.16
Total	24	100.00

Out of a total of 24 movies, seven movies are based on mental diseases i.e. Autism (*Koi Mil Gaya* and *Barfi*), Dyslexia (*Taaren Zameen Par*), Asperser Syndrome (*My Name is Khan*), Anterograde Amnesia (*Ghajni*), Cerebral Palsy (*Margareta with a Straw*), Mental Challenged (*Main Aisa Hi Hun*).

Characterizations

While coding the data for this variable, a multiple-coding process has been adopted. It means that each character has been coded for a minimum of one to a maximum of three characteristics and portrayal in terms of his/her nature. There are two different angles of portrayal one is how has the character been portrayed and the second is how do other characters in the film treat him/her?

Usually, we talk in terms of positivity and negativity in film characters. For instance, positive characters are narrated and associated with independence, confidence, determination, emotional, helpfulness, ambition, cheerfulness etc. Whereas, negative characters are supposed to be depressed, frustrated, jealous, cunning, shrewd, involved in criminal activities etc. But human beings are not so simple to be classified in a water-tight compartment-like categories. Each human character has several shades of emotions and many times it is a mix of both positive and negative features.

Table 4

Nature of Characters		
S.N.	Nature	%
1.	Cheerful	04.41
2.	Mockery	14.70
3.	Ridicule	14.70
4.	Sympathetic	08.82
5.	Dependent	07.35
6.	Hopeless	05.88
7.	Witty	01.47
8.	Comic	11.76
9.	Independent	16.17
10.	Ambitious	04.41
11.	Determined	04.41
12.	Hardworking	02.94
13.	Revengeful	02.94

As the data shows, incidents of mockery and ridicule of disabled characters by others are highest (14.7 each). The comic characters are 11.76 per cent. Most of these characters are from comedy movies i.e. *Tom, Dick & Harry*, *Mohan Pyare*, *Golmaal*, *Golmaal Returns*, *Golmaal-3*. One character is quite revengeful that is from *Ghajni*. However, the characteristics like independence, hardworking, ambitious, determined and cheerful are very few. The portrayal of disability in old movies used to be full of emotions of pity and sympathy but now these are not so popular emotions among Indian films, rather film directors expect from the audience to be intelligent and rational enough to realize the problems and situations of the disabled characters and consider them as equal citizens. Interestingly, in many movies, disabled characters are from very diverse background and their role is very unique and leading in a manner. For instance, *My Name Is Khan* (2010) successfully challenges many myths and stereotypes related to the life and abilities of an autistic person. His disability rather than proving a barrier becomes a boon for him as he marches ahead in his life, dispelling various misconceptions related to disability.

Usually, disabled persons are depicted as asexual persons by Indian filmmakers and if it is the case of women it becomes a rare thing. However, many films show them in romantic moods (*My Name is Khan* and *Main Aisa Hi Hun*). Only *Margarita with a Straw* talks about the sexuality of a young disabled girl. It is pertinent to mention here that this film is not a mainstream popular movie but can be dubbed as an independent cinema with a *niche* audience and a small budget. Independent cinema is known for its

experiment with film technique and content.

Occupational Engagements

Studies reveal that getting employment and having own family (means getting married) are the two biggest challenges for the disabled ones in India. Employment gives them financial security for subsistence and marriage provides them with social security. In Indian society, even today, disabled people are considered as a social liability. Only the affluent class can provide disabled family members with proper medical facilities and food. Despite qualifications and abilities, employers usually do not prefer hiring disabled people, this makes the situation for millions of disabled people worse. Despite reservations in government services, lots of educated disabled people are jobless. Based on caste perspectives, the situation of disabled persons in poor low caste families is worst.

How do our films portray the occupational engagements of disabled persons, this is one of the basic research questions of this study. Earlier it was thought that only professional engagements would be considered data but when it was found that very few characters are with some regular or visible profession, it was decided to collect every detail about the characters concerning their professional, occupational and social engagements. Only three characters have been shown with some job i.e. waiter, radio jockey and businessman, however, few characters are cricketer, dancer, skater, bookmaker, student etc. Nowhere, it is clear that they are earning on regular basis from this. More or less they are doing it only as a hobby. More than half of the characters (54.16 per cent) are not shown with some profession, occupation or any other visible social engagement.

Table 5

Social Engagement		
Profession	Frequency	%
Student	4	16.66
Hobby Dancer	1	04.16
Hobby Skater	1	04.16
Cricketer	1	04.16
Waiter	1	04.16
Radio Jokey	1	04.16
Bookmaker	1	04.16
Businessman	1	04.16
Not Clear	13	54.16
Total	24	100.00

Social Response

The nature of responses from the family, peer-group and society at large towards the disability as a disease and disabled as a person, is very important to study the social reality and cultural contexts of disability in any society. A certain kind of repetitive portrayal of social behaviour towards disability eventually reinforces a particular habit and the audience takes it for granted. They start taking it as a commonplace for happening. It may happen that despite an entire movie based on the life of a disabled character the ultimate message is erroneous and it is inculcating wrong notions among its audiences.

In the movie *Black*, the lead character of Michelle McNally can't see and hear. She lives in a dark world and stays isolated in the darkness. She is trapped by her inability to see, hear and express. In the beginning, she is violent, confused and unable to understand her life. Her parents are also fed up with her but a teacher helped them out. This frustration of family members is shown in many movies. In *Taare Zamin Par* also parents are shown quite irritated with their son's bad performance and they were not aware of the problem of dyslexia. He is belittled and under-rated by other teachers and children. His own father also seems to be frustrated with him and categorizes it as mental retardation. But a school teacher helps them out. In fact, in front of enormous social pressure and stigma, the family eventually loses the battle.

The lead character, *Laila* in *Margarita with a Straw* has cerebral palsy. She has a problem with her motor functions. She composes music, plays chess and excels in creative writing. She is full of life, humour and wit. Though she does her work but at times her mother needs to look after her. In many of the films, characters are shown fighting with physical impairments but this movie is completely different from others. The attitude of the people towards her is different in varied situations. In one scene of the movie, where she writes lyrics and is awarded prize primarily for sympathy and this was said '*Jab humein pata chala ki is gaane ke lyrics ek disabled person ne likha hai to hume ye award isi group ko dena pada. Laila, aapki problems normal logo se alag rahi hongi. Will you please share your experience with us?*' (When we came to know that the lyrics of this song have been written by a disabled person then we had to give the prize to this group only. Laila your problems must be different from other normal people. Will you please share your experiences with us?) And in another scene, she wins in a chess competition and was not declared the winner on the basis of her

disability rather she was praised. These sequences show the socio-cultural contexts of disability depicted in cinema which is more or less the same as it was few decades ago.

Comedy of Disability

Tushar Kapoor plays the role of Lucky in all three comedy sequels of the *Golmaal* series since 2006. He is mute (if not entirely dumb) and the director exploits his physical impairment for creating situations for laughter and comic effect. In *Tom, Dick and Harry* (2006) all three lead characters have been people with different disabilities, and their interaction with each other and their limitations have been used as a source of entertainment for the audience. Dino Morea, who plays Tom is deaf, Anuj Sawhney as Dick is blind and Jimmy Shergill plays dumb, the role of Harry. Their characters have been used as comic relief. Tom, Dick and Harry, constantly refer to each other as *abbe andhey, abbe behre* (*O blind, O dumb*) and the villain keeps referring to them as 'defected pieces'. Throughout the film, humour is frequently created through mockery of their disability. Whereas, in *Pyare Mohan* (2006), Fardeen Khan *alias* Pyare and Vivek Oberoi *alias* Mohan were shown happy go lucky in nature. They even fall in love and their impairments are used for comedy. In most of these comedy movies, either they trivialize characters with disabilities or mock them frequently.

This may be a subject of another study that how far these kinds of comedy films inculcate or re-enforce the existing social attitude of mockery or ridicule towards disabled persons. But one thing can be clearly stated that making fun of disability is akin to ridiculing females, person of a specific region, transgender persons (*kinmar*) and *dalits*. Recently, a *Sikh* person filed a suit for banning the publication and circulation of all kinds of *sardarji* jokes in the Supreme Court of India.

Conclusion

In the new millennium, a substantial number of films is based on themes related to mental, neurological and psychological disabilities with serious treatment. Most of these movies usually focus on one quite uncommon or lesser-known disease. These films usually contain research-based medical and scientific details about a particular disease and increase the information level and generate sensitization among viewers.

Disability is commonly used as a commodity for creating easy and cheap comedy by Indian film

producers. In several comedy movies, disabled characters are included just to create variety in comic situations. In such movies, disabled characters are given minor roles and other lead characters of the movie very often ridicule them for not being able to do something as they can do especially impressing girl, fighting with villain etc.

Disabled characters are rarely shown as determined, ambitious, earning, working and self-dependent professionals. In most of the films, the disabled are not even shown socially engaged or doing some occupation. They are usually shown as dependent on their family and fighting with their disability. Despite being quite sympathetic towards disabled characters, directors ultimately leave the viewers with emotions of fear and pity about disability that should never happen with anyone.

Female characters with disability are usually portrayed unrealistically. Such characters are usually shown as extraordinarily beautiful presuming that disability or physical deformity could not hamper her persona in any way. The most preferred form of disability among lead female characters in movies has been complete blindness with beautiful open eyes. Perhaps this keeps the salability of movies intact and unhampered.

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Annexure-1
Details about Films and Characters

S.N.	Name of the Movie	Year	Character's Name	Actor/Actress	Disability/Disease
1.	<i>Koi Mil Gaya</i>	2003	Rohit Mehra	Hrithik Roshan	Autism
2.	<i>Iqbal</i>	2005	Iqbal	Shreyash Talpade	Deaf and Mute
3.	<i>Main Aisa hi Hoon</i>	2005	Indraneel Thakur	Ajay Devgan	Mentally Challenged
4.	<i>Fanaa</i>	2006	Zooni Ali Beg	Kajol	Blindness
5.	<i>Tom, Dick & Harry</i>	2006	Tom, Harry and Dick	Dino Morea, Jimmy Shergill, Anuj Sawhney	Deaf, Mute and Blindness
6.	<i>Pyare Mohan</i>	2006	Pyare and Mohan	Fardeen Khan and Vivek Oberoi	Blindness, Deaf
7.	<i>Golmaal</i>	2006	Lucky	Tusshar Kapoor	Mute
8.	<i>Taare Zamin Par</i>	2007	Ishaan	Darsheel Safary	Dyslexia
9.	<i>Golmaal Return</i>	2008	Lucky	Tusshar Kapoor	Mute
10.	<i>Ghajni</i>	2008	Sanjay Singhania	Aamir Khan	Anterograde Amnesia
11.	<i>Black</i>	2009	Michelle McNally	Rani Mukherjee	Blindness and Deaf
12.	<i>Kaminey</i>	2009	Guddu and Charlie	Shahid Kapoor in double role	Speech problem
13.	<i>Golmaal 3</i>	2010	Lucky	Tusshar Kapoor	Mute
14.	<i>Lafangey Parindey</i>	2010	Pinky Palkar	Deepika Padukone	Blindness
15.	<i>Guzaarish</i>	2010	Ethan Mascarenhas	HrithikRoshan	Movement disorder
16.	<i>My Name is Khan</i>	2010	Rizwan Khan	Shahrukh Khan	Asperser's Syndrome
17.	<i>Barfi</i>	2012	Murphy 'Burfi' Jonson & Jhilmil Chatterjee	Ranbir Kapoor and Priyanka Chopra	Deaf-Mute; Autism
18.	<i>Margarita with a Straw</i>	2014	Laila	Kalki Koechlin	Cerebral Palsy
19.	<i>Do Lafzon ki Kahani</i>	2016	Jenny	Kajal Aggrawal	Blindness



Episodic Reporting of Environmental Issues and Audience Apathy: A Systematic Review of Studies on Coverage of National and Regional Dailies

SRIVEDA BASWAPOOR¹ AND SHIKHA RAI²

ABSTRACT

The significance of mainstream media has been widely researched upon. It has been instrumental in creating awareness on environmental issues and its protection. Studies have proven that media not only sets an agenda for reportage but also leads to successful environmental movements in certain cases. Against this background, an extensive review of available literature of both national and international media including print, electronic and alternative media has been done. The objective of the review is to assess the presentation and role of the media in influencing the solutions with respect to environmental issues in general and environmental pollution issues in specific. National English dailies with large circulation and credibility were assessed mainly from 2008-2018. The present study is designed to analyze the way print media has been handling its responsibility in highlighting the actual cause behind the issues of the environment. It revealed that the majority of newspapers are not playing a leadership role in creating awareness or in addressing the environmental issues. In a few instances, it was observed that newspapers were able to set an agenda for addressing environmental issues by stirring peoples' movement. Most of the studies concluded that air pollution is the major environmental issue covered by the media. However, studies revealed that alternative media forms and social media have been playing an effective role in this regard. Based on the review it can be concluded that there is a need to provide more space with high-quality content for environmental issues of global, national and local significance in both mainstream national and regional media.

Keywords: News coverage, Environmental issues, Newspapers, Agenda-setting, Audience apathy

Introduction

India is one of the fastest-growing populations (1.3 billion) in the world today and it's far behind most others when it comes to preserving the environment and the state of ecology. Today, our country is riddled with a number of environmental concerns which have only aggravated in the last few decades. In fact, according to the global Environment Performance Index (EPI) 2018, India is ranked at 177 with an EPI of 30.57, and it is disheartening to hear that Delhi, the national capital of the country, is being tagged as one of the most heavily polluted capital cities in the world. Vehicles are the main cause of air pollution in India than societal level or other causes for pollution (Ma *et al*, 2017; Bhalla *et al*, 2018).

The State of India's Environment report (2019) released on World Environment Day indicated that Air pollution is responsible for 12.5 per cent of all deaths in India. According to the World Health Organization (2018), air pollution kills an average of 8.5 per cent

out of every 10,000 children in India before they turn five. The risk is higher for girls as 9.6 per cent out of 10,000 girls die before five as per the research article published in Lancet Planetary Health journal. It was revealed that with 18 per cent of the global population, India suffered 26 per cent of premature mortality and health loss attributable to air pollution globally.

The existing environmental laws, although cover a wide spectrum of environmental concerns, seem to be ineffective due to a lack of enforcement, resources, and technical challenges faced by a large number of Indian companies, especially the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Under these conditions, India has to adopt some sustainable actions that need to address the myriad issues the country faces, including environmental degradation in order to sustain its prospects for continued economic growth (Ranganath, 2015).

Extensive liberty with reasonable restrictions has been granted to the media by the Indian Constitution and in fact an awakened and free media is essential for

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smooth functioning of the government. Newspapers are a significant platform of mass communication as they have substantial reach and access in those corridors where decision making takes place, having the potential to impact the destinies of a great mass. They possess a large quantity of power when it comes to public awareness. Recent research indicated that three newspapers The Times of India, The Financial Express and The Economic times together accounted for more than one-third of the space assigned by all the newspapers and about 42% of the total items (Dutt *et al.*, 2013).

Gaps exist in the current media discourse on air pollution, suggesting the need for strengthening engagement with the media as a means of creating citizen engagement and enabling policy action (Nandita *et al.*, 2017). In a study done by The Times of India, it can be garnered that environmental and sustainable development issues have been given considerable space. However, only three stories have been placed on the front page (Praveen, 2016). Print media has the benefit of creating a longer influence on the minds of the reader, with more in-depth coverage and investigation (Patil, 2011). The data from print is more permanent in nature as compared to the digital material available on the internet. Also, the print media, especially the ones that enjoy a huge circulation and readership are considered to mirror the ideas of the social mainstream. The enormous penetrative power of print media to reach a large diversified audience enhances its significance to shape widely shared constructions of reality. Therefore, the popular dailies and weeklies make for crucial data sources to analyze dominant discourses (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008). The present literature review is being done with a focus on coverage of environmental issues by the major national and regional dailies with the following review questions:

1. How do newspapers portray environmental issues?
2. What are the focal areas in coverage of environmental issues?
3. What kind of role do newspapers play in generating awareness towards solutions for environmental issues – mentor, spectator or activist?

Social significance of the problem

Newspapers not only help in shaping public opinion but they also influence decision making. On the other hand, the environment has been destroyed due to human activities in a big way leading to changes in the ecosystem. Nature has reached a saturation point and

started to reflect through its negative consequences by impacting the lifestyle of mankind, flora and fauna in a big way. Given the seriousness of the environmental concerns and the need to make changes to achieve sustenance, newspapers play a vital role to create awareness amongst their readers. It has been observed over the last decade that the environment has emerged to be a global concern and even students and young adults have become more aware of the issue's rising importance. So it is significant to study how a potent medium like the newspaper is covering such a vitally important issue.

The existing literature suggests that most of the researchers have dealt with the issue of reporting environmental concerns in a generic manner. This study specifically aims at systematically reviewing the role of media in influencing the solutions with respect to environmental issues in general and environmental pollution issues in specific, more so in the case of newspapers in recent times. This study uniquely analyzes the way print media has been handling its responsibility in highlighting the actual cause behind the issues of the environment through the framework of agenda-setting theory.

Theoretical Framework

The agenda-setting theory, which has attracted increasing attention in mass communication literature, posits a relationship between the relative emphasis given by the media to various topics and the degree of salience these topics have for the general public. The media has the ability to set the public agenda by conferring prominence upon specific topics, which then causes audiences to perceive those topics as more important than others. In essence, news coverage, which is a manifestation of the priorities of the press, set the agenda for the public thought and become the priorities of the public.

The McComb and Maxwell's model of the agenda-setting process consists of three main components: the media agenda, which influences; the public agenda, which in turn might have an influence; and the policy agenda. According to McCombs and Shaw, maybe the media cannot tell people what to think but can tell people what to think about. The current study focuses on research assessment of coverage of environmental issues in the newspapers and research output of effects on people with agenda-setting theory as a framework.

Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, a systematic literature review of existing literature on the subject was conducted in accordance with the

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach (Moher *et al.*, 2015). This method was chosen because it helps to synthesize academic literature in an accurate and reliable manner. The PRISMA approach entailed an evidence-based checklist of items and a four-phase flow diagram. PRISMA is not intending to be a quality assessment tool, but this research study aimed at ensuring clarity and transparency when reporting systematic literature reviews. For the current study, a systematic search for articles was conducted to categorize newspaper coverage of environmental issues. Both researchers were able to resolve the disagreements on the review as the terms used in systematic review were clearly defined and constructs used for comparative effectiveness were also mutually exclusive. After deciding the review questions, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, search terms, study selection and assessment of risk of bias, data extraction and how to analyze the data were decided. These are explained below:

Search terms

The search action was conducted using the Google scholar database which was accessed through an institutional gateway that has access to several other databases. The search action included environmental issues related terms.

For each construct, several keywords were used to make sure a broad coverage of studies. As a result, the following Boolean search action was conducted: “Environmental issues AND media agenda setting”, and “Environmental issues and

Newspaper coverage”.

Inclusion criteria

A number of criteria were specified to select the most relevant studies. To be included, articles had to fulfil the criteria defined below:

1. Availability of the full text,
2. Usage of keywords in the title,
3. Articles published in only media and environmental communication journals,
4. Relevance of the abstract,
5. Articles focusing on only newspaper reporting,
6. Articles that are guided majorly by agenda-setting theory.

Study selection

The study selection was made in three steps. First, the titles of all retrieved articles were screened for eligibility for the above-mentioned inclusion criteria. Second, the abstracts of all initially relevant articles were screened for eligibility by applying uniform criteria. Finally, the full text of all remaining publications was checked. All articles deemed relevant were coded in terms of: name of authors, published date, journal, the main aims, method, mentioned skills, definition and operationalization of skills, results and conclusions. Coding of the articles was done to make sure all articles that fulfilled the criteria were selected.

PRISMA flowchart

Given the restrictions of availability of documents, and the keywords, 20,300 articles were identified from the database. The first level of

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion of constructs for risk-of-bias assessment, applicability and strength of evidence

Construct	Whether included in appraisal of individual study of bias	Whether included in assessing applicability of studies and the body of evidence?	Whether included in grading strength of the evidence
Risk of bias	Yes	Yes	No
Precision	Yes	No	Yes
Applicability/external validity	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poor or inadequate reporting	No	No	No
Selective outcome reporting	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outcome measures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Study design	No	Yes	Yes
Fidelity to protocol	Yes	No	Yes
Conflict of interest from sponsor bias	Yes	Yes	Yes

screening included availability of the full text, which resulted in 14,200 articles. After title screening, 8,820 articles met all four inclusion criteria.

Exclusion criteria

1. Not containing the search keywords;
2. Only focused on the news aspect of the environmental issues,
3. Specifically focused on news coverage in Newspapers;
4. Research articles published in media and environmental communication journals.

After filtering the articles based on the above criteria, 6,348 articles were published only in media and environmental communication journals only. The articles were further excluded based on the keywords ‘news’ and ‘environment’ that are used in the abstract of the research article which summed up to 2,950 articles. At a later stage, articles that deal only with news of environmental issues that sum up to 180 were selected. The last stage of selection was based on the criteria of research articles that deal only with environmental news in newspapers that summed to 34 articles that have been reviewed.

Data analysis

This section provides an overview of the major themes, approach of the media, its findings and the aspect of public perception mentioned in the literature reviewed. The articles indicated the use of diverse theoretical frameworks, methodologies and varied focuses which will be further discussed in the subsequent sections.

Major focal areas

The articles reviewed have majorly researched on Environmental issues, Nuclear energy, Water Pollution, Shale Oil and Gas, Land, Air Pollution and Biodiversity issues. Under each area, several sub-themes were covered.

Media perspective

In this section the various approaches of the media towards these environmental issues are discussed. The review reveals five major themes emerging from the selected literature which are broadly categorised into the Role of Media, Effects of Media Messages, Environmental Reporting, Agenda Setting Dynamics and News Coverage (Table 2). The results indicate that news coverage as a theme is most dominantly seen in the research articles (n=12) followed by the role of media (n=10), agenda-setting dynamics (n=5),

effects (n=4) and environmental reporting (n=3).

Table 2. Details of major themes in the selected literature (n=34)

Themes	Frequency
News Coverage	12
Role of Media	10
Agenda-setting Dynamics	5
Effects	4
Environmental Reporting	3

Public Perspective

An audience survey conducted in selected districts (Nimish, 2011) revealed that majority of the respondents of the study had low level of knowledge about the environmental protection and conservation of natural resources but they were aware of the adverse effects of climate change on their agriculture and domestic animals. Interestingly, knowledge levels of women were higher than men in Shringverpur, Allahabad district, India. It is observed that government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can play a significant role in improvement of the environmental awareness and knowledge level of the villagers.

When the filters were applied by the researchers, some studies carried out in countries other than in India also fell in the ambit. One of them was conducted in Ontario, Canada. The local residents of Ontario reported that newspapers were an important source of site-related information for them. Face-to-face communication with friends, neighbours and officials at public meetings, reported as being more credible. Newspapers are clearly an inconsistent source of risk communication, especially when it came to the mundane aspects of citizen participation in environmental decision making. The findings underscore the well-documented propensities of journalists to rely heavily on key informants and focus on issues that they view as newsworthy. Interestingly, the reliance on print media is paralleled by a distrust of the material contained within.

A study done by Xiaoquan Zhao (2012), finds that not all personal attributes or values of people of the US and China are important drivers of media use and not all facets of environmental concern are equally influenced by the use of news media. Among the two personal values altruism and post-materialism related to environmental concern, altruism emerged as a relatively stable predictor of environmental outcomes. However, it should also be noted that both

Chinese and American respondents indicated greater concern about global environmental problems than about local environmental problems. The local impact of environmental problems is not made clear, learning about these global problems could be minimal. Further, environmental issues are often highly politicized in the US media.

Micheal *et al.*, 2012 concluded that media reports regarding adverse health effects of supposedly hazardous substances can increase the likelihood of experiencing symptoms following sham exposure and developing an apparent sensitivity to it. Greater engagement between journalists and scientists is required to counter these negative effects.

The survey showed that a large proportion of the respondents were exposed to the media in the study. A moderate relationship between media salience and audience intrapersonal salience was found (correlation).

Theoretical Framework

Table 3 presents an overview of the various theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in the articles as a basis to conduct the research. The Agenda Setting Theory has been the most commonly used framework for the study (n=15) followed by Framing (n=2) and Narrative policy framework (n=2). It is also seen that Cultural Studies, Advocacy Coalition Framework and O-S-O-R models are used. Research articles have also used a concept as a framework which is called a conceptual framework (n=12).

Table 3 Theoretical framework used in the articles

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework	Frequency
Agenda setting theory	15
Framing	2
Narrative policy framework	2
Cultural Studies	1
Advocacy coalition framework	1
O-S-O-R model	1
Conceptual framework	12

Methodological style

Content analysis emerged to be the favourite of maximum researchers as it allows for in depth investigation of the media text. There was just one meta analysis and in depth interview based research. Table 4 shows the number of articles and the different styles of methodology used for conducting research.

Table 4 Methodology used in the articles (n=34)

Methodology	Frequency
Survey	2
Meta-analysis	1
Discourse-analysis	2
Content-analysis	13
Case study	4
In-depth Interviews	1
Experiment	3
Mixed Method	4
Discussion/review papers	4

The methodologies made use of representative samples based on the nature of the study. Other than the review protocol which has been explained in the above sections, a detailed analysis of the sample size of the studies, respondent profile, the number of newspapers each study analyzed and their time period was made. A comparative chart of all the studies that formed the sample frame that brought out the key characteristics of the studies under review was also made. It largely focussed on publication type, research design, objectives and major findings. (Annexure 1: Key characteristics of the reviewed studies)

Findings

The literature review of the news coverage of global newspapers clearly brings out that the public needs the media to tell them how important an issue of the environment is (Christine, 1995). The selected newspapers showed a remarkable variation in coverage priorities of regional and mainstream media. A low share of environmental issues was reflected in the editorial policies of the newspapers. According to Ali and Bashir (2018), the placement of the news is an important element of agenda setting. Susan (2006) pointed out that for effective communication one must take into account audiences for which we need to understand them first. Also, openly communicate with the public so as to increase their trust (Shirley & Kristiansen, 2019). Study done by (Atwater *et al.*, 1983) found that a moderate relationship between media salience and audience intrapersonal salience was found.

The data reveals that the majority of the respondents of the study had a low level of knowledge about the environmental protection and conservation of natural resources. Nimish (2011) found that television and radio were preferred over newspapers. However, another study found that the newspapers were an important source of environment-related information for the local residents (Sarah & Susan,

2002). The literature indicated that vehicles were mentioned as the main cause of air pollution in India than societal level or other causes for pollution (Nandita *et al.*, 2017; Nandini *et al.*, 2018). A majority of articles did not mention any specific institution or organization as the primarily responsible stakeholder, thus leaving ambiguous the organizations whose leadership was not necessary to mitigate air pollution. “Gatekeeping function has the power to raise their readers’ salience on certain issues over a short period of time”. Wayne, 1988 suggested that extensive media coverage was given to certain events when compared to that of other times. At times newspapers were concerned with biodiversity as situation demanded but not on a regular basis (Anita, 2014).

Literature hinted that environmental coverage will become increasingly politicized (Anderson, 1991). It was also found that the government and political leaders are represented well which indicates that emphasis is given to policymakers (Nirmala *et al.*, 2006) but, the media must publish the voices of the common man (Nandini, 2018). Environmental news stories rarely make headline news and much depends on the extent to which other social issues command greater political attention. Securing political advantage was the main driver in the whole process (Mukherjee, 2019). The main reason for the scarcity of environmental news is the conflict within the interests of politicians and big companies due to which media sets an agenda (Kostarella *et al.*, 2013). Strong agenda setting effects are not apparent in the short run, but become more significant with time, suggesting a cumulative and long-term cognitive impact of the news media (Mikami *et al.*, 2014). Data journalism is the way of the future and the newspapers should strive more to help the public understand scientific and ethical aspects of an environmental problem better (Nirmala & Arul Aram, 2016). As brought out by the review, presently, the media is playing mostly a spectator role. Hence, a more active watchdog role would be necessary for the media to uncover threats to the environment in time for the public to be educated about such issues and have a chance to influence crucial official decisions (Ohkura, 2003).

Interpretation

The first objective of this study was to identify the presentation of environmental issues in newspapers. In certain cases, the media not only sets an agenda for reportage but also leads to successful environmental movements. The literature reveals that the majority of the print media is not playing a leadership role in

creating awareness or in addressing the environmental issues. In a few instances, it is observed that the media is able to set an agenda for addressing environmental issues by stirring peoples’ movement. Most of the studies concluded that air pollution is the major environmental issue covered by the media. Lack of corporate sectors’ interest in addressing environmental pollution is not highlighted by all forms of media due to vested political interests. Environmental news stories rarely make headline news and much depends on the extent to which other social issues command greater political attention. However, studies revealed that alternative media forms and social media have been playing an effective role in this regard.

Based on the literature review, there is a need to provide more space with high-quality content for environmental issues of Global, National and Local significance in both mainstream National and Regional media. Interestingly, the more the negative tone of media coverage, the impact on the audiences was more. There is not much importance given to environmental issues keeping in view the global perspective. A lot of coverage is given to immediate local issues. Also, the coverage is based on the events and no follow up stories are reported after the event. The newspapers are concerned about an environmental issue as an event as the situation demands and not as a problem as such. There is a need to devote more space to environmental issues with scientific coverage. It is very clear that the reporters are having a low knowledge of environmental issues, so there is a need to improve on this aspect to ensure quality reporting.

The media played mostly a spectator role than being in a more active role of a watchdog. The media needed to uncover threats to the environment in time for the public to be educated about such issues. The people seemed to have less or negligible knowledge or awareness regarding the environmental issues. The study revealed that there is a need for the Indian media to publish the voices of the common man. The people needed to be explained by the media about the importance of the environmental issues based on the real-world conditions. It was found that the media had the power and capacity to raise the reader’s salience on certain issues over a short period of time.

A total of thirty-four research papers based on studies conducted across the globe have been analyzed from multiple lenses to get an overview of the scenario of news coverage of environmental issues globally. Large majority of these studies were from various developed and developing nations such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Japan and India.

The nature of the topic guided most of the researchers to utilize a qualitative approach to study and uncover the nature of news coverage of environmental issues. It is observed from the literature that a majority of studies have utilized qualitative approaches to answer their research objectives. Data collection tools like content analysis, case-study, experimental studies were used. In a few instances, it is also observed that tools like surveys which are quantitative in nature have been used to collect empirical data. However, they were complimented further using a qualitative method. The other studies have adopted only a quantitative approach with data collection tools of survey to answer the research questions and draw conclusions. These studies mainly focused on issues of public perceptions and peoples' understanding of environmental issues.

Interestingly, the literature review indicates that a majority (48 per cent) of the articles on environmental issues have chosen agenda-setting theory as a theoretical framework of the study where the researchers have assumed and later proved that newspapers set an agenda for the news that they publish. It can be noted that the O-S-O-R model, narrative policy framework, gatekeeping and framing were a few other concepts that researchers used in their research. However, a few researchers have not used any theoretical/conceptual framework since they reviewed papers.

The studies examined have taken a representative sample based on the nature of the study. It can be observed that a wide range of sample size exists, ranging from 1249 units to studying a single issue using a case study method. However, it can be said that a representative sample of 500 units on an average was used for the study in both quantitative and qualitative studies.

It is observed that most of the studies have been conducted in the area of newspapers effects of messages on the readers. The researchers aimed to study the ways in which newspapers present their content which have an influence on the reader. Also, a large number of studies have been undertaken based on a single environmental issue, such as Ganga river pollution, Biodiversity summit, Dakshina Kannada environmental movement, etc. From the analysis of the studies, it is clearly evident that newspapers take up only episodic reportage and do not show interest in any kind of follow-up stories. The major reason for this could be the lack of science and environmental knowledge, awareness among the environmental reporters. Also, there were a few studies in the realm of testing awareness levels of readers and the agenda-setting role of the media.

Conclusions

Environmental issues have been at the forefront of newspaper coverage and have increased in the last two decades due to the impact of environmental conditions. Newspapers have been covering diverse environmental topics setting the agenda in certain cases. Media effects of the news in newspapers on the readers have been observed and show a significant influence. However, it was revealed many times that event-based reporting existed on environmental issues rather than continuous coverage so as to guide policymakers to move towards a solution. Often environmental reporters lacked knowledge of science to report in-depth with respect to an environmental issue. Moreover, a low share of the editorial content of environmental issues reflects on the editorial policies of the newspaper organization. In recent times politicians, industrialists and the media houses with their own biases are playing key roles in setting an environmental agenda for newspapers. Despite large coverage of air and water pollution in general, there is no in-depth analysis in the Indian context and hence the analysis calls for a study focusing on analytical coverage of environmental issues by leading newspapers of India.

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ANNEXURE 1
Key Characteristics of the Reviewed Studies

Published in/ Publication Type	Research Design	Objectives	Major findings
Grassroots, Vol. 52, No. II, 2018. Scopus Indexed 07336608	Content Analysis	To evaluate the role of Pakistani print media in highlighting the environmental problems of the Indus Delta region.	Variation in coverage by regional and mainstream media. Low share of editorial content.
Media, Culture and Society, Vol. 13 (1991), 459-476. Peer Reviewed Journal. Scopus Indexed 01634437	In-depth, semi-structured interviews	To evaluate the extent to which environmental pressure groups employ strategies to achieve media attention.	If environmental pressure groups are to obtain quality coverage they need to be viewed by the journalist as reliable and accurate.
Media, Culture and Society, Vol. 13, 443-458. Peer Reviewed Journal. Scopus Indexed 01634437	-	To trace the influence of media coverage on public opinion or the influence of media coverage on political decision making.	Calls for a perspective without ignoring the contributions of traditional approaches to studying mass media.
Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 72:300. Peer Reviewed Journal. Scopus Indexed 10776990	Content Analysis	A longitudinal study of agenda-setting for the issues of environmental pollution.	Real-world conditions do not influence the public and media directly. The public needs the media to tell them how important environment is.
Journal of the American water sources association, Indexed in ISI	Quantitative content analysis	To investigate coverage of water issues across seven newspapers in the core of the U.S. Intermountain West region.	Variations in newspaper coverage of water issues suggest more local nuance persists despite the experience of common water issues across the region.
International Journal of Communication and Social Research Vol. 2, No.1: January 2014. Peer Reviewed Journal	Content analysis	To find out what the media reported and how it handled the event of biodiversity issues and mass media.	The newspapers are concerned with biodiversity as situation demands but not on a regular basis.
Global Virtual Conference, April, 8. - 12. 2013 Conference Proceedings	A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from the editors who cover environmental issues for national Greek newspapers using snowball sampling method.	Aims to map the visibility of environmental issues in the Greek media.	The main reason for the scarcity of environmental news is the conflict within the interests of politicians and big companies due to which the media sets an agenda. The findings suggest that the way journalists practice their profession is to be blamed for its limited visibility.

Published in/ Publication Type	Research Design	Objectives	Major findings
Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Vol. 15, No.2 (1990), pp. 139-161	Case study method	The case is made for an agenda of Geographical research based on the mass media of communications.	It is argued that physical and human geographers could usefully collaborate in research with both producers and consumers of media texts, so as to better understand contemporary discourses about human-environment relations.
Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, Vol. 20, No. 5, 645–660	Content analysis	Identifies the coalitions involved in the topic of shale oil and gas development in India.	This paper shows how a change in a dominant coalition can precede a change in policy, offers a replicable method of identifying and measuring coalitions via newspaper content analysis.
Environmental Communication, Peer Reviewed Journal	Deductive approach	Studied news media framing to study non-profit organization narrations.	The result is a depiction of the priorities that influence public opinions, political decisions, and eventually public policies.
Local Environment, Vol. 24, No. 5, 442–457. Peer Reviewed Journal, Scopus Indexed 13549839	Content analysis	Attempts to compare the coverage of water issues between English and Non-English language newspapers published in Sydney.	The study concluded that the water issues were reported differently with regard to coverage, article type, temporal distribution, theme and geographical focus.
Public Policy Research in the Global South, pp 231-246	Discourse analysis	The nature of agenda-setting dynamics in the Global South by investigating issue-attention patterns in context of pollution control activities in the Ganges river basin in India over a span of three decades (1985–2016)	The findings indicate that securing political advantage was the main driver in the whole process. The deplorable condition of the river, and repeated government failure to deliver results, was exploited by the opposition party to create a national mood charged with public sentiments and an urgent need to address the issue.
Environmental Management and Health, Vol. 10 Iss 5 pp. 310-320. Peer Reviewed Journal	Surveys	Environmental disclosure within company annual reports which has become an increasing expectation of environmental regulators and campaigners in industrial countries.	A low level of environmental disclosure in Singapore was observed. There is a gap between the developing environmental responsibility accepted in the Western countries and that in this newly industrialized economy.
The Annual Review of Environment and Resources, Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour. 2009.34:431–57	Surveys	Surveys the role of the media in communicating environmental issues.	Discussions here also touch on how media portrayals influence ongoing public understanding and engagement. Connections between media information and behaviours are not straight forward, as coverage does not determine engagement.

Published in/ Publication Type	Research Design	Objectives	Major findings
International Journal of Communication, 41-64. Peer Reviewed Journal. Scopus Indexed 19328036	Quantitative content analysis	Examines how the Indian print news media has framed the issue of Delhi air pollution, and framed responsibilities for its causes and solutions.	Findings revealed that personal-level causal attributions (i.e., cars) were mentioned more frequently than were societal-level or other causes (industrial emissions and weather). The responsibility for solutions was attributed to the government and businesses, however, and not to individuals, which may be due to the nation's high context culture.
WHO South-East Asia Journal of Public Health, New Delhi, India, Volume 6, Issue 2, page 41-50	Content analysis	Designed to assess news coverage of air pollution in India and its implications for policy advancement.	The findings have an increase in the number of news stories on air pollution in India in the national media over the study period; 317 (63%) stories described the risk to health from air pollution as moderately to extremely severe, and 393 (79%) stories described the situation as needing urgent action. Limited information was provided on the kinds of illnesses that can result from exposure.
Journal of Media and Communication Studies, ISSN: 2141-2545, Vol. 9(1),pp. 1-9. Peer Reviewed Journal	Content analysis	Aims to find how the English and Tamil newspapers in India have covered environmental issues and identify the differences among the newspapers based on region and language.	The result suggests that the newspapers, especially in Tamil, should devote more space to the newer environmental issues. Environmental problems are portrayed as a scientific or political issue in the Indian newspapers. While English newspapers go in for scientific sources, Tamil newspapers use international news agency reports on scientific matters.
Asian Geographer	Survey	The study inquires the role of the news media in forming the public awareness of global environmental problems and in facilitating pro-environmental behaviour of individuals.	Finds that public awareness of the global environment has been kept at a high level since 1992. Exposure to the news media is found to have a positive correlation with the level of concern over environmental issues. Strong agenda-setting effects are not apparent in the short run, but become more significant with time, suggesting a cumulative and long-term cognitive impact of the news media.
Journalism, 1 –17. Peer Reviewed Journal, Scopus Indexed 14648849	Critical discourse analysis	To compare UK newspaper reporting of floods in the developed and developing world.	The headlines in the media sample framed the Chennai floods in a highly dramatic way. The Sun, The Mirror and the Daily Mail attempted to directly blame the government's decisions and the individuals for the flooding. The Guardia

Published in/ Publication Type	Research Design	Objectives	Major findings
Local Environment, Vol. 24, NO\o. 5, 442–457. Peer Reviewed Journal, Scopus Indexed 13549839	Content analysis	Attempts to compare the coverage of water issues between English and Non-English language newspapers published in Sydney.	In general water issues received more attention in English and Chinese-language coverage than in the Korean language newspaper. The two English newspapers were found to present a wide range of local, regional, national and international water issues while the Korean language newspaper had a substantial level of coverage focused on Korea and Chinese language newspapers appear to have even higher coverage of Chinese water issues than Australian relevant ones.
Asia Pacific Media Educator, 28(1) 1–17	Content analysis	Examine how environment is represented in images in newspapers.	The content analysis revealed that photographs were more prominently used by Indian newspapers than infographics. The Hindu has a greater number of photographs than The Times of India. The study observed that the newspaper focussed more on the urban issues and waste management. Data journalism is the way of the future, and newspapers should strive more to help the public understand scientific and ethical aspects of an environmental problem better.
Journalism Quarterly, 65(1), 107-111. Peer Reviewed journal	An experimental study	Photographs of data were analysed separately by the issue involved.	A major implication of these findings is that editors, through their gate-keeping function, have the power to raise their readers' salience on certain issues over a short period of time by merely increasing the size of photographs. Quite possibly, some editors - at newspapers which solely use the dominant art concept of layout. The dominant art could be used in fact, should be used - when a story merits such eye-catching display.
Global Media Journal, ISSN 2249-5835, Vol.4, No.1	Interviews and content analysis	Analyses use of communication media in the environmental movements of Dakshina Kannada district based on interviews and content analysis.	The alternative media played a vital role in the environmental movement of the district. They took initiative in educating the masses while the mainstream media were preoccupied with corporate interests than the environmental interests. Though the mainstream media provided good coverage to the issues they did not set the agenda. Views, editorials and analytical articles were missing in the pages of mainstream media.

Published in/ Publication Type	Research Design	Objectives	Major findings
Communication Monographs ISSN: 0363-7751. Peer Reviewed Publication	Survey	The role of informational media use in public concern over the environment.	Not all personal attributes or values are important drivers of media use and not all facets of environmental concern are equally influenced by the use of news media.
Environmental Communication, ISSN: 1752-4032. Peer Reviewed	Meta-analysis	An analysis of Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear incident, Japan in general, with specific coverage of heightened risks in the aftermath of nuclear accident	The findings suggest that science communicators should openly communicate risks with the public so as to increase their trust rather than attempting to alleviate the common-mans' negative emotions.
The Professional Geographer, ISSN: 0033-0124	A multi method qualitative case-study approach and Content analysis	The study explored the role of the mass media in environmental risk perception by examining the relationship between an Environmental Assessment (EA) process, newspaper coverage of the process and resident perceptions of the coverage.	The media coverage of the environmental assessment process was dominated by a trio of themes; process, environmental degradation and technology. The local residents reported that newspapers were an important source of site-related information for them. Interestingly, the reliance on the print media is paralleled by a distrust of the material contained within.
International Conference on Chemical, Biological and Environment Sciences (ICCEBS'2011) Bangkok	Survey	To access the role of mass media in dissemination of knowledge and awareness among the rural people about the environment related issues.	It was found that television and radio were the most preferred information tools over newspapers and utilized by 39.5% and 26% of the respondents respectively. The data reveals that majority of the respondents of the study had low level of knowledge about the environment protection and conservation of natural resources but they were aware about the adverse effects of climate change on their agriculture and domestic animals.
Impact Journal, ISSN(E): 2321-886X; ISSN(P): 2347-4572, Vol. 2, Issue 10, Oct 2014, 15-24. Peer Reviewed Journal	-	Aims at the conceptual discussion on Corporate Environmental reporting and guidelines for developing a sustainable corporate culture.	Corporate Environmental reporting has traditionally been a voluntary method of communicating environmental performance to stakeholders. A major challenge to the reporting community at large in India is to improve comparability among environmental reports. Involvement and commitment of corporate accountants in environmental management appears to be limited due to lack of regional reporting guidelines. Sustainable development is totally based on the attitude, eagerness and involvement of people, corporate leaders and policy makers.

Published in/ Publication Type	Research Design	Objectives	Major findings
Asian Geographer	Survey data and newspaper articles in Japan	The study inquires the role of the news media in forming the public awareness of global environmental problems and in facilitating pro-environmental behaviour of individuals	Finds that public awareness of the global environment has been kept at a high level since 1992. Exposure to the news media is found to have a positive correlation with the level of concern over environmental issues. Strong agenda-setting effects are not apparent in the short run, but become more significant with time, suggesting a cumulative and long-term cognitive impact of the news media.
Energy Research & Social Science (51), 168-175. Peer Reviewed Journal	Content analysis	Where's the fracking bias?: Contested media frames and news reporting on shale gas in the United States.	An SNK post hoc analysis revealed that stories discussing fracking on CNN provided audiences with significantly more in-depth content than stories on MSNBC. Further, CNN and MSNBC provided a significantly more in-depth analysis than Fox News.
Journalism Quarterly. Peer Reviewed.	Survey	To determine whether the agenda-setting function of the press operated at the sub-issue level	The survey showed that a large proportion of the respondents were exposed to the media in the study. A moderate relationship between media salience and audience intrapersonal salience was found (correlation).
Springer Business Media 138:437-458	An analysis of the news media reports from more than 600 newspaper sources on disciplining pollution activities of listed Chinese firms from 2004 to 2012 has been performed.	Focus on the micro-foundations of news reports to elaborate on how negative news reports following an initial exposure of corporate pollution activity can help stop such activity through their impact on corporate managers.	The study reveals that the more negative media coverage and more coverage, the greater the impact on corporations.
Environmental Management and Health, Vol. 10 Iss 5 pp. 310-320. Peer Reviewed Journal	Survey	An overview of trends related to environmental reporting in Singapore	A low level of environmental disclosure in Singapore was observed. There is a gap between the developing environmental responsibility accepted in the Western countries and that in this newly industrialized economy.



ICT Based Media Support Services Provided to the Learners of ODL Programmes During Covid-19 Pandemic

VIJAYAKUMAR P.¹, MUKESH KUMAR², MEETALI³ AND DEEPSHIKHA⁴

ABSTRACT

Learner Support is the lifeline of a distance learning programme. A feedback study was conducted to assess the Learner Support provided online for the six Distance Learning Agriculture Programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic. An online survey using a well-structured questionnaire was conducted in which 75 respondents participated out of 906 contacted. The results revealed that majority of the respondents were male from urban locality having qualification of graduation and above and were mostly employed. The primary source of information was Email accessed through smart phone using 4G data. The major source of Self-learning Material (SLM) was eGyankosh, an online repository. The majority of the respondents were aware of the availability of e-self-learning materials and also accessed them regularly though not daily. Most of the respondents (90.7%) reported that they attended online counselling sessions. All the respondents were satisfied with the online support they received during the COVID-19 pandemic. It can be concluded that the learners of all the six distance learning agriculture programmes were completely satisfied with the online Learner Support they received in the pandemic times.

Keywords: Feedback, ODL, Agriculture, Pandemic, Learner Support, SLM

Introduction

Agriculture education is mostly focussed on the conventional system of face-to-face education particularly in a developing country like India. However, distance learning institutions are slowly peeking into this domain by offering distance learning programme in Agriculture and Allied Sector. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) can be an effective and cost-effective tool to reach the masses in imparting the required skills and technical proficiency (Salooja & Vijayakumar, 2018). For example, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is offering a wide range of short-term Certificate/Diploma programmes in different emerging areas through distance learning mode. One of the major components in the teaching-learning process of the ODL learning programmes is the Learner Support Services like the counselling sessions provided at the Learner Support Centres. With the advancement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), heterogeneous and diverse learners' groups who are geographically scattered and having increasing expectations from all concerned, necessitate effective support services to ensure proper guidance and learning conditions. Learner Support services involves a whole lot of activities ranging

from pre-admission counselling to post-completion support. Counselling is the most vital component of Learner Support to the learners of distance learning programme which provides an opportunity to interact with counsellors and peer-group which is conducted in the Learner Support Centre. During lockdowns, there being no alternative, students were made to attend online classes. Complaints and challenges were brought to notice by teachers and administration, prominent among them being many students not having computers or laptops at their homes (Bozkurt, 2020). Though the outbreak of COVID-19 has created many challenges for education including the ODL system, many educational institutions have accepted the challenges and tried their best to provide seamless support services to the learners exploring better opportunities (Jena, 2020). Online learner support services provided to the learner range of support through social media, online counselling session, online submission of assignments, access to e-self-learning materials and many more. The different online platforms available for the teaching-learning process include Zoom, Cisco Webex, Microsoft Team, Google Meet, Facebook, YouTube, Skype etc. The Government of India has also promoted online

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education and evaluation through various initiatives like SWAYAM, SWAYAM Prabha, e-PG Pathshala, DIKSHA portal etc. These Online Learner Support Services were provided to ease the teaching-learning process during the pandemic and it is essential to get the feedback of the learners for improving the quality of services provided. The present study was undertaken to obtain feedback from the learners of six distance learning programmes of the School of Agriculture, IGNOU for which online learner support was provided.

Objectives of the study

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To study the profile of the learners;
- To gather the perception of the learners on the access to information about the programs;
- To assess the accessibility of e-learning resources by the learners; and
- To ascertain the effectiveness of online counselling sessions conducted during the pandemic.

Review of literature

During COVID-19 pandemic, the whole educational system had a setback in the initial phase due to difficulty in organizing the counselling sessions physically. With the advent of many technological tools, most institutions/universities could move ahead by amalgamating online counselling through platforms in their pedagogy. The ODL is presently not an option but a compulsion in India. In this mode of education, learner support facilities are performing a pivotal role in the teaching-learning evaluation process. Learner support has been defined as the resources that learners can access to carry out the learning processes (Sarkhel, 2014). Netanda *et al.* (2019) concluded that “Academic support was found to be the most fundamental form of support in encouraging student immersion in learning and to realise student success”. The use of new technology i.e. teleconferencing, virtual classrooms, video on demand etc., also improve the support service of the university (Chattopadhyay, 2014). The human element in learner support is very vital and cannot be overlooked, whatever the scope and speed of technological advances, but the learner usually feels satisfied and comfortable when she/he receives oral instruction. Therefore, academic counselling plays a major role in the distance education system (Mishra, 2014).

Kumtepe *et al.* (2018) reported that “Within the context of distance education support services, it is

natural to include technology-based and web-based services and also the related materials. In terms of the sustainability of the system, an institution should provide distance education services through ICT enabled processes to support all stakeholders in the system, particularly distance learners”. Muthuprasad *et al.* (2020) studied the students’ perception and preference for Online Education in India during the COVID-19 pandemic and reported that the majority of the respondents (70%) are ready to opt for online classes to manage the curriculum during this pandemic. The majority of the students preferred to use a smartphone for online learning. The students opined that the flexibility and convenience of online classes make it an attractive option, whereas, broadband connectivity issues in rural areas makes it a challenge for students to make use of online learning initiatives. Using the various technologies available for online learning, educators can provide a more interactive distance learning experience by delivering real-time, synchronous video conferencing. Online learning is considered as a future learning process and this platform has the potential of an overall change in the pedagogy of teaching-learning in the modern world (Jena, 2020).

Bharti *et al.* (2018) reported that even with the limited resources, the smart ICT need to be ushered in where automation and data can help farmers address many challenges of the future. The application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in farming will bring revolution, sustainability and vibrancy in future farming.

Bharti *et al.* (2019) reported that the demand and supply gap between manpower requirement for graduates in the field of agriculture and its allied areas is increasing significantly in India. The traditional methods of educating the diverse masses in diverse geographical areas are becoming difficult in the new context of problems, which puts greater demand on current and future knowledge. Besides, the new generation of students are tech-savvy and believe in blogging, podcasting, SMSing and net-centric in the connected world. Therefore, use of new technologies in education like e-course, ODLs, cloud computing and virtual teaching are the need of the hour. E-learning is the current trend in synchronous classroom education as well as asynchronous distance education.

e-Courses for the degree level programmes in seven disciplines were developed for the disciplines; Agriculture Science, Fisheries Science, Dairy Science, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry, Horticulture Science, Home Science and Agricultural Engineering. The entire course modules were developed by the

renowned subject matter specialists, teaching in respective disciplines and course contents were as per the syllabus approved by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR).

An exclusive e-learning portal for these e-Courses with 1107 credits and 15820 lessons have been developed as per the ICAR approved syllabus. The e-learning system is aimed at bringing reforms in agricultural education in the country. University management systems have been implemented to computerize the management of students, courses, exams, mark-sheets etc. The system has brought transparency and efficiency to the processes. The National Information System on Agricultural Education Network in India (NISAGENET) portal (<http://nisagenet.icar.gov.in>) has been developed to provide State/University/College level reporting on agricultural education in India. It provides a unified information base for collection, compilation and analysis of academic information, infrastructural facilities, budget provision, manpower and research and development activities of all the identified Indian Agricultural Universities (AUs) and Deemed universities of the ICAR along with their constituent/affiliated colleges (<https://ecourses.icar.gov.in/>).

Bharti *et al.* (2020) reported that technologies like AI, Big Data, GIS, mapping location technology and autonomous machines played a key role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this war against this invisible enemy, drones have played a key role by helping authorities and people by surveillance, broadcast messages and information about lockdown measures.

Methodology

The present study was an *ex-post facto* research study conducting using the online survey method.

Study Design and Instrument

This study was conducted through an online survey method using a well-structured questionnaire. There were a total of 43 question items included in the questionnaire covering four major aspects *viz.* general information about the respondents; access to information; e-SLM or Online Self Learning Materials and Online Counselling was developed and validated by involving the faculty of the School of Agriculture, IGNOU.

The major questions covered in the questionnaire were: profile of the learners like the programme enrolled, locality, gender, employment status etc.; access to information like the source of information, communication tool used, internet connectivity; use

of e-learning materials such as source, availability in the web portal and App, frequency and ease of access; and perception on the online counselling with particular reference to participation, usefulness, frequency, topics covered and interaction with teacher and peer group.

Sampling and data collection

A purposive sampling technique was employed for collecting the data for the study. The data were collected from the learners of the six distance learning programmes of the School of Agriculture, IGNOU *viz.* Awareness Programme on Value Added Products from Fruits and Vegetables (APVPFV), Certificate in Poultry Farming (CPF), Certificate in Water Harvesting and Management (CWHM), Diploma in Value Added Products from Fruits and Vegetables (DVAPFV), Diploma in Dairy Technology (DDT) and PG Diploma in Food Safety and Quality Management (PGDFSQM) for which the online learner support was provided during the pandemic. The questionnaire was posted online in the ‘Google Form’ survey portal and the link was sent to all the 906 learners enrolled during the 2019-20 session pertaining to six distance learning programmes of the School of Agriculture, IGNOU. Only the responses from 75 learners belonging to all the six programmes were received.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by the quantitative method and the results are present in the form of descriptive statistics *viz.* simple frequency and percentages.

Results And discussion

The results are presented in five parts: (a) General information about the learners, (b) Access to information, (c) e-SLM or Online Self Learning Materials, (d) Online Counselling and (e) Learner Support.

(a) General information about the learners

Out of the 75, most responses (24%) were received from the learners of the PG Diploma in Food Safety and Quality Management (PGDFSQM). This was followed by Awareness Programme on Value Added Products from Fruits and Vegetables (APVPFV) and Certificate in Water Harvesting and Management (CWHM) programme (22.7%) each, Diploma in Dairy Technology (DDT) and Certificate in Poultry Farming (11.7%) each and least from Diploma in Value Added Products from Fruits and Vegetables (DVAPFV).

The majority of the respondents (57.3%) were from the urban region as compared to the

rural locality (42.7%). More than two-thirds of the respondents (77.3%) were males, which means only 22.3% of respondents were females. About half of the respondents were graduates (50.7%), followed by postgraduates (26.7%) and senior secondary pass-outs (16%). This might be due to the fact that three out of six programmes included in the study required senior secondary as eligibility criteria for enrolment. Just over half of the respondents were employed (54.7%) as compared to the unemployed respondents (45.3%).

(b) Access to information

The primary source of information (Figure 1)

the learners received from the university was through email (56%) followed by the IGNOU website (21.3%) and Webinar (13.3%). This might be due to the fact that during pandemic the programme coordinator provided online academic support to the learners through emails, webinars, social media etc.

The main communication tool (Figure 2) the respondents used for communicating with the University officials was smartphones (65.3%) followed by laptops (32%) and desktop computers (8%).

About two-thirds of the respondents used 4G mobile data (69.3%) as the primary source of

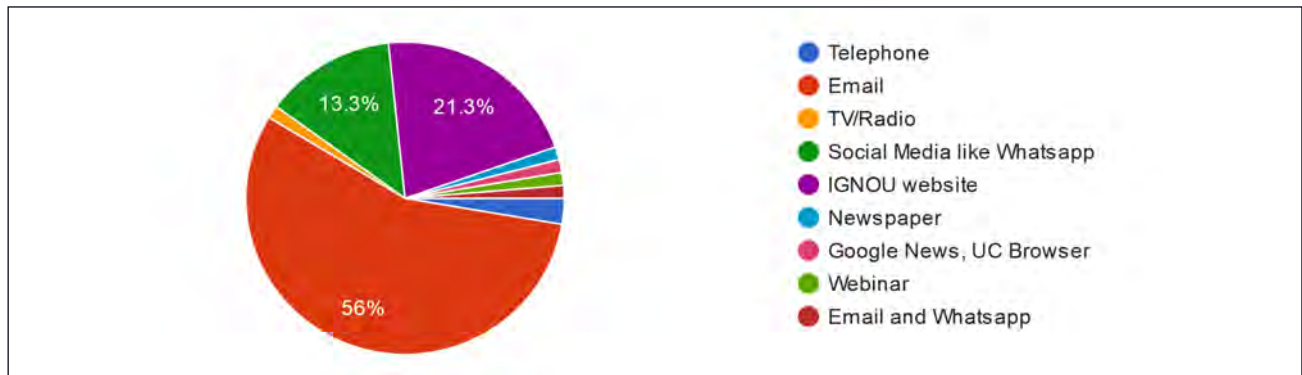


Fig 1. Medium used for receiving primary source of information from IGNOU

internet connection followed by WiFi (18.7%). This might be due to the fact that majority of the learners used a smartphone as a means of communication.

The majority of the learners (88%) informed that they had access to continuous internet connectivity for streaming online audio/video/web-counselling

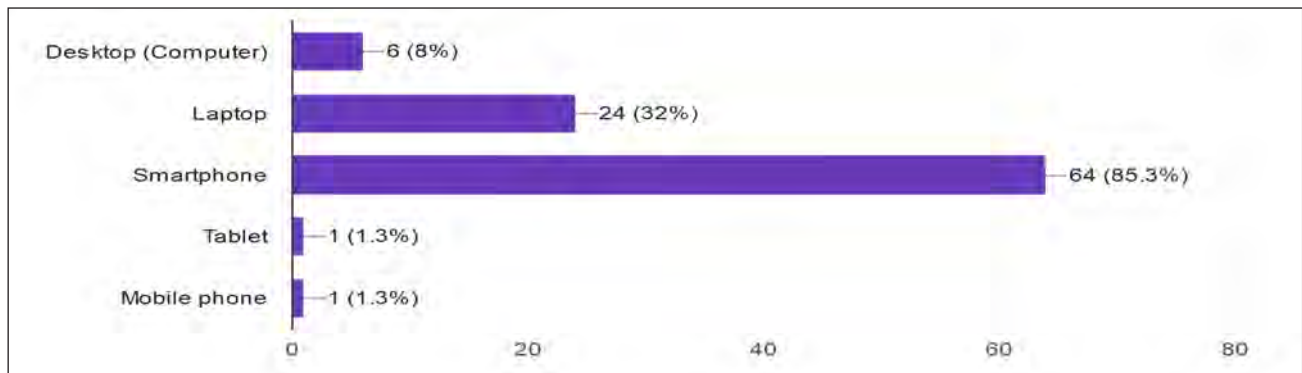


Fig 2. ICT Tool used for communication with IGNOU official

sessions. This indicates that online counselling can be an effective medium for teaching-learning process for distance learning and online educational programmes.

(c) e-SLM or Online Self Learning Materials

The results of the study revealed that there is not much difference regarding the source of self-learning material (SLM) viz. eGyankosh, Print and IGNOU e-content App. From Figure 3, it is clearly evident that the main source of SLM was eGyankosh (40%), an online repository followed by Print (38%) and

IGNOU e-content App (36%). This shows that just over one-third of the learners still prefer printed SLM even during pandemic for learning even though online e-SLMs are available.

About 80% of the respondents informed that they were aware of the availability of e-resources in eGyankosh online repository and IGNOU e-content App. The major sources of information (Figure 4) about the e-resources were emails from faculty (70%) and the IGNOU website (60%).

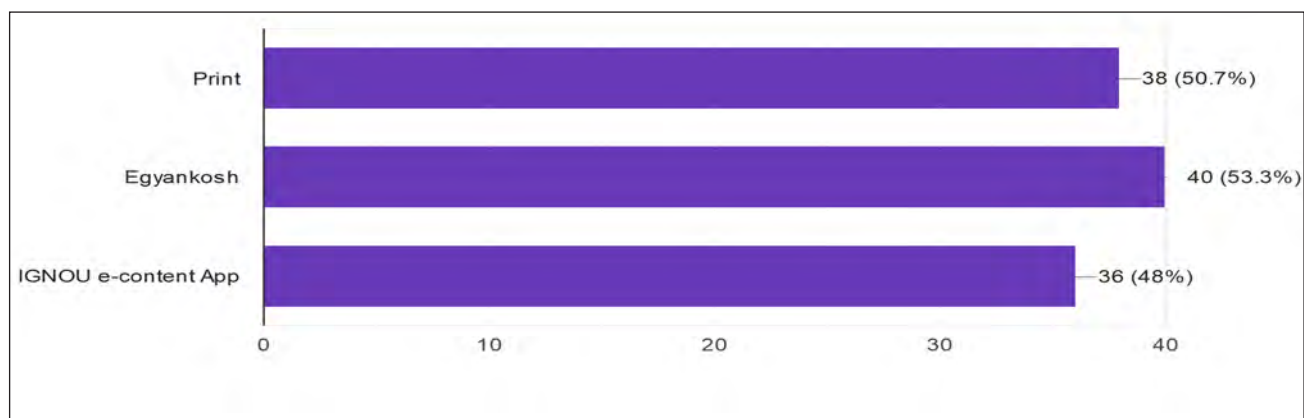


Fig 3. Source of self-learning material (SLM)

Regarding availability of e-resources, most of the respondents informed that they were available in the eGyankosh portal (67.1%) and IGNOU e-content

App (56.2%). Vast majority of the respondents (94.6%) reported that the e-resources were easy to access. About two-thirds of the respondents accessed



Fig 4. Source of information about the e-resources

the self-learning materials once in 2-3 days (30%) and once in a week (30%) whereas, only 17.1% accessed them daily. This clearly depicts the typical characteristics of the distance learners who learn at their own pace. The assignment is an important component of assessment in the ODL programmes in the form of continuous assessment. Majority of the respondents (82.7%) were aware of the availability of the assignment questions on the IGNOU website. The major sources of information about the assignment were the IGNOU website (43.3%) and emails from faculty (40.3%).

(d) Online Counselling

All the respondents were aware of the online counselling sessions conducted by the University teachers out of which the majority (98.6%) informed that they received the information about the counselling sessions well in advance. The main sources of information about the counselling session were email (78.1%) and social media (19.2%).

Most of the respondents (90.7%) reported that they attended the online counselling sessions out of which nearly two-thirds (76.1%) felt that the counselling sessions were very useful and the

remaining one-fourth (23.9%) found the sessions useful. None of the respondents informed that the sessions were not at all useful. The results show a similar trend in light of the study conducted by Agarwal and Kaushik (2020). About 43.7% of the respondent learners attended all the counselling sessions, whereas, 31% and 22.5% attended them frequently and sometimes, respectively.

Regarding the content covered in the online counselling sessions, most of the learners (94.2%) informed that the contents were covered adequately as per their expectations. The duration of the counselling sessions was found to be adequate to 72.5% of the learners, whereas, about 14.5% and 13% of respondents felt that the sessions were too long and too short, respectively. Just over two-thirds of the respondents (70.6%) reported that they had interacted with the expert and peer group during the counselling session. The majority of the respondents (91.5%) informed that the timing of the counselling session was suitable for them.

(e) Learner Support

Feedback on the learner support services provided to the learners' during the pandemic was obtained and

the results are presented below:

The majority of the respondents (93.3%) informed that they received information about the Self-learning Materials, Counselling, Assignments/Projects and examination on time. Gohiya and Gohiya (2020) conducted a student perception study on the e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and reported that about 98% of students responded that the class schedule was informed well on time. A similar response (93.3%) was received regarding the provision of links for additional learning resources and videos. The results also revealed that most of the respondents (88.6%) accessed these additional resources and videos provided to them and they were very informative and useful to the majority of them (98.5%). The most preferred medium of communication with the IGNOU officials was email (68%) followed by social media (25.3%). Regarding constraints in accessing the self-learning materials, majority of the learners (86.7%) did not face any issue. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (73.3%) did not face any issue in preparing and submitting the assignments online.

The overall satisfaction of the support the learners received during the pandemic was assessed and the results revealed that all the respondents were satisfied with the support they received. There was not much difference in the satisfaction level between Highly satisfied (52%) and Satisfied (48%). This shows that the learner support services provided to the learners of all the six distance learning programmes were up to the expectation of the learners. This is in line with the finding of Coman *et al.* (2020) who reported that “Students that were more open to the use of the online environment for the teaching-learning process in general, had a higher degree of satisfaction with their exclusively online learning experience during the pandemic”. As online practice is benefitting the students immensely, it should be continued after the lockdown (Jena, 2020).

Conclusion

Learner Support Services is vital for the success of any distance learning programme and particularly during the pandemic. The results of the study revealed that the learners received all the necessary information on time, accessed the e-repository of self-learning materials and additional resources and actively participated in the online counselling sessions. It can be concluded that the learner of all the six distance learning agriculture programmes were completely satisfied with the support services they received online during the pandemic.

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Participatory Communication for Solid Waste Management and Sustainable Development: A Study of First Garbage Treatment Plant in Himachal Pradesh

ARCHNA KATOCH¹

ABSTRACT

The haphazard unmindful dumping and burning of solid waste in open, proliferation of plastics and hazardous materials, and emission of greenhouse gases from poorly managed solid waste can be catastrophic for current and future generations. A participatory development project leads to information exchange, behaviour change, and empowers people to take actions collectively for sustainable development. Inefficient solid waste disposal is a major problem in Himachal Pradesh to be resolved after attaining the ‘Open Defecation Free’ status for the success of ‘Swachh Bharat Mission’ and to achieve the dream of ‘Swachh Himachal Swasth Himachal’. This study will provide an overview of the award-winning first gram panchayat level self-sustaining garbage treatment plant in Himachal Pradesh that is showing the way for efficient solid waste management by converting ‘waste to wealth’ with ‘zero waste generation’, and by following the environmentally sustainable and carbon smart economic growth model.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Participatory communication, Self-sustainable, Solid waste management, Zero waste generation

Introduction

The development process encompasses innumerable qualitative transformations that take the entire social system in an upward direction. The whole world is working today to achieve seventeen *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), which is the 2030 agenda for sustainable development accepted by the United Nations in 2015. It embodies improvement in matters affecting the daily life of the common person, good health and clean environment, progress in the country’s economic conditions, development of children and women, social justice, etc., which bring about inclusive growth of a nation and overall enhancement in the quality of human life. “Inclusive development consists of ensuring that all marginalized and excluded groups are stakeholders in development processes” (Razi, 2019). According to the World Commission on Environment and Development report, (usually called the Brundtland Report), “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987).

Strategy for sustainable and inclusive development of a society is made by putting the individuals in the core, and identifying their common social, economic, political, and ecological goals. Strategic communication is a tool for effective policy making through public participation to achieve these

fixed desired goals. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, approach for sustainable development comprises a “coordinated set of participatory and continuously improving processes of analysis, debate, capacity strengthening, planning and investment, which integrates the economic, social and environmental objectives of society, seeking trade-offs where this is not possible” (OECD, 2001).

The participatory theory of communication for sustainable development works upon a participatory communication model that unlocks innovative spaces for dialogues amid stakeholders, and helps the exchange of knowledge, empowering citizens to participate dynamically in the process involving their lives (Mefalopulos, 2008). Participatory communication imparts non-formal education to the people by which they work as planners, informers, persuaders, and performers that bring out an innovative and sustainable change in their practices, actions, capabilities, and lifestyles. Democracy requires that people should make collective decisions. However, these people should be well-informed citizens. “Contrary to the elitist theory, participation of people in the decision making has the utmost value in participatory democracy” (Mishra, 2009).

The haphazard dumping of waste contaminates land, pollutes water bodies, and degrades the quality of the air we breathe in, causing overall environmental

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degradation, poor quality of life, and diseases. Further, the mounting heaps of plastics, e-waste and hazardous materials, and emission of greenhouse gases from the poorly managed waste can be calamitous to both natural resources and living beings. A specific communication strategy should be developed to impart information, build knowledge, and bring behaviour change to people to adapt the sustainable practices for waste disposal.

Participatory communication empowers individuals to make strategies and take action collectively to eradicate the problems in the way of sustainable development. As self-management is the most innovative type of participation, the focus today is on the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to build and manage effective management systems to control the hazard of solid waste. The integrated solid waste management system should be environmental friendly and according to the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, if the waste generated by us is not managed aptly, it will destroy the whole ecosystem.

The *Swachh Bharat Mission* implies that every gram panchayat or municipality should ensure a clean ecosystem by adopting a proper waste management and sanitation in its area. The study of Aima Panchayat is an example that is inspiring all panchayats in the state of Himachal Pradesh to identify themselves with the environmental problems they are facing, and have sustainable development in the state. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

1. To understand the role of participatory development communication in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for solid waste management.
2. To ascertain the conditions of existing solid waste management practices in Himachal Pradesh.
3. To provide an overview of first garbage treatment plant of gram panchayat Aima, situated in Tehsil Palampur of district Kangra in Himachal Pradesh.

Materials and methods

This study has been conducted by using the qualitative research method. For understanding the role of participatory development communication in the Panchayati Raj Institutions for solid waste management and to ascertain the conditions of existing solid waste management practices in Himachal Pradesh, diverse types of primary research studies, media coverage and predominantly the reports showing the ground situation of waste disposal practices and environmental degradation in Himachal Pradesh have been taken. Based on this secondary data (qualitative data) collected, different inferences

are drawn for first and second objectives.

The case study is a qualitative research technique which uses as many data sources as possible to systematically investigate individuals, groups, organisations, or events (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). To explore the vital role of participatory development communication in the Panchayati Raj Institutions for solid waste management, a case study of first garbage treatment plant of gram panchayat Aima, situated in tehsil Palampur of district Kangra in Himachal Pradesh has been conducted.

Results and discussion

Participatory Communication for Solid Waste Management and Sustainable Development

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj reported, “When economies go after indiscriminate market-based growth and the people go after a consumerist culture, the apparent side-effect is ‘unmanageable waste generation’” (NIRD & PR, 2016). There is a need to change the behaviour of the people to conserve the environment and promote the *responsible consumption and production* (SDG 12). They should understand the hazards of dumping the waste in the environments and take apposite actions to protect their surroundings from environmental decay and ensure the availability of *clean water and sanitation for all* (SDG 6). Therefore, people must be motivated to implement the solid waste management as a way of life to have *sustainable cities and communities* (SDG 11). Different stakeholders and individuals at the community or panchayat level should be encouraged to follow the carbon resilient growth path by use of cost-effective technologies and ensure access to *affordable and clean energy* (SDG 7).

Waste management is indispensable to have inclusive sustainable development. If the waste, which is generated daily, is not collected, treated, or properly disposed of, it produces a waste crisis and unhealthy life. “Sustainable waste management provides ideal opportunities to collaborate and work in partnership (SDG 17) the wealthy and the poor, the formal and informal, communities, business, governments, and the international donor community” (Lenkiewicz, 2016).

According to Bharucha (2005), the two most detrimental factors, which lead to the current rapid depletion of all forms of natural resources, are rapid population growth and increasing consumerism, and both these factors are the outcome of choices we make as persons. India’s population is in second position

after China, and waste management is essential to have clean water, sanitation, and a healthy environment.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) released the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2016, which states that improper and unscientific dumping of solid and toxic waste is illegal, and all local bodies within their districts are required to make proper policies concerning segregation, collection, processing, treatment, and disposal of waste. Dry leaves, plastic, and other such waste should not be burnt in open, doing such type of activity will be treated as illegal and punishable, and the violator should be fined. It is the prime responsibility of each waste generator to segregate the waste generated in three forms namely biodegradable, non-biodegradable, and domestic hazardous wastes, and handover segregated waste to the waste collectors and pay fixed monthly rent for the services of door-to-door garbage collection. Society creates a huge waste daily and it becomes a huge problem if not segregated at the source during waste collection.

The *Swachh Bharat Mission* or total sanitation campaign in India was launched on Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, 2014, to make human life cleaner, healthier and honourable by eradicating open defecation up to October 2, 2019. Under the *Swachh Bharat Mission*, India is trying its best to become *Open Defecation Free* (ODF) by providing access to clean and usable toilet facilities to all the people. The *Swachh Bharat Mission* is not only building toilets but it has the objective of changing people's behaviour by applying healthier sanitation practices. Guidelines for *Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin* (2017) enunciate, "Safe sanitation means the promotion of safe disposal of human excreta, the right use of toilets and avoiding open defecation as well as management of solid and liquid waste".

The goals of the total sanitation mission cannot be achieved unless the waste is judiciously disposed of and at the end of the day, gram panchayat or municipality must clean and manage it. Today, *Swachh Bharat Mission* has turned into a people's movement locally due to strong government policies, media awareness campaigns, and people's participation. According to Mahatma Gandhi, '*Cleanliness is next to Godliness*', this mission is an approach to make cleanliness a way of life.

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) has also given various suggestions which enable gram panchayats to deal efficiently with the menace of solid waste. It has recommended the usage of reused cloth bags and a

ban on the use-and-throw carry bags. It has suggested that every gram panchayat should develop a system to acquire the dues for the solid waste disposal and sanitation facilities provided to them. Violation of the local bodies' norms must be seen earnestly by imposing the penalties. According to NIRD&PR study, "Panchayat functionaries should conduct periodical inspections to ensure community members, shopkeepers and other stakeholders keep their locality clean". Further, according to R. Ramesh, an Associate Professor at Centre for Rural Infrastructure at the the NIRD&PR, "Waste management is more a socio-psychological problem, rather than being technology or facility-related. Behavioural changes can help" (Business Line, 2019).

Communication that is known as the lifeblood of any strategy is a two-way dynamic process involving a series of actions and reactions with a vision to realize an objective. Participatory communication involves information exchange, behaviour change, establishes a consensus among conflicting views and interests, and facilitates decision making and actions by involving all people, government, media, NGOs, civil society groups, self-help groups, social workers, etc. Participation involves active listening, which facilitates the equitable exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences creating understanding between them and reduces the social gap between communicator(s) and receiver(s). It must encompass the government, planners, people, and the administrators with their goals.

The function of participatory communication is necessary for the Panchayati Raj Institutions to have sustainable development. According to Mahatma Gandhi, village panchayat is a vital instrument for rural development and establishing participatory democracy at the grass-root level. According to his vision, Panchayati Raj is a decentralized democratic system of governance called the *Gram Swaraj* (village self-governance). In participatory communication, people are positioned at the centre of the development with two key approaches; first is dialogical pedagogy and second involves the ideas of access, participation and self-management (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005).

Sustainable development initiatives were taken starting from the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 to the United Nations Earth Summit or Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in which the first agenda for development was developed and implemented in 1992. After 20 years, Rio+20, agreement was adopted by all members of the United Nations called *The Future We Want* and eight *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) were

implemented in 2000 to be attained until 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to accomplish peace, justice and a better future for the entire humanity (United Nations, n.d.).

The Indian government had appointed a committee in January 1957, called the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee to give suggestions for the implementation of Panchayati Raj Institutions or institutions of democratic decentralization. This committee recommended a three-tier decentralized local government called as Village Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad at the village, block, and the district level, respectively. The Panchayati Raj that denotes the local self-government of villages was formalized in 1992 by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution that came into force on April 24, 1993. On August 27, 2009, the Union Cabinet of the Government of India permitted fifty per cent women's reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions. These institutions follow a bottom-up approach for the planning of different development processes those initiate at the grassroots level. The power and responsibilities of panchayats are to prepare economic development and social justice plans, implement and monitor them at the decentralized level with appropriate resources and authority. Funds are obtained from the local body grants, centrally sponsored schemes, state governments, and by collecting and levy taxes, fees, tolls, duties, etc.

Therefore, the progress of a community requires a people-centred approach involving all its stakeholders, decentralized authorities, civil society, local peoples, and marginalized groups for long-term benefits and ultimately sustainable development. They communicate with each other, debate, and discover solutions to their problems through consensus by using numerous communication methods. Participatory communication creates awareness and behavioural change, which can solve the menace of solid waste disposal and environmental degradation. Participatory communication is the need of the hour for sustainable development in the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Panchayati Raj Institutions and Solid Waste Management Practices in Himachal Pradesh

Solid waste management in Himachal Pradesh is a foremost crisis to be resolved to achieve the dream of *Nirmal Himachal* and *Clean Himachal Healthy Himachal* (Swachh Himachal Swasth Himachal). At present, increasing waste and inefficient waste management are the major challenges this developing state is facing today. Himachal Pradesh is a prominent tourist destination but its environment is degrading

gradually due to unmindful throwing away and burning of waste in open. Proper management is required to curb the menace of solid waste, as most of the tourists' places of this state do not have waste treatment plants.

According to the Himachal Pradesh Government (2019), rural areas of Himachal Pradesh have become *Open Defecation Free* (ODF) on October 28, 2016. Therefore, focus under Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin has been changed from ODF sustainability to Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM). As solid waste management is the utmost challenge before the State, Himachal Pradesh is on the way of green growth and sustainable development path by following environment responsive practices that include pollution prevention, reduction, and control through participatory approach by setting up of various solid waste management plants in all the districts.

According to Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin, Himachal Pradesh website, *Swachh Bharat Mission* is being executed in Himachal Pradesh to upgrade the quality of life of rural people with the help of the State Rural Development Department through participation and management of PRIs and all stakeholders (n.d.). According to the H.P. Panchayati Raj Act 1994, under sections 12, 13 and 15, the panchayats must undertake waste management practices to save the environment with basic waste management mechanism of three R's i.e. *Reduce, Reuse and Recycle* with emphasis on the zero waste generation and segregation of waste at the source. Waste disposal practice with income generation through capacity building (composting and recycling of waste) and the policy of *polluters pays* should be followed.

Hence, Himachal Pradesh government had planned to create at least 500 gram panchayats as *Zero Waste GP* by October 2, 2020, with a budgetary provision of Rs 4274.2 million, besides funds of 30 million rupees have been released to Higher Education Department for setting up of incinerators in the schools (The Statesman, 2019). The Himachal Pradesh government has already put a ban on the plastic bags since 2009, and nowadays government is also sensitizing the citizens and tourists to use biodegradable paper bags or jute bags as a substitute for plastic bags.

Department of Environment, Science and Technology, Shimla, carried out a weeklong state wide campaign *Polythene Hatao, Paryavaran Bachao* to remove the use of plastic from Himachal Pradesh from May 27, 2018. The emphasis of this campaign was to inform and sensitize people regarding the detrimental

effects of plastic waste pollution, collection of plastic waste for its reuse to produce energy or construction material for roads, and construction of Waste-to-Energy plants in the state (Singh, 2018).

According to the Department of Information and Public Relations, Himachal Pradesh, Under *Swachh Bharat Mission*, the state government has conducted numerous activities for raising citizen's awareness, behaviour change and public participation to keep their surroundings unpolluted. For the management of waste, the HP government has built 1.75 MW Waste-to-Energy plant with a budget of Rs. 420 million in Shimla and 1.00 MW Waste-to-Energy plant of Rs 180 million in Manali under public private partnership (IPR-HP, 2020).

Accumulation of waste can be a menace to both human health and the environment. "Unmanaged plastic waste negatively impacts the natural environment and creates problems for plants, wildlife, and human population" (Matani, 2020). Plastic waste is not an easily biodegradable substance as plastic is made of toxic compounds whose accumulation may harm the environment. Plastic can be melted to recycle or repurpose it into other items, and it is a method to decrease the heaps of plastic waste in the environment. Nowadays, the Indian government is encouraging the collection of plastic waste and its reuse for the metalling of roads and as a fuel for cement plants. There is a complete ban in Himachal Pradesh on the use of plastic and thermocol cutlery, and the use of traditional plates and bowls made of leaves are being encouraged. The state government is collecting non-recyclable and the single use plastic waste for Rs 75 per kilogram (The Tribune, 2019).

Most of the tourist destinations of Kullu, Manali, Shimla and Kangra districts and the smart city Dharamshala, all have the same trends of dumping the waste in dumpsites unscientifically without segregation. Reality is that lack of solid waste treatment plants in all the districts in the state of Himachal Pradesh is a big challenge despite being a tourist destination creating a huge waste every day. Management of solid waste has become a key crisis in Kangra district as most of the urban bodies in the district lack dumpsites. Waste is not even segregated and treated properly and is polluting water resources and causing diseases (Mohan, 2020).

From the last five years, waste from the Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh (BBN) industrial belt is dumped unscientifically and untreated in the dumping site Kenduwal. This site has got an environment clearance in 2015 to make an Integrated Solid Waste Treatment Plant here but this place is getting toxic day-by-day

due to the unscientific dumping of industrial, bio-medical and municipal waste (Rathore, 2020).

Palampur, a beautiful valley full of natural resources and surrounded by snow-clad Dhauladhar hills, is also turning into a dumpsite as indiscriminate throwing away of waste all over had caused the environmental degradation. The first garbage treatment plant of Aima panchayat of Himachal Pradesh for waste disposal has been highly admired by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The NGT with HP High Court has directed other state panchayats to pursue further this specific model. Besides, the NGT has passed the direction to Himachal Pradesh government for stopping the dumping of solid waste in the river Beas and completing soon its solid waste processing plant (Bodh, 2019).

In the outskirts of Palampur in the Ghuggar panchayat, ten million rupees have been spent to get district's first garbage treatment plant, which has been set up on the lines of Aima panchayat that has been emerged as a self-sustaining model for other panchayats of the state to follow (Kumar, 2019).

Three hundred years old Kirpal Chand Kuhul, one of the oldest clear water channels used for drinking and other purposes in the Palampur region is crying for attention today, as it is highly contaminated and not even suitable for washing clothes. There are only two panchayats, Aima and Khalet that have their garbage treatment plants in twelve panchayats in Palampur. There are tonnes of garbage, polythene bags, animal carcasses, empty gunny bags, other waste material dumped in the Kuhul, and the situation is worse between Aima and Maranda panchayat (Sood, 2020, p. 3).

Despite various government initiatives, solid waste disposal is a major development issue to be resolved in Himachal Pradesh due to increasing waste and inefficient waste management practices in this prominent tourist destination.

Participatory Communication for Solid Waste Management: A Case Study of Gram Panchayat Aima

Gram panchayat Aima is situated in Tehsil Palampur of district Kangra in Himachal Pradesh that is about 15 km away from the development block headquarter, Bhawarna. It is a gram panchayat with 57.51 hectares of geographical area with a population of approximate 7000 people in its thirteen wards. Its watershed is Neugal Khad that is the tributary of Beas River. The government of Himachal Pradesh has given *Himachal Pradesh Environment Leadership Award, 2018-19* to the gram panchayat Aima (second prize)

in the category of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) on June 5, 2019, for its best practices adopted for environmental protection and sustainable development by following the environmentally sustainable and carbon smart economic growth model (Department of Environment, Science & Technology, 2019).

According to the Department of Environment, Science and Technology, Himachal Pradesh, gram panchayat Aima is working for environment preservation and sustainable development by embracing effective practices of solid waste management. Major achievements of this project are as follows:

1. First panchayat level, effective, modern, self-sustaining solid waste management system in the state,
2. First panchayat in the state that started door-to-door waste collection since 2016,
3. First panchayat in the state that is using eco-friendly battery vehicle for door-to-door waste collection (E-rickshaw) since 2019,
4. First panchayat level solid waste management plant in the state that is collecting waste from adjoining urban areas,
5. Effective segregation of waste,
6. Bio-composting unit installed and producing compost from biodegradable waste,
7. Recycling of non-biodegradable waste,
8. Provided job employability to eleven men through this project,
9. Successfully created the awareness of sanitation and waste management among its residents that brings their behaviour change,
10. Waste management in a compact space systematically without any clutter, odour and dust nuisance,
11. Waste management leads to environmental conservation and the protection of natural resources,
12. Solid waste management plant is a role model of participatory communication in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for sustainable development.

For ensuring safe and sustainable waste management, Aima panchayat has been successful in making the first panchayat level modern, self-sustaining garbage treatment plant in the state. Prior too, gram panchayat Aima was the first panchayat in the state that began the door-to-door waste collection on January 25, 2016, intending to bring about improvement in the sanitation, cleanliness, and overall good health conditions of the people. The garbage treatment plant has been made at a cost

of around Rs 5.5 million with modern solid waste treatment technologies.

At present, eleven sanitary workers are working very hard to collect the waste at a salary of Rs 8000 per month. A *swachhta* committee has been constituted from the 13 wards of Aima panchayat to manage and organize different activities for waste management. It is also creating awareness and behaviour change among the public for waste management, sanitation, and natural resources protection. This is done through regular meetings, discussion, communication through posters, media, public announcements for households, etc.

Besides the collection the waste of local residents of Aima panchayat, this garbage treatment plant is also collecting the waste of nearby hotels like RS Sarovar Portico, The Bliss, and Novelty Sweets. Apart from this, Aima panchayat's garbage treatment plant is also collecting the waste from Palampu Municipal Council.

According to the H.P. Panchayati Raj Act 1994, under section 100, the panchayats have to impose a fee for cleaning, sanitation, and solid and liquid waste management. An annual fee of Rs. 350 is being charged from each household nowadays. The municipal council of Palampur pays Rs 40,000 per month to the Aima panchayat for its services. Payment is also collected from hotels. The panchayat's total earning every month is being used for sanitation works of the panchayat and bearing all the expenses of waste management plant's operation. Hence, this waste treatment plant is not only self-sustaining but also generates revenue.

Before this plant, locals were in the big problem of disposing the garbage. The problem of the waste disposal had reached a state of crisis and waste accumulation had occurred in our wetlands and tea gardens. All Kuhals and Khad had converted to dumping sites. Earlier, heaps of domestic waste could be seen in the nearby tea gardens and clouds of smoke from burning waste could be seen floating in the air frequently. It was a very serious problem. After that, people also started dumping the waste in a nearby landfill site. However, residents along with Sanjeev Rana, Pradhan of the Aima panchayat, found a more sustainable method to resolve the waste disposable crisis. "It was during a national seminar under 'Swachh Bharat Mission' in New Delhi in 2017 when I came across an Israeli technique on waste disposal that was put on display. After the meet, I went to see the garbage disposal unit in Noida in Uttar Pradesh and decided to adopt the model for Aima Panchayat" (Rana, 2019).

After attending this seminar, the Panchayat Pradhan met with other elected members of the panchayat, residents and other stakeholders. They discussed and identified various problems created by this waste accumulation everywhere and its proper solution. After various oriented discussions on this project, all stakeholders agreed to work on this eco-friendly model of waste disposal. The residents even donated a vehicle to lift the collected solid waste from the households to the garbage plant.

At present, the total estimated solid waste collected in this plant is about 1.50 tonnes per day. Along with a tractor parked in Aima, waste is collected two times by E-rickshaw from households, market, hospitals and hotels in the morning and evening. Domestic waste should be collected within twelve hours because if kept beyond 24 hours, foul smell generates bad odour and formation of maggots. All the machines in this plant operate in a very less space without any foul odour.

The panchayat is using an eco-friendly vehicle (E-rickshaw) for door-to-door garbage collection. It has become the first panchayat in the state that has purchased a pollution-free vehicle in 2019. An electric rickshaw produces very less noise pollution while functioning, which gives very smooth and relaxing riding experience.

Proper segregation of waste is done at the plant in three categories viz., biodegradable (kitchen waste, dry waste, garden leaves, etc.), non-biodegradable (plastic waste, plastic bottles, PET bottles, and hard plastic material, etc.), and biomedical waste (syringes and other medical waste). Biodegradable wet kitchen waste (organic waste) is converted into compost. Composting is done through the fully automatic modern machine by an aerobic process. This valuable compost is used by nearby villagers for crops. Manure produced from this waste stops the emission of greenhouse gases, improves soil quality, and helps control soil erosion by improving soil's water holding capacity.

Shredding of plastic waste, PET bottles and hard plastic material is done in the shredder to decrease the volume of non-biodegradable plastic waste for reuse and recycle i.e. reduce, reuse and recycle with emphasis on zero waste generation. The granulator grinds the shredded plastic into granules. The extruder and binder change plastic waste into construction material like plastic bricks. The incineration process burns bio-medical waste, diapers, and sanitary pads. Two incinerators are being used in this garbage disposal plant for burning the sanitary waste and biomedical waste. This method is quite hygienic with no odour and dust.

According to Rana (2019), "Now we have launched GPS monitoring of sanitation workers to ensure that garbage is collected from each household daily". Various delegations and people from different places visit the waste treatment plant to study its different functions of door-to-door collection, treating garbage and making compost, and replicate it in their areas for efficient garbage disposal. It has become a model for the state for waste treatment and disposing of the waste of the adjoining areas.

Hence, salient features of this participatory model for sustainable development are:

1. Complete awareness and behavioural change through participatory communication,
2. Systematically collection and transportation of segregated waste,
3. Gram panchayat's ownership to manage, execute and monitor,
4. Self-sustainability of operation and maintenance is ensured by the people of gram panchayat,
5. The cost of waste management plant's operation will be borne by gram panchayat's residents in the form of *swachhta kar*, fees, duties and other earnings,
6. Establishing the principle of cost recovery from waste by following the concept of converting 'waste to wealth' in an eco-friendly way.

Success, Challenges, and the Way Ahead

This waste treatment plant has become a role model to follow. Even, Himachal Pradesh High Court order has confirmed to make use of this waste disposal model in other panchayats of the state. At present, work for similar projects is going on in several panchayats in Himachal Pradesh. This model is a first step towards achieving the goals of sustainable developments. Aima's award-winning waste management plant gives a lesson that local waste can be dealt efficiently by local people with their knowledge and experience collectively, and gives a loud and clear message that decentralized waste management is the way to sustainable development (Rathore, 2020).

However, there are various challenges that Aima waste management plant is facing:

1. Even today, there is a lack of awareness among people in the panchayat regarding the detrimental effects of throwing solid waste in open. Participatory communication can create awareness and behavioural change the people. More participation and coordination among local people are the need of the hour for implementation of solid waste disposal scientifically and systematically.

2. It is found that this plant is doing composting regularly but the shredder and other machinery to deal with the plastic waste are standing idle. These machines require a huge amount of electricity to change plastic into powder. Better alternative power sources those are renewable, inexhaustible, pollution-free, and economical are needed for the functioning of the plant in place of expensive electricity. This requires further innovation as the plant is unable to make plastic bricks at the present scenario despite all machinery available in the plant.
3. The total quantity of plastic that this plant is unloading in the waste is not quite sufficient to make adequate amount of plastic bricks to sell and does not even cover the operating cost of these machines. Therefore, bundles of pressed plastic waste are being sold to the recyclers.
4. There is a need to make a sustainable and economically viable waste management system with waste to energy facilities. Installations of Waste-to-Energy (WTE) plants are proficient ways to convert garbage to electricity that will further fulfil the electricity requirements economically.
5. The sanitary workers should be paid more salary for such a tough job.
6. Even today, some industries are throwing waste here and there and not following the environment protection norms and laws properly. The proper environment laws should be enforced for solid waste disposal so that the hazardous impacts on the atmosphere and wellbeing of people can be reduced.
7. Some people in the community lack a sense of responsibility towards proper waste disposal. Use and throw culture needs to be changed to the segregation of waste at the source, and give segregated waste to the collectors for further treatment in waste management plants.

Conclusions

First solid waste management plant of gram panchayat Aima in Palampur, district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh is an example of participatory communication in the Panchayati Raj Institutions for sustainable development. Participatory development communication is a successful people-centred approach involving all community people and stakeholders to communicate with each other, debate, and discover solutions to their problems.

Despite various government initiatives, solid waste disposal is the major development issue

to be resolved today in Himachal Pradesh due to increasing waste and inefficient waste management practices. It is a prominent tourist destination but its environment is degrading gradually due to unmindful throwing away and burning of waste in open. Waste management plants should be constructed to curb the menace of solid waste. Further, more participatory communication is required to promote behavioural change among the people towards the adoption of eco-friendly practices and proper disposal of solid waste for environmental conservation.

For the efficacious implementation of *Swachh Bharat Mission*, Himachal Pradesh is empowering its gram panchayats to deal effectively with waste by setting up various garbage treatment plants, and to bring about the behaviour change of the people to adapt healthier sanitation practices. It is hoped that upcoming waste treatment plants in the state will change the scenario of the garbage disposal, save the environment from further deterioration, and realize the dream of *Swachh Himachal Swasth Himachal*.

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Social Media: A Platform for News or Disinformation

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ABSTRACT

Prior to debating whether social media provide news or disinformation, we must understand how the whole concept of social media started. As is known, humans are social animals and interacting with others across long distances has been a concern of humans for centuries. Humans have always depended on personal interactions and communication to strengthen their relationships. When problems arose in conducting face-to-face interactions, humans invented plenty of creative solutions. One of which is social media, a tool of communication in modern times. This study analyzes the use of social media as a source of information or disinformation during various events and protest.

Keywords: Social media, Disinformation, Communication, News

Introduction

One of the earliest methods of communicating across great distances was correspondence in the form of letters, delivered by hand. The earliest postal service dates back to 550 B.C., and this primitive delivery system would become more widespread and streamlined in future centuries. In 1792, the telegraph was invented. This allowed messages to be delivered over a long distance. Although messages were short, they were a revolutionary way to convey news and information. Two more important discoveries in the last decade of the 1800s changed the methods of communication further: The telephone in 1890 and the radio in 1891. Telephone lines and radio signals enabled people to communicate across great distances, instantaneously, and were far more interactive in a way that mankind had never experienced before.

Technology changed very rapidly in the 20th Century. In 1940s after the first super computers were created, scientists and engineers began to develop ways to create networks between those computers, and this later led to the birth of the Internet. The earliest forms of the Internet were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of email were also developed during this time. By the 70s, networking technology improved, and 1979's it users started communicating through a virtual newsletter. Home computers were becoming more common and social media was becoming more sophisticated by 1980s. Internet relay chats were first used in 1988 and became more popular in the 1990's.

The first recognizable social media site, Six Degrees, was created in 1997. It enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. In 1999, the first blogging sites became popular,

creating a social media sensation. After the invention of Blogging, Social Media began to explode in popularity.

The Internet boom and social networking

In 2002, social networking really got its stride with the launch of Friendster. Friendster refined the idea of a routine 'Circle of Friends,' into a rich online community that existed between people who had common interests. Friendster had the same traits as an online dating site. Within a year of its launch, Friendster boasted more than three million registered users, and a ton of investment interest. Introduced just a year later in 2003, LinkedIn took a decidedly more serious and sober approach to the social networking phenomenon. Rather than being an informal platform for classmates, teenagers and cyberspace Don Juans, LinkedIn was, and still is, a work focused networking resource for professionals who want to connect with other professionals. In fact, LinkedIn contacts are referred to as 'connections.' Today, LinkedIn has over 500 million members. Facebook now leads the global social networking pack. It was launched in 2004, as a Harvard-only exercise and remained a campus-oriented site for two full years, before finally opening to the general public in 2006.

Over the course of recent years, the invention of gadgets like mobile phones, smart phones and tablets has completely changed social networking, and the way we communicate with each other. What used to sit on our desks now conveniently fits in the palm of our hands, allowing us to effortlessly communicate wherever we go.

With the rise of mobile computing, the usage of popular social media platforms now hinges on the capabilities of smart phones. Photo and video-

sharing applications such as Snapchat and Instagram, the latter of which has now garnered a staggering 50 billion images since the app's initial inception in October 2010, exist almost entirely on mobile.

Viral videos (videos posted online that are shared and viewed repeatedly), have created more complications for social media giants than they have opportunities. Then there is the attraction of live streaming; live broadcasts on social networks. Like viral videos, live streams have the unique ability of making viewers feel like they are 'in the moment.' A popular live stream has a snowball effect and can quickly become a trending topic.

The integration of live streaming on Twitter and Facebook has also made the two companies more open to striking broadcast deals with third-parties. Having seen the success that BuzzFeed and its counterparts have had with video, both traditional and new media companies have been quick to embrace Periscope and Facebook Live. Facebook and Twitter remain some of the most popular social networks on the Internet. Other sites like Tumblr, Spotify, Foursquare and Pinterest began popping up to fill specific social networking niches. With the launch of mobile applications such as Whatsapp and Instagram, generation next is set to enjoy social networking like never before.

Today, there is a tremendous variety of social networking sites, and many of them can be linked to allow cross-posting. This creates an environment where users can reach the maximum number of people without sacrificing the intimacy of person-to-person communication. We can only speculate about what the future of social networking may look in the next decade or even 100 years from now, but it seems clear that it will exist in some form for as long as humans are alive.

Social media and Government

Social Media technologies are now regularly employed by a majority of internet users. In India 230 million or 70% are active social media users. For Generation Z in the country, it has already become a way of life - tweeting about problems while getting a passport or writing a Facebook post about the sanitary conditions on trains and expecting a response from the concerned authorities. This was unimaginable just a few years ago.

It is impossible for government agencies to ignore Social Media in this age of rapid information dissemination; for this precise reason government agencies are increasingly using social media to connect with those they serve. These connections have the potential to extend government services,

solicit new ideas, and improve decision-making and problem-solving.

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in its first term launched the 'Digital India' campaign in 2015 to ensure all of the government's services are made electronically available. Today, the Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Textiles, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Office of the Prime Minister of India (PMO India), Ministry of Defense, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and other major organizations are heavily followed on social networking platforms.

In fact, keeping in line with Prime Minister's vision of creating a digitally empowered nation, a large number of leaders, organizations, ministries and the armed forces are marking their presence online - that too with witty quips at times. With rapid smart phone penetration and half a billion people in the country now using internet, millennial now feel that the much needed 'digital revolution' is on the right track.

Leading from the front, Mr. Narendra Modi has 64.6 million followers on Twitter, where he conveys important policy decisions and 50.7 million followers on Instagram, where he posts about cricket, travel destinations and pictures of him meditating in ice capped mountains, while keeping his country informed about the work he looks into.

Since digitalization has bridged the gap between citizens and the government, a lot of information and data now reach the authorities first hand. Social Media has eliminated the need of a middleman. "People personally reach out to us with their grievances which not only keeps information clear but also helps us help them immediately," says Sunil Dubey, Deputy Secretary, Department of Revenue, Madhya Pradesh.

Sampada Saraf, a 24-year old Deputy Collector from Madhya Pradesh believes that digitalization has not only made proceedings more transparent for the citizens, but has also helped authorities keep a tab on the progress of their work. "From registration of complaints to getting a caste certificate, ration card or land disputes, has been or is in the process of being shifted online," (as reported by IANS).

Challenges to Governance from Social Media

There are no two opinions about the fact that people now care about the digital presence of the government handles. However, interacting via social media introduces new challenges related to privacy, security, data management, accessibility, social inclusion, governance, and other information policy issues. The rapid adoption of social media by the population and government agencies has outpaced the

regulatory framework related to information, although the guiding principles behind many regulations are still relevant. Let us examine the challenges agencies face in implementing them, as well as possible approaches for addressing these challenges.

The face of media is changing with new communication technologies such as camera-enabled mobile phones, spy cameras & voice recorders. These give journalists an opportunity to gather and disperse information very easily. Digitization of the news media has led to compression of time and distance but various hidden realities and factor still affect the reporting of conflicts.

Influence of Media in Conflicts

During local, domestic or international conflicts, the images broadcast in our living rooms, not only inform the audience of the horrific happenings but may also potentially instigate further violence. Media kindles opinion-building and impacts political decisions and audience's reactions in society. This eventually shapes crises and conflicts, with carefully selected news dissemination and tight control over media.

Social media platforms have been widely used in protests worldwide as a communication and organisation tool for over a decade. Without it, the 2011 Arab Spring, one of the largest waves of unrest in recent history, would never have happened. At the same time, the growth of crowd-sourced information and reporting has contributed to the spread of misinformation, as well as state surveillance. Governments have grown aware of the power of a global network and narratives, particularly as platforms like twitter are increasingly hosting debates over policy and ethics. In countries like China, North Korea and Iran, western social media platforms are permanently banned, while the practice of imposing internet blockades during periods of social unrest is becoming more common.

Government affidavit in India's Supreme Court:

The Government's primary concern in the affidavit that it had filed in the Supreme Court was the apparent disruption that the internet is causing. The Government pointed out the rise in hate speech, fake news and so-called anti-national activities online through defamatory social media posts. The need for greater regulation of social media companies stems from the growing feeling that they are not doing enough to curb the misuse of their platforms.

In recent times, many of them have been

involved in brushes with the government and courts. For instance, short-video app TikTok was accused of promoting pornography among teens and temporarily banned from app stores following a Madras High Court order; WhatsApp was slammed for not being able to curb fake messages which led to several cases of mob lynching in 2018 and, more recently, for the Pegasus spyware attack. Twitter too has been criticized for failing to curb hate speech.

While the legal government draft talks about intermediaries as a whole and doesn't specify any particular segment, the proposals that apply to social media companies include setting up an India office and having a nodal officer for liaising with the government; furnishing information within 24 hours and tracing the source of a post or information. While forcing companies to have a nodal officer in the country can make these platforms more accountable to legal requests, it also makes them vulnerable to government pressure.

The fact that India doesn't have an encryption law per se also complicates the scenario. In fact, section 84A (introduced after an amendment in 2008) of IT Act 2000 has specific provisions authorizing central government for coming up with a policy on encryption. It has been 11 years but there is still no law on it.

Challenges in enforcing cyber regulations:

Apart from having no encryption law, to ensure that companies abide by the proposed rules and furnish information within 24 hours, the Indian government will have to address hurdles in mutual legal assistance treaty between India and the US. Due to these hurdles, many government requests take a lot of time to process. The target of the Indian government should be having an executive agreement with the US under the Cloud Act.

The US has significant stakes in the data localization debate as many of the companies are based in the US, and that can be used as leverage to negotiate such an agreement. That will allow law enforcement agencies in India to have expedited access to information held by platforms which are based outside the country.

Case of WhatsApp: Challenges and concerns

With the largest WhatsApp market in the world, and a place where users forward more content than anywhere else, India has a unique challenge while tackling the issue of fake news via social media applications like WhatsApp. Concerns have been raised in India regarding the liability of WhatsApp

group administrators, citing instances where the administrators of WhatsApp groups were arrested.

A joint order issued by District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police of Varanasi (2017) states, that an FIR can be filed against group administrators if any factually incorrect, rumor or misleading information is circulated on a social media group. A response from State Cyber Crime of Maharashtra (2018) mentions the challenge police faces in keeping a watch on WhatsApp content, since the platform is end-to-end encrypted. Holding WhatsApp group administrators liable for a crime done by another person is unconstitutional and a plain misuse of criminal law. Circulating a malicious message intended to create ill-will or enmity, is a cognizable and non-bailable offense, under Sec. 505 of the Indian Penal Code (Singh, 2018). Holding group administrators liable for failing to regulate fake news and hate speech by deleting such posts from WhatsApp is impractical, since there are other legal implications. If the admin deletes such content, it would mean destroying evidence, which is punishable under Sec. 204 of IPC.

In addition, a Delhi High Court judgment clarified that holding administrators responsible for content someone else had posted was illogical. In the judgment, the court said that "...to make an administrator of an online platform liable for defamation would be like making the manufacturer of the newsprint on which defamatory statements are published liable for defamation" (Ashish Bhalla vs. Suresh Chaudhary & Others, 2016).

Provisions of Information Technology Act, 2000

Section 69 (1) of the Information Technology Act, 2000 relates to how the Controller can extend decryption of information facilities, to any agency, for intercepting any information, transmitted through any computer resource. The person-in-charge of the computer resource shall, when called upon by any agency directed under Section 69 (1), extend all facilities and technical assistance to decrypt the information. Any person who fails to assist the agency referred to in Section 69 (2) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years.

Section 79 of the Act, provides for cases when the Network service providers or intermediaries are not held liable. This provision of law is precisely for the removal of doubts and thus declares that no person providing any service as a network service provider/intermediary shall be liable under this Act, rules or regulations made there under for any third party

information or data made available by him/her. This provision comes into play if the person proves that the offense or contravention was committed without his/her knowledge or that he/she had exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offense or contravention.

Also, new proposed changes under Section 79 require online platforms to deploy technology-based automated tools or appropriate mechanisms to proactively identify or remove or disable access to illegal information or content.

Gauba Committee on fake news

In September 2018, Gauba Committee, a team reporting to government on menacing instances of fake news leading to cases of lynching, came up with a recommendation. The committee, headed by the Home Secretary of India, Rajiv Gauba, recommended that India heads of global internet and social media giants should face criminal proceedings, if their platforms are used to propagate fake news or campaigns that incite violence, ultimately causing riots and cases of lynching. In June, Gauba urged the representatives of Google and Facebook to take appropriate measures to filter fake and explosive content.

The inter-ministerial committee added that if social networks are used to peddle information that contravenes Sections 69 and 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, it has to be addressed in a time-bound manner. Even the central government appeared to have taken steps in drafting new guidelines to make social media platforms bound to respond to complaints about fake news in a few hours.

The problem that looms before the Gauba Committee recommendation is the question of who decides which content is suspicious and needs to be pulled down. Again, here, the involvement of government as overseeing body of the committee's recommendation brings in the possibility of a conflict of interests while drawing a line separating the suspicious content.

Even though, the government delegates the responsibility of censoring the content to private social media corporations, the problem of where to draw a line persists. Media corporations need to have a sufficient understanding of how social media algorithms function in detecting the keywords in the content and identifying them as suspicious to overcome this problem.

Regulatory Body - Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA):

One more mechanism in pursuit of fixing the

fake news plague is the establishment of the Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA), a regulating body. DNPA is an establishment initiated by ten leading media companies in India, in response to the increasing pressure from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, to foster digital space in the country. Along with self-regulatory steps, it welcomed the idea to work together with government and other similar associations. This regulatory body for digital media was initiated in line with Press Council of India (PCI) for print and the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) for television news, to come up with a cleansed digital information network.

Problem with Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA)

There is one major problem with this initiative. Although it says that the organization is open to any online news publisher and that the board will clear all the membership applications, one look at the current founding team gives a different story. The very purpose looks defeated since all its founder members are either television or print media companies for whom; digital news platform forms a small part of their operations.

This scenario raises many doubts about the effectiveness of the organization since it might give rise to a conflict of interests. The very issue of the propagation of fake news in the digital space comes back to haunt us if the players of the digital space like Scroll, The Print, The Wire and many like these are left out of the founders' community. These new-age media companies seem to be steering away from the association.

News audience has become vulnerable to fake news due to their naivety towards the threats it poses. Audiences show more interest towards extensive consumption of social media platforms citing the power of their fundamental rights and claiming democratic participation. However, there is little importance given to the awareness of regulating content on social media.

Social Media feeds on the trust of the civil society by harnessing the public emotions of the participants and persuading them into sharing specifics. When Italy came up with rules to criminalize sharing and posting of 'false, exaggerated or biased' information by imposing fines and bringing in imprisonment provisions, it attracted criticism for redundancy and challenging the Freedom of Expression under their Constitution.

Germany too, earned its share of criticism, when it mandated online platforms to remove 'obviously

illegal' posts within 24 hours to avoid levy of exorbitant fines. Similarly, the Malaysian government also attempted to repeal the existing Anti-Fake News 2018 Bill to safeguard the democratic space where people enjoy a right to free speech. France faced backlash for its move, which was argued as a threat to democracy and censorship to foreign media outlets.

Recommendations

India can learn lessons from criticism the countries mentioned above faced in the implementation of policies in their countries. One can understand that the policies required to regulate content are highly sensitive. Therefore public voice and their rights are to be considered with care before implementing any policy that intends to regulate content. India can incorporate one of the following strategies, where importance is given to spreading awareness among stakeholders instead of regulating content and violating the constitutional provisions.

Ensuring Literacy - Media or News literacy has been one of the most promising solutions recommended by many experts around the world. The initiative needs to be backed by the ability to understand the relationship between news and ownership patterns to evaluate the information based on its source credibility.

Discrediting Fake News - In India, awareness campaigns have been released by service providers to alert users about the consequences of fake news and why it is important to be self-aware before forwarding any message. In December 2018, WhatsApp rolled out three ad films as a part of their strategy to fight back circulation of fake news ahead of general elections. These campaigns asked users to check the integrity of the information they receive on forwarded messages, before sharing it with others.

Conclusion

Purpose of news is to make people aware of what is happening around, and allow people to have a common ground to converse, to constitute a dynamic public sphere. Social Media, with its reach, popularity and instantaneity, is a potent tool for communication development if used properly. Otherwise, it could also become a double-edged sword. Fake News has become a menace which can only be curbed when collective efforts are made from individual to policy level.

Social Media is just a body to broadcast information quickly – whether the information is right, authentic or false or malicious depends ultimately on the individual and how he/she takes

it. Whether the individual gets lured immediately or waits for a reliable source, and frames opinion or action, which is ultimately in favors of the whole society. In conclusion, whether Social Media is news or disinformation depends upon the intention of the individual posting something online, and the resulting action of the individual who consumes that information.

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Effects of Social Media on News Consumption: A Study of Female University Students of Delhi

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ABSTRACT

Social media is influencing online news consumption in a decisive way. Social networks have a significant impact on users' media consumption and they are behaving as content aggregators, which is providing diverse content at one place. This study tries to explore the news consumption habits of female students of three central universities of Delhi. A survey method has been implemented for the purpose by administering detailed questionnaire to female students. The study finds that 95% of female students have social media account and majority of them are on Social Networking Site (SNS), Facebook. Others like Google Plus and Twitter are far behind in popularity (less than 25% each) The study reveals that nearly 38% students get their daily news by online medium and 62% get it through Facebook. Majority of students (46%) agree that more they use social media; more they consume news and it is giving them opportunity to gratify their different needs. This study finds that when female students are exposed to Political, Sports, Religious or Viral news on SNS, they are most likely to read and like it. Spearman rank order relation finds a very significant relation between reading and liking such stories. However a large chunk of students (42.5%) couldn't recall their news sharing pattern on SNS but majority of them agreed that news on social media gives them confidence, liberty to speak on issues, express themselves and has made them socially more aware about their surroundings.

Keywords: Social media, News consumption, Social networking site, Uses and gratification, Female students

Introduction

Increasing internet penetration and use of social media is rapidly changing the news consumption habits of people in India. Initially online news posed a challenge in front of conventional media outfits like TV, print and radio. So when they recognised it and modified their online version to grab the users attention, a new phenomenon called News Aggregators started snatching their user base and online advertisement revenue. Since news aggregators provide diverse content taken from traditional news outfits at one place, traditional news outfits started losing their loyal users and revenue. A study by (Lee & Chyi, 2015) indicates that in this process, news outfits lose the exclusivity of their content and the news aggregators take advantage of their large reach and big market.

Meanwhile a new entrant in the online news space again changed the whole scenario. Popularity of Social Media and its power to engage its users changed the online news consumption scenario completely. A research report by (Shearer & Gottfried, 2017) has highlighted the fact that nearly 67% Americans get some of their news from social media. Since social media gives the users a chance to interact on a news story and they can read, watch, like, comment or share it in real time, it enhances the news story's individual

and social consumption significantly. Another study by (Seth *et al.*, 2016) approves this which says that opinion stories have a share of 6% in hard news consumption and one-third of it is coming through social media or search engines.

India has adopted this social media revolution very quickly and its social media user base in recent years has increased significantly. According to data of a website (Statista, 2021), India has the largest number of Facebook users in the world surpassing United States of America. It reveals that India has 320 million Facebook users as of January, 2021. United States of America is far behind with 190 million users. Since India has largest youth population in the world (According to 2011 census report, it is 422 million), rapid smart-phone penetration and cheap data prices has made it easier for them to access internet and in turn use social media.

However, studies suggest that women are far behind from men in terms of internet and social media usage. A report on news outfit "Scroll" quotes findings of a research which elaborates that in India, social media giant Facebook has three male users for every female user which means that it has 76% male users and only 24% female users. In view of this large gender gap, this study tries to find out the relation

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between SNS and its impact on news consumption of Delhi's three Central University female students. The study explores if high social media usage can result in greater degree of online news consumption and gratification of their different needs and how they behave with different news content on their social media wall.

This study has some meaningful insights for news industry too as findings show that social media platforms are playing a key role in online news consumption for female students and students do click on the corresponding news link to get details, when content of the news story appeals or excites them. Thus traditional news outfits need to devise and design a target oriented social media strategy to disseminate and distribute their online content effectively. It can help them to attract online traffic from social media platforms to their news outfits' landing pages.

Review of literature

Social Media is playing a key role in online news dissemination and consumption. Several studies have been done on the use and impact of social media on news consumption and user behavior. Quan-Haase and Young (2010) state that people use Facebook to get social information and be in touch with their near and dear ones. It acts as a platform where people find general news of their importance and which matters to their community.

Another study on the effect of social media on news consuming habits of people is being done in Canada by Hermida, Fletcher, Korell and Logan, (2012). Findings of this study say that traditional news outfits are recognising power of social media and they are rushing to adapt it. They are viewing SNS like Facebook and Twitter as a key source to distribute their content. This study also finds that social networks are acting as a key source of news for the people residing in Canada and about two-fifth of them using social networking said that they get news from the person, they are connected with on SNS like Facebook.

A scholarly article by Usher-Layser (2016) focuses on the news and information dissemination power of facebook. It says that Facebook uses very complex algorithm called EdgeRank to anticipate what users want to see. So the effect of Facebook in filtering news and information has created a debate among academicians and policy makers. Facebook algorithm never shows opposing views and there is a fear that Facebook's ability to manipulate the news can have a noticeable impact on people. This report quotes an experiment of *The Wall Street Journal*

which had made an interactive which was giving special attention to news feed for conservative and liberals on Facebook.

Another scholarly article by Seymour (2012) highlights the incidental way, in which people are exposed to news on SNS. The author has mentioned a research from University of Missouri which states that internet users came across news accidentally while looking for other information online or while doing non-news related activities such as online shopping or surfing through social network sites. Author has also quoted Sean Gelles who is director of social media for online performance marketing agency MeaiWhhiz, who elaborates that people are consuming news from SNS because their friends and peer groups are sharing links of articles on their walls and they pick it from diverse traditional news outfits.

The study by Kerrigan and Graham (2010) focuses on regional news media and its' challenges from internet. This study emphasises that regional media is facing a tough completion from new media and there is a strategic gap in news outfits' capability to harness the power of internet. The study says that news outfits are not taking advantage of social media which has a unique potential to give users an engaging experience.

Pentina and Tarafdar (2014) talk about news consumption, information overload and role of SNS in addressing these issues. The study states that contemporary news consumption habits can be specified by two distinct characteristics. First, there is a screening news stimuli where user identifies the content and source to consume. Then there is a contextual factor where user adjusts itself to deal with the information overload. In view of this, social media empowers the users by giving them timely and relevant content which are curated by likeminded people in their network.

Flaxman, Goel and Rao (2013) discuss ideological segregation and social networking sites. The study finds that while consuming articles shared on SNS, people show substantial ideological segregation. Social media can become a major channel for the dissemination of news which can increase ideological segregation.

Hajli (2014) has accepted the role of social media in social interaction and consumption habits. It states that SNS has given a new opportunity for consumers to engage in online interaction. People use it to generate content and for networking with the people. This study highlights how social media uses its influence to build trust among its users.

Zúñiga, Jung and Valenzuela (2012) examined the SNS's influence on news. The study enquires its effect on news consumption on the basis of four factors which are social capital, civic engagement and online as well as offline political participation. It finds that there is a significant statistical relation between use of SNS for news and thereby reporting higher level of social capital. It means that social media can facilitate community life too apart from facilitating civic participation.

Interesting research by Lee and Ma (2012) suggest that with the power of social media, people can participate in news production and its dissemination easily. The study finds that those students, who were seeking information, status or socialising gratifications were more prone to share news on their social media wall.

Ju, Jeong and Chyi (2014) analysed the presence of United States' 66 newspapers on internet. This study explored how Facebook and Twitter are effective as news platforms and finds that if we see Twitter in the perspective of reach, it is much more effective than Facebook.

An interesting pattern is being revealed in the report of Reuters Institute (2017), which claims that growth in social media for news is incremental and messaging app is giving a tough competition to giants like Facebook. This report states that use of WhatsApp for news is giving a rigorous competition to Facebook in several countries. This study also voice users' concern which says that inadequate rules and algorithms are encouraging and propagating fake news.

In light of these studies, we find that people are consuming news on social media in Uses and Gratification paradigm. In fact, (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010) and (Lee & Ma, 2012) have conducted their study by implying Uses and Gratification theory.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to explore how female university students are consuming news on social media platforms. The study tries to identify what are their news consumption patterns and by consuming news on social media how they are gratifying their different needs.

Theoretical framework

Uses and Gratification theory is employed as a theoretical framework for this study. People use social media to gratify their different needs and availability of news on social media helps them to choose and

consume the desired information. Basically Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is an audience centric approach to understand mass communication process which elaborates that audience or user is king and people use media as per their choice, circumstances, surroundings and desire to gratify their different needs.

Hypothesis

In view of the objective of this study, our prime hypothesis is that the more female students are using social media, the more they are exposed to news and hence consuming it more. Also female students gratify their different needs by consuming news on social media.

Research questions

Research questions were designed to meet the objective of the study and test the hypothesis. For this study, following research questions were formed.

RQ1: How many female students are using the social media and which they visit the most?

RQ2: Do they consume news from social media or merely use it for social networking?

RQ3: What are the needs they gratify by consuming news on social media?

RQ4: What is their primary sources of online news, social media or traditional news outfits?

RQ5: How do they behave after being exposed to news on social media (like, comment, share)?

RQ6: What are its effects on them, individually and socially and how they gratify their needs?

Research design

The study focuses on the three prominent Central Universities of Delhi regarding "Effects of Facebook and Twitter on female's news consumption". These universities are identified as Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Milia Islamia and University of Delhi. The study uses survey method for the collection of primary data. A detailed questionnaire was used as a research tool to collect the data.

Sample size: According to a 2015 study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the number of female students enrolled in higher education increased from 39% to 46% from 2007 to 2014. Therefore total number of female students from each university was calculated as 46% of the total enrolled students in a particular year. For this study a random sample of total 105 female students has been taken from three Central Universities of Delhi. 35 female students each from JNU, Jamia and DU participated in this study.

Method of calculating sample size:

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)

As per the website of JNU, total no of enrolled students for AY 2016-17 was 8432 including overseas students. So according to IMF study, 46% of 8432 is 3879 and the sample size for the study is 0.9022% of 3879 which is 35 students.

Delhi University (DU)

According to Delhi University's website, the university has 132435 regular students, where number of Under Graduate students is 114494 and Post Graduate students are 17941. So total number of female students of DU is calculated as 46% of 132435 which amounts to 60920 female students. This study includes 0.057% of total female students of DU which is 35.

Jamia Milia Islamia (JMI)

As per the website of Jamia Milia Islamia, total number of female students enrolled as on 15.09.2015 is 5551. Going by this data, the study includes 0.63% of total female students of JMI which is 35.

Minimum age of female students of this study's sample is 17 years and maximum age is 31 years and their mean age is 20.5 years.

Results

All participant female students of three central universities of Delhi are accessing internet. They are familiar with the World Wide Web for a long time and on an average, they are using it for the last 6.5 years.

When asked if they use social media, 95 percent of the respondent replied in 'Yes' and only 5 percent said that they don't use social media. From the response of the female students, Facebook has emerged as a leading and favorite social networking site as 78% respondents have an account on this social networking site. Twitter and Google Plus are very close to each other as 24% female students have a Twitter account and 23% have Google Plus account. LinkedIn has landed at fifth position with 13% students going for this social network. Interestingly respondents have mentioned Whatsapp and Instagram as their choice of social network in the OTHER option of the questionnaire and Whatsapp is leading at number four position with 16% students voting for it. Instagram too was the choice of 5% students.

Only 5.7% students have no account on social media and when they were asked about its reason, majority of them termed it as 'waste of time'. The results of this research survey gives very optimistic

view as 38% female students are getting daily news by online medium. However, newspaper (print) is still their first choice for daily news as 44% respondents opting for it but as per the survey results, online media is grabbing its space.

To know the popularity of the online news among female students, a question about their preference of accessing news was asked through survey questions. Majority of students, 61% replied that they would prefer accessing news online instead of traditional form of news media- Print, TV or Radio. Only 39% students said that they would prefer traditional media form over online news.

Also Facebook is the first choice among all SNS for getting online news as 62% students opted for it. Google plus is at number two position with 13% share and Twitter stands at number three slot with 8% share. Apart from social networking sites, online messaging apps (OMA) are also a powerful tool of online interaction and this survey shows that online messaging apps are ruling the internet space. When asked which OMA is useful for them to access news, Whatsapp is a distinct leader with 84% female students voting for it. Snapchat and Hike is very close to each other with 6% and 5.9% share respectively.

Spearman rank order test

The research also explores the specific genre of news on SNS and female students' preference of consuming that specific news. This study provided ten genres of such news as Entertainment, Crime, Politics, Health, Education, Sports, Business, Religious, Women and Viral news. The students were asked to rank every genre of news on a scale of one to four whether they want to read it, watch it, listen to it or it depends. Female students were also asked to rank every genre of news (1 to 4) as per their preference whether they would like it, comment on it, share it or depends on the news content.

Entertainment Stories: The results show that when female students read an entertainment related story, they tend to comment on it as Spearman value $\rho = 0.22 > p 0.024$. When they watch such stories, they like it ($\rho = 0.172 > p 0.0039$). Also when they listen to such stories, they like it ($\rho = 0.16 > p 0.1$) and share it as well ($\rho = 0.16 > p 0.0979$).

It's clear from the above results the female students are gratifying their entertainment needs from news on social media which is approving the theoretical framework of this study.

Crime Stories: The results show that when female students read a crime story, they like it as Spearman value $\rho = 0.32 > p 0.001$. When they watch

such stories, they like it ($\rho = 0.25 > p = 0.0014$). Also when they watch such stories, they share it ($\rho = 0.15 > p = 0.1186$).

Political Stories: The results show that when female students read a political story, they like it as $\rho = 0.0735 > p = 9e-04$. Also when they listen, they share it ($\rho = 0.16 > p = 0.114$). It signifies that female students are politically active and don't hesitate to react on political news.

(See table 1.3)

Health Stories: The study indicates that Health is also on top priority of majority of female students as they tend to like or comment on such stories on their social media wall ($\rho = 0.19 > p = 0.053$) and ($\rho = 0.25 > p = 0.0093$).

Education Stories: Results show that Education also attracts female students as they comment on such stories, when read them ($\rho = 0.16 > p = 0.0989$). Also when they watch, they like ($\rho = 0.15 > p = 0.1202$) and comment ($\rho = 0.18 > p = 0.0691$) on it.

Sports Stories: When students read a sports news on SNS, they like it and comment on it too. ($\rho = 0.36 > p = 1e-04$) & ($\rho = 0.2 > p = 0.376$). Also when they watch it, they share it ($\rho = 0.26 > p = 0.0071$).

Religious Stories: When students read religious news, they like and comment on it. ($\rho = 0.33 > p = 5e-04$). Also when they watch it, they like it ($\rho = 0.15 > p = 0.1237$).

Women Stories: When students read such stories, they share it. ($\rho = 0.22 > p = .0225$). Also when they watch it, they like it ($\rho = 0.24 > p = 0.0122$) and comment on it ($\rho = 0.28 > p = .0041$).

Viral Stories: When students read viral news, they like and comment on it. ($\rho = 0.333 > p = 0.00050$) & ($\rho = 0.16 > p = 0.0997$). Also when they watch it, they share it ($\rho = 0.18 > p = 0.0675$) and when they listen to it, they share it too ($\rho = 0.17 > p = 0.0752$).

The results of above Spearman tests indicate that Alternate hypothesis is accepted in all these cases which means that significant relationship is existing ($\rho > p$) between reading, watching, listening as well as liking, commenting and sharing a news story on social media wall of female students.

Pearson Chi Square Test

The results of Chi square tests in this study also reflect that habits and behavior of female students' online news consumption have significant relation with each other.

The tests between Q.16 and Q.35 have Chi Square value (χ) 17.74 which is greater than its critical value (p) which scores 0.21. So Alternate

hypothesis ($\chi > p$) is accepted in this case which means that there is significant relationship between these two behaviors. It means that when female students click on a news story, they tend to like or comment or share that story.

Similarly Q.9 was about primary source of online news for female students and Q.30 dealt with preferred mode for accessing online news. Chi square value for these two variables comes as $\chi = 66.41$ and critical value $p = 6.943e-07$. Here too $\chi > p$, so Alternate hypothesis is accepted. It means that on SNS, mode of accessing news (text or video or Live TV) matters for them.

The Q.3 ask that if they use social media and Q.39 asks about sharing online news with friends or relatives or in groups. Here Chi Square value $\chi = 22.909$ and $p = 0.000132$. Again $\chi > p$ and Alternate hypothesis is accepted which means that very significant relationship exists here. We can conclude that when female students use social media, they do share news on their social platform as per their choice and convenience.

Summary of the findings

- This study finds that 48% female students find social media as the easiest way to access news.
- Facebook is most preferred online platform to access routine news.
- Majority of female students (Nearly 54%) opted for Education related news to read. Second choice is women related news (nearly 48%) and Politics related news is their third choice to read (nearly 45%). Health news is at no four (39%) and Viral news is at no five (38%).
- Entertainment news is first choice of female students in terms of watching it on SNS as 37% opted for it.
- Like (As first preference): Women related news is at no one slot here (52%), entertainment stories are at no two position (51.42%) and Education at no three (50.5%).
- Comment (As first preference): Less than 15% students expressed their desire to comment on any story as their first preference in all categories. However, they think that Health and Sports news are worth to comment as majority of them (13%) voted for it.
- Share (As first preference) : Less than 14% students showed their willingness to share a story as their first choice after being exposed to it. Crime stories are at number one slot in this category as 13% female students are likely to share it on exposure. Women, Education,

Politics and Sports are at second slot because less than 10% students in these categories opted for it.

- News on social media has not replaced the traditional news forms yet. The study finds that 63% students still access news when they don't go to social networking sites and Television is their first choice (45%) in that scenario. Newspaper comes in second place (21.1%).

Discussion and conclusion

This study finds that 95% female students have social media account and majority of them (78%) are on Facebook. Google Plus and Twitter (less than 25% each) are far behind in popularity. Social media is playing a leading role in online news consumption as 69% respondents say that social media is their primary source of online news and majority of them use Facebook for it. Traditional news media websites and apps get 10.5% share each in online news consumption. Online messaging apps earned only 9.5% share only.

The female students consume different genres of news on social media to gratify their needs and for every genre of news they react (like, comment, share) differently. Nearly half of the respondents (49.5%) say that they consume more news due to social media as it expose them to variety of news stories.

The Chi Square test of this study reveals that more time the female students spend on social media, more they click on news to get details and share it on their wall. It also makes them more aware about their society and surroundings. This study's 43% respondents say that social networking sites has made them more aware about their surroundings. Only 5.5% respondents say that social networking sites has no effect in improving awareness level of their surroundings.

The Chi Square test also confirms that by spending more time on social media, the respondents get the opportunity to understand different perspective and opinions of a news story. It also encourages them to write their own opinion on social media. This proves the study's research hypothesis that greater use of social media expose the female students to more news and they consume it to gratify their different needs.

Further, Spearman rank order test of this study shows that female students are liking, commenting and sharing different genres of news stories, which are gratifying their cognitive, social integrative and personal integrative needs.

Limitations and future scope of the study

There are many areas in the study, where results

don't show the complete picture. For example, majority of female students (54%) prefer education news to read and Pearson results prove that there is a significant relation between reading and commenting on an education story ($r > 0.0989$) but we don't know why and how female students give so much importance to education related news stories. Also, we have identified certain online behaviour of students as their like, comment and sharing pattern but we are not sure why they behave in such manner. To explore it more, we need in-depth interviews of the respondents and have to design qualitative analysis method.

Also, this study has not focused on leading mainstream news outlets' presence on social media and reaction of female students to that. It would be interesting to see how female students react and behave when stories of different mainstream news outlet appear on their timeline. The sample size of this study is also very small, so results show major trends only.

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A Study on Scope and Effectiveness of MOOCs for Agricultural Education

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ABSTRACT

This study is based on the research undertaken to examine the status and potential of agricultural education through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). This includes profile of the learners, utility and quality of agriculture MOOCs. Data was collected through an online survey of three agriculture MOOCs offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) on SWAYAM platform. The salient finding of the study includes: MOOCs is an important tool of imparting education to agriculture professionals and stakeholders as the MOOCs have equal popularity among rural and urban as well as learners employed and employment seekers. The need exists to create awareness about agriculture MOOCs particularly among women learners to enhance their participation. The study also gives suggestions to further improve the agriculture MOOCs and SWAYAM platforms as well as topics for development of new agricultural MOOCs.

Keywords: Agriculture education, MOOCs, SWAYAM, Online education, Agricultural

Introduction

Knowledge and competency upgradation among agricultural professionals is continuously increasing due to various reasons such as reinforced importance being accorded to agriculture sector in national economies; enhanced livelihoods opportunities; new policies and scientific interventions; and emerging issues like climate change, sustainability as well as increasing commercialization. Agricultural professionals *viz.* farmers, input suppliers, extension personnel, supply chain agents, food processors, researchers, academicians and even policy planners need enhancement in their knowledge and capabilities to perform their role and duties efficiently and effectively. The conventional educational system has vast infrastructure and facilities to serve the purpose. It is difficult for agri-professionals to participate in the conventional mode of capacity building due to time constrain and limited flexibility of courses. There is a felt need to explore the online and open education system for capacity building activities under the agriculture professions. The Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are quite successful and popular.

Genesis and Growth: The phenomenon of the MOOCs was started in 2008 and in a short span of 4–5 years they had become very popular. According to an estimate, 20 million new learners had joined at least one MOOC in the year 2018 and more importantly the numbers of fee payee users are increasing over the period (Dhawal, 2019). MOOC is an open education system, impart education on online platform and

intends to serve large number of learners. The curriculum of MOOCs contains video lessons and text based self learning materials; interaction through quizzes and discussion forum; and evaluation through assignments, reports and examinations. The learners are provided flexibility in undertaking and completing the week-wise structured curriculum.

Digital Spread: The availability of low cost internet and internet technologies have been instrumental in increasing access to online education and MOOCs to a larger segment of the society even in far flung areas. The MOOCs have a good potential to serve the educational requirement of agricultural stakeholders. Various agricultural MOOCs are available on the popular MOOCs providing platforms such as Coursera, Edx, FutureLearn, Canvas network, Udemy, etc. MOOCs have gained very high popularity and acceptance among the disciplines such as business management, engineering, computer science, science, humanity, and social sciences as compared to agricultural MOOCs. Limited numbers of MOOCs are available in the agriculture and allied disciplines may be the reason.

MOOCs Platforms: Indian learners are very well utilizing this revolutionary method of learning. India accounts for a significant share of learners enrolled on the Coursera, Edx and Udacity platforms (Chauhan, 2017 and Shah, 2016). After seeing the popularity of the MOOCs at the global level, a number of MOOCs development initiatives has been started in India and most prominent MOOCs providing platforms

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available in India are NPTEL, mooKIT, IITBombayX and SWAYAM. IIT Kanpur and Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada has developed a platform for agriculture MOOCs namely agMOOCs which has offered a number of agriculture MOOCs since 2015.

SWAYAM: The SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) is the most recent MOOCs platform started by the Ministry of Education, Government of India and has gained immense popularity. A good number of agriculture MOOCs have also been offered along with other disciplines.

The School of Agriculture, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has taken a lead by offering six agriculture MOOCs at certificate and diploma levels *viz.* Food laws and standards; Technology of Fermented, Cheese, Ice-Cream and By-products; Indian Agricultural Development; Sustainable Management of Biodiversity; Introduction to Poultry Farming; and Solar Water Pumping System. Three cycles of MOOCs have been run successfully. It is important to have an empirical study on the effectiveness and the quality of delivery of such online mode of education in agriculture field. The study reflects on the profile and quality of agricultural MOOCs initiatives in India under SWAYAM platform. The study shall help the course providers in improving the course design, development and delivery of the agriculture MOOCs.

Methodology

An online survey of the registered learners of three agriculture MOOCs *viz.* Food Laws and Standards; Technology of Fermented, Cheese, Ice-Cream and By-products; and Indian Agricultural Development offered on the SWAYAM platform (<https://swayam.gov.in/>) was conducted. The data were collected through an online structured questionnaire using the Google Form. Link of the questionnaire was sent to the learners with a request e-mail to provide the requisite data for the research study. The important parameters included for data collection were the socio-economic profile of learners; awareness about the agriculture MOOCs; purpose of undertaking study on agriculture MOOCs through SWAYAM platform; and the quality of MOOCs in terms of study contents, delivery and interaction. The learners were also requested to provide feedback on major problems faced by them in undergoing the MOOCs and provide suggestions to improve the platforms. The study also sought information on the areas/topics for development of new agriculture MOOCs. A total of 199 learners submitted online questionnaire. Some

of the respondents did not respond to all the questions included in the questionnaire. The data provided by the learners were compiled and results are presented in the paper.

Result and discussion

Socio-economic profile

The MOOCs are popular among the young learners as about 54 per cent respondents were having the age between 21-30 years. Mishra (2016) too reported in his study on agriculture MOOCs that maximum learner were from the young age group. The persons of this age group go for higher education, search the job opportunities and/or take the education for better job opportunities. It was also found that about 32 per cent respondents were aged above the 31 years and purpose of undertaking education for them were improving their knowledge, skills and to enhance professional competency. About 87 per cent respondents were male and female participation was only 13 per cent, and this calls for creation of awareness among female learners. The study revealed that the higher qualified learners are more enrolling in MOOCs. About 39 per cent MOOCs takers had the Post Graduate degree followed by the Under Graduate degree (about 33 per cent). About 11 per cent MOOCs takers had the Ph.D. degree. The senior secondary pass out were also enrolled for the MOOCs comprising 11 per cent respondents. Both employed (47 per cent) and employment seeker (53 per cent) had participated in the learning through MOOCs. The most interesting fact emerged from the study was that the participation of rural learners (58 per cent) was more than that of the urban learners (42 per cent) and the probable reason for this could be availability of internet even in far flung areas across the country (Table 1). The socio-economic profile suggests that the MOOCs have good acceptability across the society and has the potential participants to increase the access to education. The focus need to given for its popularity among the female learners as they are good potential for the MOOCs.

Awareness about agriculture MOOCs and platforms offering agriculture MOOCs

The level of awareness on agriculture MOOCs and platform offering these MOOCs is presented in the Table 2 and the results were not encouraging. The study revealed that 26 percent learners were not aware about other MOOCs and other platforms offering agriculture MOOCs. About 30 percent learners were knowing the title of the courses only but not

the platform. About 31 percent learners could tell the name of the platform offering agriculture MOOCs but could not tell the title of other courses. Only 13 percent learners knew the title of the agriculture MOOCs as well as the platforms offering the agriculture MOOCs. This indicates that there is a need to generate awareness and enhance their acceptability by linking the MOOCs with the academic credit and this could be taken by organizing sensitization workshop in the agricultural universities. The new MOOCs may be designed in the areas which could be readily taken by the female participates.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of respondent-learners

Particulars	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age (N=199)		
Up to 20 years	26	13.07
21 to 25 years	63	31.66
26 to 30 years	45	22.61
31 to 35 years	32	16.08
36 to 40 years	11	5.53
Above 40 years	22	11.06
Average age (Years)	28.61	
Gender		
N (total response)	199	
Male	173	86.93
Female	26	13.07
Highest qualification (N=197)		
Doctorate	21	10.66
PG degree	76	38.58
UG degree	66	33.50
Diploma	10	5.08
Higher secondary	23	11.68
Secondary	1	0.51
Employment (N=199)		
Employed	94.00	47.24
Not-employed	105.00	52.76
Rural /urban (N=199)		
Rural	116.00	58.29
Urban	83.00	41.71

Table 2: Types of MOOCs available in agriculture and platforms offering agriculture MOOCs

Particulars	Number of respondents	Percentage
Not aware about other MOOCs and platforms	16	26.2
Could tell title of courses only	18	29.5
Could tell platform only	19	31.1
Could tell MOOCs title along with platform	8	13.1
Total number of respondents	61	100.0

Purpose of undertaking MOOCs

The learners of three MOOCs namely Food Laws and Standards; Technology of Fermented, Cheese, Ice-Cream and By-products; and Indian Agricultural Development were requested to specify objectives for joining agricultural MOOCs. The responses from the learners indicated that the prime purpose for joining the courses was knowledge enhancement (66.49 per cent respondents) followed by the skill enhancement (64.43 per cent), and to get aware on the subject of the course (56.19 per cent). About 46 per cent learners expressed that they did join the course to add to their existing qualification. About 32 per cent learners indicated that they had joined the course for seeking new employment opportunity and equal number of respondents indicated that they wanted to experience a new way of learning (Table 3). The similar trend was observed by Mishra (2016) in a study on agriculture MOOCs and had indicated that increasing knowledge and awareness about the subject were the main reasons for undertaking MOOCs.

Table 3: Reasons for undertaking agricultural MOOCs

Particulars	Number of respondents (N=194)	Percentage
Knowledge enhancement	129	66.49
Skill development /enhancement	125	64.43
To get aware about the subject of the course	109	56.19
To add on existing qualification (get a additional qualification / certificate)	90	46.39
To seek new job opportunities	63	32.47
To practice new way of teaching learning	63	32.47

The learners were also requested to indicate the reasons for studying through MOOCs platform and the results are presented in the Table 4. Majority of learners ascribed that the easy access and study anytime and anywhere' are the major reasons for opting MOOCs courses. Difficulty in attending the conventional courses, limitation in attending the regular classes, non-availability of courses in the regular mode and flexibility in the MOOCs, were other reasons expressed by the learners.

Table 4: Reasons for undertaking study through MOOCs platforms

Particulars	Number of respondents (N=190)	Percentage
MOOCs have easy access to everyone	115	60.53
Provide access to study anytime and anywhere	110	57.89
Difficulty in attending the course in regular mode	98	51.58
Provide educational opportunity with free/less cost	93	48.95
Provide a flexible approach of study	92	48.42
Can be taken while on the job	79	41.58
Course not available in face to face (conventional mode)	40	21.05
Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard syllabus with job orientation • Continuing higher education • Means of keeping busy in old age 	4	2.11

Quality of MOOCs curriculum

The quality of learning material, level of interaction, delivery of the contents and comfortability in undertaking the courses are important parameters for the success of online and distance learning programmes. These parameters were examined and the response is given in the Table 5. The quality of the study materials, both video and text based lessons, were examined in terms of presentation; language and style; multimedia and illustration used; and conceptual clarity. The majority of the learners (about 70 per cent) confirmed the quality of the study materials either 'very good' or 'excellent' in terms of 'overall quality'; 'presentation quality', 'language and styles', 'multimedia and illustration used' and 'conceptual clarity'.

Table 5: Quality of study materials provided under MOOCs courses

	Video lessons		Text (SLM)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Overall quality	N=192		N=189	
Excellent	59	30.73	57	30.16
Very good	79	41.15	73	38.62
Good	51	26.56	58	30.69
Poor	3	1.56	1	0.53
Presentation quality	N= 190		183	
Excellent	61	32.11	53	28.96
Very good	75	39.47	74	40.44
Good	51	26.84	56	30.60
Poor	3	1.58	0	0.00
Language and style	188		183	
Excellent	56	29.79	56	30.60
Very good	77	40.96	73	39.89
Good	53	28.19	53	28.96
Poor	2	1.06	1	0.55
Multimedia / Illustration used (Pictures, diagrams, tables, etc.)	191		186	
Excellent	66	34.55	57	30.65
Very good	66	34.55	78	41.94
Good	56	29.32	50	26.88
Poor	3	1.57	1	0.54
Conceptual clarity	189		182	
Excellent	64	33.86	64	35.16
Very good	66	34.92	67	36.81
Good	58	30.69	50	27.47
Poor	1	0.53	1	0.55

About 87 percent learners ranked the video contents as 'extremely useful' and 'very useful'. Similarly, 78 per cent learners indicated that the text based study materials were 'extremely useful' to 'very useful'. The quiz as an integrated part of curriculum appreciated as 'useful' (48 per cent learners). More than 70 per cent learners expressed that discussion and assignments provided in the MOOCs were 'very useful' to 'extremely useful' (Table 6).

Table 6: Usefulness of study contents / components provided in undergoing / completing the study through MOOCs

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Video lessons	N=176	
Extremely Useful	60	34.09
Very useful	93	52.84
Somewhat useful	21	11.93
Not Useful	2	1.14
Text based study materials (Self learning materials)	N=180	
Extremely Useful	57	31.67
Very useful	83	46.11
Somewhat useful	38	21.11
Not Useful	2	1.11
Quizzes	N=183	
Extremely Useful	59	32.24
Very useful	87	47.54
Somewhat useful	32	17.49
Not Useful	4	2.19
Discussion	N=181	
Extremely Useful	46	25.41
Very useful	92	50.83
Somewhat useful	39	21.55
Not Useful	4	2.21
Assignments	N=181	
Extremely Useful	49	27.07
Very useful	90	49.72
Somewhat useful	38	20.99
Not Useful	4	2.21

The level of interaction is another important component of the course curriculum. The study revealed that level of interaction was 'good' for about 47 per cent learners and 'extremely good' for 35 per cent learners (Figure 1). The responses on the effectiveness of the delivery of MOOCs through SWAYAM platform is given in the Figure 2. About 37 per cent learners mentioned that the course delivery through SWAYAM was 'very good', followed by 'extremely good' (29 per cent learners), 'good' (22 per cent learners) and 'satisfactory' (10 per cent learners).

A good number of learners, about 54 per cent, had revealed that they were comfortable using the SWAYAM platform and only 4 per cent learners expressed that they were not comfortable with SWAYAM platform (Figure 3). The MOOCs are

structured courses with a week-wise coverage of the contents. The Figure 4 indicates a substantial number, 61 percent, were comfortable in undertaking the MOOCs offered through SWAYAM platform.

The Figure 5 shows that the learning objectives have been met to a substantial extent for 37 per cent learners and to adequate extent for 44 per cent learners. About 16 per cent learners expressed that the learning objectives met to the partial extent (Figure 5). This shows that there is need to improve the course design so that all learners achieve the desired learning objectives. The learners expressed that the MOOCs are excellent (39 per cent learners) and good (49 per cent learners) as a teaching learning methodology for imparting the education to the large segment of the society (Figure 6).

Problem faced by the learners in undertaking the MOOCs

The learners were requested to identify three major problems they encountered during the course of study through MOOCs. A total of 53 learners expressed various types of problems. The problems faced by the learners have been categorized and the same are presented below:

Course curriculum: Difficult syllabus; heavy content load; lengthy and not regularly updated videos; inadequate contextualization with the local conditions and examples; lack of the practical hands-on training and 'on field' experience; and too much classroom adherence in videos. At times it was difficult to understand the concept given in the text material, high difficulty level of quizzes; language, fluency and explanation need to be improved; and courses not offered at regular intervals were other important problems mentioned by the learners.

Communication: Lack of timely information; no regular updation and notifications about exam and new courses; and inadequate mechanism for clarifying doubt, feedback and query dissolution.

Time: Rigid course schedule and poor time management at the learners' level.

Assignment: Lengthy assignments, fixed time line for submission of assignments and no reminder for submission of assignments.

Assessment and certification: Problem in submission of exam form, limited number of examination centers, high exam fee for credit certificate, and timely award of certificates

Technical and infrastructure: Internet connectivity and its prohibitive cost; slow MOOCs application, interruption in video playing; no existence of mechanism to check the self progress/

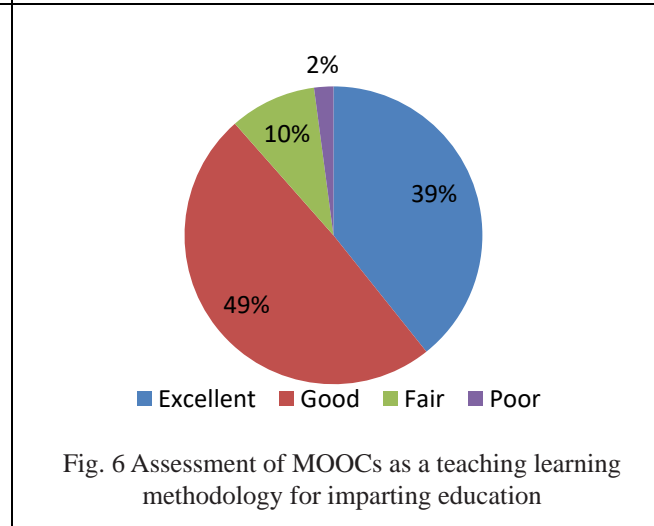
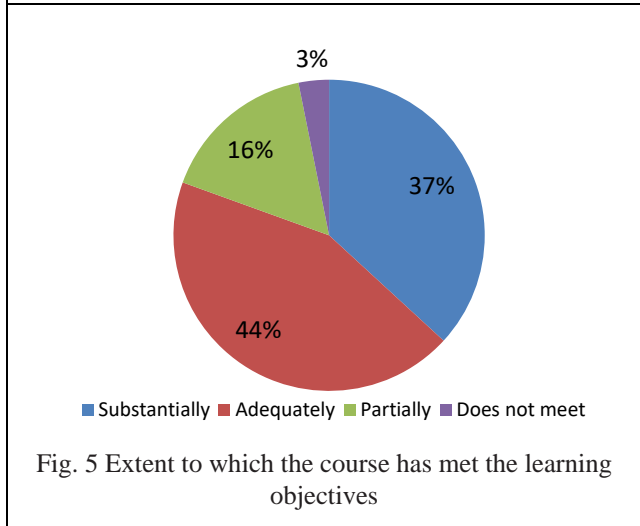
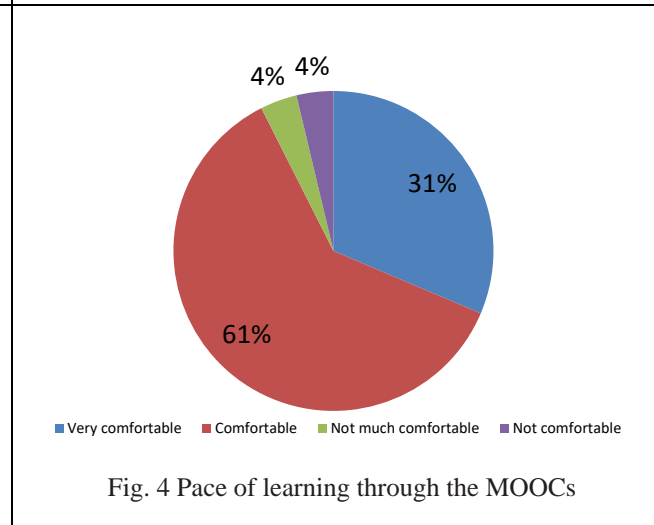
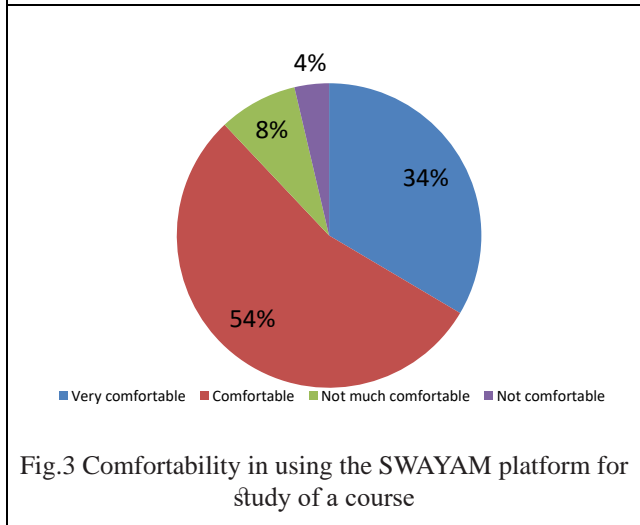
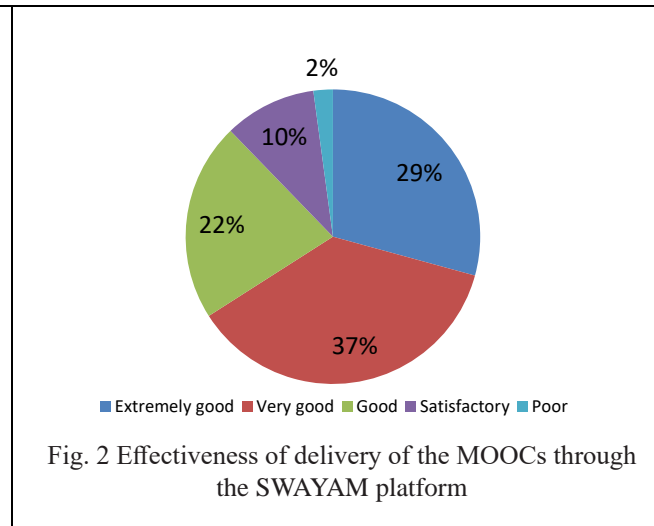
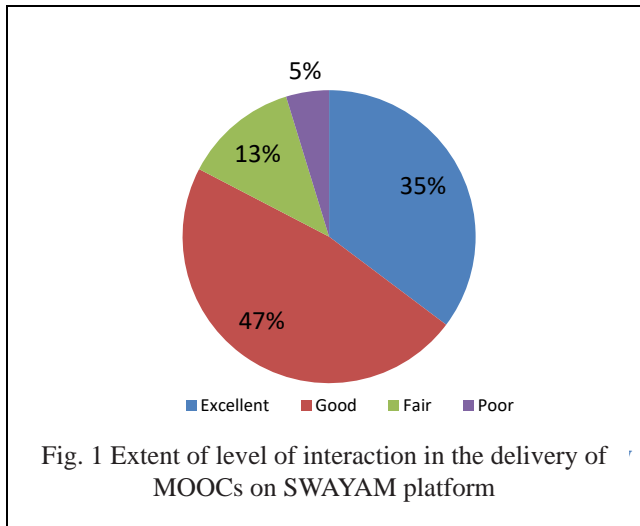
completion of course, inconvenient dashboard and navigation; logging problem; and offline mode option not available; and download facility of study material not available.

The above results suggest that the MOOCs on SWAYAM need strengthening in all aspects of design and delivery. The credit-wise load of the course contents, communication and learners engagement

strategies and assessment and certification process of MOOCs under SWAYAM need to be reviewed.

Suggestions to improve delivery of MOOCs

About 31 learners gave suggestions to improve the design and delivery of MOOCs through SWAYAM platform. Learners suggested to increase the access for reaching to aspiring learners through collaboration



with more colleges. The suggestions expressed by the learners are presented here:

Course: Improvement in registration process; courses availability in Hindi and regional languages, duration of the course be limited to maximum two months; flexible provisions and introduction of advanced/practical oriented courses.

Course Curriculum: Reduction in the syllabus/course contents; integration of demonstration, online practice, video conferencing, multimedia and animations; skill training component; practical demos and case studies; and download facility for the study material.

Communication: Communication with learners could be strengthened by providing timely notifications, SMS alert, email, online discussion forum, mechanism for feedback and response to queries. The learners also advocated for few face to face sessions on weekend. Goldberg and Ladd (2019) highlighted the importance of in-person contact along with digital interaction for best result through MOOCs. The course materials and discussion forums should be available even after the completion of course.

Assignments: Number, size and time should be appropriate.

Technical and Infrastructure: Update platform software and resolve the problem of buffering of videos.

Assessment and certification: More weightage to continuous evaluation instead of final exams and round the year mechanism for certification.

Areas for Agriculture MOOCs

A few MOOCs are available in the discipline of agriculture and allied sciences as compared to other disciplines. One of the objectives of the study included to identify the topics for agriculture MOOCs based on the needs of the learners. About 44 learners had suggested various topics for agriculture MOOCs. The same have been structured into different subareas and are given here:

Agriculture and crop management: Organic farming; Soil fertility analysis and development techniques; Kitchen gardening, Terrace gardening, Horticulture, Crop production technology; Agro-climatology; Irrigation technology; Water Saving technologies; Entomology; Crop Protection; Pesticide Control; Productivity and organic fertilizers; Smart Devices and Precision Agriculture Development; Eco-cultural approach of agriculture management; and Weed management.

Allied disciplines of agriculture: Fisheries, Bio

flocks (fish culture), Lac processing, Biotechnology; indigenous dairy products, Zoonotic diseases; Organic animal husbandry; Agro-forestry.

Post harvest management, food processing and safety: Cheese Technology; Packaging Technology; Food Science and Technology; Food Safety Laws; Food preservation techniques; Preservation for fruits; Occupational Hazards and risk assessment; Post harvest technology, Pesticide residual analysis

Sustainability: Zero budget natural farming; Climate Change and Agriculture; Conservation of natural resources; Biodiversity; Traditional and indigenous agricultural practice.

Agricultural economics and Business management: Marketing Management; Agriculture e-marketing, Agricultural exports, Supply chain management: Farm to Fork journey; agricultural price forecast; Resource Planning, Agribusiness Management & Agri Entrepreneurship; Gender & Food Security;

Extension and ICT: Transfer of technology, ICT in Agriculture; Agricultural psychology.

In order to promote the agricultural MOOCs, in the initial stage, the MOOCs may be developed in the areas which require less practical components in the curriculum such as agripreneurship, agricultural marketing, agribusiness management, extension technologies and continuing education of agriculture.

Conclusions

MOOCs acceptability is increasing gradually and have become very popular in a short span of time. MOOCs also have capacity to serve the educational need of agricultural stakeholders and professionals. MOOCs in agriculture area are also being developed and offered though in a limited numbers. IGNOU is offering six agriculture MOOCs at diploma and certificate levels for the last three years through SWAYAM platform. The study undertaken indicated that the courses were popular among young learners having qualification above graduation degree and well taken by the both employed and unemployed as well as rural and urban learners. The share of female participation was found less compared to male participation. Awareness need to be created about agriculture MOOCs and platforms offering MOOCs as many of the learners did not have information on these. The prime purpose for undertaking the MOOCs was knowledge and skill development in the subject area. The study revealed that MOOCs provided an easy access and flexibility in time and space especially to learners who had difficulty in attending the regular courses. The quality of the learning materials (video

and text based) were found very good to excellent in terms of presentation, language and style, use of multimedia and illustration, and conceptual clarity. The video lessons, text based study materials, quizzes, discussion forums and assignments provided in the courses were 'very useful' to 'extremely useful' in undergoing /completing the agriculture MOOCs. The level of interaction and effectiveness of the delivery of MOOCs were found very good. The SWAYAM platform was convenient in use and the pace of the learning was also comfortable.

The learning objectives met to adequate level and the teaching learning methodology was graded at the level of good. The problems related to course curriculum; communication; study time; assignments; certifications; and technical and infrastructure were indicated by the learners. The suggestions included improvement in registration process; communication with learners in providing timely notification, query resolution, provision of personal contact; reducing syllabus and course contents; inclusion of demonstration, online practice and skill training. The learners also suggested reduction in the size of assignments and improvement in the assessment and certification process. The subject areas identified

for the new MOOCs included agriculture and crop management; Post harvest management, food processing and safety; Sustainability: Agricultural economics and Business management and agriculture extension.

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Development of Haryanvi Cinema: A Journey of Five Decades (1968 – 2020)

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ABSTRACT

Indian cinema has been around for over 150 years. In 1898, Hiralal Sen created the first film “*The Flower of Persia*”. This was one of the first milestones of Indian cinema. Many developments have taken place, not only in terms of technology used in cameras, photography, lighting and sound, but also in various concepts and languages of Indian cinema. When it comes to regional cinema, Haryanvi cinema is the least discussed. This study looks into the development of Haryanvi cinema through the eyes and experiences of a few leading Haryanvi film creators including, directors, actors and producers through focus interview.

Keywords: Haryanvi cinema, Haryanvi actors, Haryanvi talents, Haryana Film Cell, Haryana Film Policy

Introduction

“Dharti” (1968) is considered as the first Haryanvi movie; as per the History of Haryanvi cinema mentioned on the website of Haryana Film Cell (Government of Haryana). But some critics say that *Dharti* was not a feature film, instead, *Beera Shera* was the first Haryanvi feature film. The total films listed by Haryana Film Cell (HFC) are 40 in number. This indicates that in more than 50 years of Haryanvi cinema, nothing much has been achieved or created. Haryana Film Policy came into being in 2018 along with the creation of Haryana Film Cell.

The Haryanvi film industry has its achievements. There are many national and international awards conferred to the films of Haryanvi language viz. *Laado* (2000), *Pagdi the Honour* (2014), *Satragi* (2015) and the latest being *Dada Lakshmi* (2020) along with State awards which were given at the First Haryanvi Film Festival for the Best Actress category to the film *Chander Kiran* in 1986.

Earlier, there were three traditional film centres viz. Bombay, Poona and Kolhapur in the west; Madras, Mysore, Salem, Alleppey, Alwaye and Hyderabad in the south; Calcutta in the east. Attempts were made in 1967 to create full-fledged units in Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Ghaziabad and Haryana, Punjab and Gujarat.

Since 1968, when the first Haryanvi film came to the screens, no film received any award until 1986. The First Haryanvi Film Festival was held at Hisar in 1986. *Chander Kiran* bagged the award for Best

Actress (Pushpa Soni). The film is Produced and Directed by Dilawar Singh. This is one of the first achievements of Haryanvi cinema.

It was only in the year 2000 (47th National Film Awards) when the Indira Gandhi Award for the Best First Film of a Director was given to Ashwini Chaudhary for “*Laado*”, which spoke boldly and stood for women’s rights in an agricultural community of Haryana which is traditionally orthodox. Ashwini started his career with “*Beech Bahas Mein*”, a news-based weekly on Doordarshan. *Laado* was the first celluloid work of a 35-year-old director.

In the 62nd National Film Awards (2014), the Best Haryanvi Film was given to “*Pagdi the Honour*”, directed by Rajeev Bhatia. The film captures the rudeness and aggressiveness of a patriarchal society. Rajeev Bhatia, a gold medalist learnt film making from Ketan Mehta and Late Mukul S. Anand. He had directed TV shows for various channels. Another award for Best Supporting Actress was given to Baljinder Kaur Sharma for the same film. She was earlier noticed for her role in the National award-winning film “*Shahid*”. She was also given the Haryana Gaurav award for her contribution in theatre and cinema.

63rd National Film Awards (2015) added another feather in the cap of Haryanvi cinema by “*Satragi*” (Sharma, 2015) bagging the award for Best Haryanvi Film. The film addresses the social issue of how a girl child is neglected in the state and eventually empowers the girl. This film was directed by Sandeep Sharma.

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Objectives

While searching for some writings or literature regarding Haryanvi cinema, researcher was unable to find anything which is documented, hence, researcher has decided to gather first-hand information from the primary sources. Based on the literature gap, the following objectives are identified:

- To find out the various achievements of Haryanvi cinema at National and International levels.
- To find out the reasons as to why the Haryanvi film industry is not recognized as the other regional cinemas.
- To know the requirements to uplift and develop Haryanvi cinema.

Research questions

- Whether the Haryanvi films have ever received any awards at the National or International levels?
- Why Haryanvi films are not looked upon as sensible, impactful or good?
- Why celebrities/film personalities from Haryana doesn't consider making Haryanvi films?
- How to motivate filmmakers to work for the regional cinema of Haryana and help in the growth of the industry?

Review of literature

Rana (2018) in her paper, "Representation of Haryanvi culture in Bollywood with special reference to Vishal Bhardwaj's movie-*Matru ki Bijli ka Mandola*", talks about bringing the Haryanvi culture to the screens through Bollywood. There are well-written songs in the Haryanvi language as well. The dialogues, dressing styles, chaupal etc. shows a clear picture of the society and culture of Haryana. It was a bold step for a director to create a film with a Haryanvi backdrop, she concludes.

Mhatre (2010) talks about the situation of khap panchayats in northern India. Her paper throws light on how khaps have annulled the marriages of many young persons and how these panchayats work defying the Indian Constitutional laws. She tries to dig deeper into the roots of rural society to understand where it all started.

Siwach (2010) opines that khaps have given the idea for the story of Haryanvi films. Khap panchayats can become good themes for filmmakers. National award-winning Haryanvi film *Laado* was also based on such a concept.

Aditi (2014) talks elaborately about the film

Laado from the legal perspective. It also discusses the impact of such films on society. She tries to bring out the real picture from the reel picture. It also suggests societal reforms are thus required to overcome such issues.

Research methodology

The sole purpose of this research plan is to gather the information directly from the sources. Thus, primary data is gathered through unstructured questionnaires with open-ended questions that were directly asked from the persons responsible for making or working in Haryanvi films.

The qualitative research methodology used in this study. The method is a Focus interview of a selected sample size of four persons. This is taken as a purposive sample based on their availability and time. The four names mentioned above are selected because they are all a part of those Haryanvi films which have been conferred awards at various levels. As we have to find out about the development of the industry, these persons can show us the journey through their experiences.

Interviews of a few Haryanvi award-winning film Directors, Actors and Producers. Their names are:

(i) **Rajeev Bhatia, Director of National award-winning film "Pagdi the Honour" (Bhatia, Pagdi the Honour, 2014)** : This film released in 2014 and won the National award for Best Haryanvi Film and also the Best Actress award which was given to Baljinder Kaur. The film also won five awards at Haryana International Film Festival (HIFF) for Best direction, Best actor (Ravi Chauhan), Best supporting actress (Baljinder Kaur), Best story (Rajeev Bhatia) and Best Editing (Upendra & Sankalan studio).

(ii) **Yashpal Sharma, Director, Actor and Producer of the latest International award-winning film "Dada Lakhmi" (Sharma & Lakhmi, 2021)** : Yashpal Sharma is a famous Bollywood actor and belongs to Hisar. After playing roles in award-winning Haryanvi films like Pagdi the Honour and Satrangi, he has now come up as a debutant director of the biopic "Dada Lakhmi". He is the director, producer and actor of the film. This was his dream project and it took him 5 years to complete it. He had also announced the sequel of the film during the interview. Dada Lakhmi had received 4 awards at Kaashi Indian International Film Festival and one at Rajasthan International Film Festival.

(iii) **Sh. Dilawar Singh, Producer and Director of State award-winning film “Chander Kiran”**

(Singh, 1985): Dilawar Singh is the Director and Producer of “Chander Kiran”. The film was made in 1985, a year after the famous film, “Chandrawal” was released. Chander Kiran (Haryana, Haryana Film Cell: List of Haryanvi language films, 2018) bagged the award for Best Actress which was played by Pushpa Soni. The award was given at the First Haryanvi Film Festival which was held in February 1986 at Hisar, Haryana.

v) **Sh. Ravi Chauhan, Actor in the leading role in the National award-winning film “Pagdi the Honour”**

: Ravi Chauhan is the actor in a leading role in the film Pagdi the Honour. He received the Best Actor award for the film at Haryana International Film Festival (HIFF). He has a career of around 40 years in theatres and films.

The rationale behind selecting this research approach is that there is not much written about Haryanvi cinema so far. No work has been done on this topic till now. As the researcher belong to Haryana, she thought of working and finding out about the growth and development of Haryana film industry but, couldn't find anything worth mentioning. So it was decided to gather first-hand information directly from those who are from the industry itself.

Analysis of the four interviews (refer to Annexure I for questionnaire)

All four interviews were different concerning the perspectives of the interviewees. While analyzing the information gathered from them about the objectives of the research, here are the following outcomes.

Firstly, it was to be seen that whether the cinema of Haryana has reached any National or International level in its journey of development from 1968 to 2020. It is found out that the Haryanvi cinema has achieved various awards at State, National and International levels. *Chander Kiran* (Dir: Dilawar Singh) had received the Best Actress award at the first Haryanvi Film Festival which was held in 1986 at Hisar. Likewise, films like *Laado*, *Pagdi the Honour* and *Satrang* received National and International appreciations in 2000, 2014 and 2015, respectively. Yashpal Sharma, in his debut venture as director and producer of the film *Dada Lakhmi*, is complete in 2021, has been recognized at various International levels, even before its public release.

Therefore, it can be said that Haryanvi cinema is not completely ignored by others but, the levels of

achievements is less and needs more recognition for its growth. In more than 50 years of Haryanvi cinema, only three National award films have been won.

Secondly, it was to find out that why Haryanvi cinema is not taken up seriously by the filmmakers or the audience, where are they lacking and why the cinema is walking at a low pace since 1968. Rajeev Bhatia opines that people of Haryana lack motivation in the field of filmmaking. Haryana can produce many quality films but the foremost reason is that people don't have monetary support. Filmmakers want to be famous like Hindi film industry so, they didn't want to work in Haryana. Everyone needs recognition.

On the other hand, Yashpal Sharma was of the view that the culture, language and people of Haryana were not shown positively in the Hindi film industry for long, thus it damaged the image of the State's language and culture along with the films. He continued saying that TV serials like *Na aana is des Laado* and the character of “Ammaji” played by Meghna Malik, was phenomenal. The credit of polishing the Haryanvi language goes to her. The proper use and pronunciation of the language were not refined or correct earlier. Films like *Dangal* and *Sultan* had tried to do justice with the language. Ranbir Hooda had done complete justice to his role and language in the film *Laal Rang* because he belongs to Rohtak. So, it is all about the right things at the right place at the right time.

As per Dilawar Singh, it was not that Haryanvi films were not known to the Bollywood persons or that Haryanvi dialect was unknown to them. They considered Haryanvi language as rude or straight forward and not refined but when the editing of his film was going on in Bombay, some rushes of his film were played in the studio. There were some actors present in the studio, which were struggling in those days but had now become the legends of the industry, they saw the film's rushes and were quite impressed by what a young boy of Haryana had created as his debut.

Ravi Chauhan, the experienced actor and writer with a span of around 40 years in his career notes that Haryanvi is not a language, it is a dialect. So the language doesn't have a base. But as a dialect, it is now liked and understood by the Hindi filmmakers and also the audience. Earlier, the dialect was used, in Hindi films, by a negative character film. It was not used in normal routine dialogues. So, the nature of the language was lost somehow. But now, many serials like “*Na aana is des Laado*” and the actors of Hindi films are saying Haryanvi dialogues which are liked by the audience. Therefore, language has a big role to

play in any cinema to flourish.

Thirdly, it was to find out that how the Haryanvi cinema can be uplifted or what is required to motivate filmmakers for the development and growth of the industry. Motivation, positivity and creativity and the sense to understand the audience were the keys to become a successful filmmaker, said, Dilawar Singh. He didn't have the technical knowledge of film making but he gathered a team of technical experts from Haryana and Mumbai and thus, was able to create the film. He added that filmmaking is an art and once a person started working for it, he gets to know all the technicalities etc. One has to be passionate about this.

Rajeev Bhatia believed that film production was not as easy as it looked. First, he needed a team of actors, technicians, story writer etc. He was fortunate enough to get some of the actors from Haryana itself. Baljinder Kaur and Ravi Chauhan, in the leading roles, did justice to their characters. Monetary support is a vital part of film making and if the government supported such endeavours then it would have been easy. There was no such support from the state in 2014.

The debut director of the 80s, Dilawar Singh added that every film needed support in terms of money, technology etc. but the government of the state lacked behind in all such matters. Now, in 2018, Haryana Film Policy (Haryana, Haryana Film Cell, 2018) has been established by the Haryana government. He hoped to have more additions in Haryanvi films now. Another reason was that the language was considered rude and unrefined but now with the coming of films like *Dangal* (Tiwari, 2016), *Sultan* (Zafar, 2016) and *Laal Rang* (Afzal, 2016), the language barrier had gone.

Concerning the changes and development of Haryanvi cinema, Ravi Chauhan opined that Haryanvi cinema is a small film industry. Many actors had given their lives while working in the industry like Jagat Jakhad, who had worked in around 12 Haryanvi films and left his career in medicine to fulfil his dreams. Chandrawal broke all box office records of those times. There were milestones in 1986, 2000, 2014, 2015 and 2020. After the establishment of the Haryana Film Cell (HFC) in 2018, we can hope for developments in film infrastructure. Persons like Yashpal Sharma are working hard to showcase the culture and society of Haryana through his latest film *Dada Lakhmi* which is a biopic.

Yashpal Sharma shared his views by saying that after the success of *Laado* in 2000, there was a gap of 14 years until *Pagdi the Honour* and *Satrangei* came to the screens. This gap happened because of technological advancements in the form of android phones, YouTube, new TV channels etc. So, people

thought that when there were other platforms for entertainment then why they will watch a Haryanvi film.

From the above analysis of the experiences and works of the four renowned filmmakers and actors of the industry, it can be concluded that Haryana is full of raw talent which needs to be polished or guided in the right direction. The lead cast of the film *Chander Kiran*, Jagat Jakhad and Pushpa Soni and some supporting actors were from Haryana only. Jagat Jakhad was a celebrity of Haryanvi cinema at that time. Actors like Yashpal Sharma, Meghna Malik, Jaideep Ahlawat, Ranbir Hooda, Mallika Sehrawat and many more belong to this state.

Persons like Dilawar Singh, do get motivated and curious about film making and that too at the age of 25 years in the 80s that he decided to produce his film, only because of the commercial hit of *Chandrawal* in 1985. JP Kaushik was his Music director and Uttam Singh was his assistant. Later, Uttam Singh got the Filmfare award for Best Music Direction for the film *Dil to Pagal hai* (Chopra, 1998) in 1998.

Yashpal Sharma was very enthusiastic and excited about his film and said that he was a successful actor but his motherland is Haryana. People, usually don't come back to their roots but, he belonged to a different tribe. This was his dream project and now it was complete. The film is a biopic of a folk artist who was very famous in his times. He will also be writing its sequel and thus, will continue working for Haryanvi cinema. He also announced that he will surely not release the film on the OTT platform because the film is only meant for theatrical release, irrespective of the date of its release.

Findings

Regarding the various achievements of Haryanvi cinema at National and International levels, it is seen that Haryanvi cinema has achieved many National and International awards along with a few state awards. The films that have been discussed had received various awards at various levels. Therefore, we can finally say that Haryanvi cinema is being recognized now.

To know about the reason of non-recognition of Haryanvi film industry as compared to the other regional cinemas, it can be said that, according to the views and experiences of the four persons of Haryanvi cinema, the Haryanvi language was considered vulgar or rude. But after a long gap, and due to personalities like Meghna Malik, Yashpal Sharma, Ranbir Hooda, the Haryanvi language has been shown as refined and polished. Filmmakers are

now coming to shoot at the locations of the state. Another reason is that people lack motivation and there is no support from the government concerning infrastructure. But now, with the creation of HFC and the film policy, we can look forward to a brighter future in Haryanvi cinema.

As per the interviews of film experts, the government's support and incentives can help in the growth and development of the industry. Earlier, there was no monetary or infrastructure support, but after the coming of the Haryana Film Policy in 2018, this barrier is no more. A special university viz. The Pandit Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts has been established in 2014 at Rohtak for training the youth of the state and promoting young talent.

Discussion

Haryanvi cinema, unlike other regional cinemas, is struggling hard for recognition. Very few persons want to work here because of the image that has been created over a period of time, about the language, the culture, society and the like. Despite the handful of talent in the state, they are unable to give it direction in this field. With the coming of films like Dada Lakhmi, Haryanvi film industry can hope for some growth and motivate others to do their bit.

Conclusion

After interviewing the various experts of the film industry, it can be stated that many things need to be done to uplift the Haryanvi cinema. There must be motivation from the government side as well. We cannot say that even after the establishment of State University in 2014, films or documentaries etc. have not been created or made. New creativity needs support, especially from the government. Even after the coming of the Haryana Film Policy in 2018, the government provided no support in terms of finance to any upcoming film.

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ANNEXURE I

Interviews of the four personalities of Haryanvi cinema

Interview 1

- Experiences of Dilawar Singh, the producer and director of Chander Kiran (1985), the questions asked were:
- What motivated you to produce a Haryanvi film at the age of 25 years?
- What are the requirements to become a film director or producer?
- Was a Haryanvi film recognized then i.e. in the 80s by the Hindi film industry/ Bollywood?
- Why, according to you, the Haryana's film industry is not as developed as the other regional film industries?
- Where did you hire the actors or technicians for your film? Were they from Haryana or outside Haryana?

Interview 2

- Experiences of Rajeev Bhatia as a Director of Pagdi the Honour, the questions asked were:
- Haryanvi films, normally, don't get awards. Only Laado had won the National award in 2000. What are your feelings after getting the National award as a debut director for a Haryanvi film?
- Tell us something about your experiences while making the movie.
- We have heard that you have not given any copyrights to film distributors to exhibit Pagdi the Honour for public viewing. Why you didn't release the film in theatres?
- Why, according to you, the Haryanvi cinema is unable to produce films and is lacking behind the other regional cinemas?

Interview 3

- Experiences of Ravi Chauhan, the actor and a writer who worked as an actor in the leading role in Pagdi the Honour, the questions asked were:
- How does it feel to be awarded for the first time in a career of about 40 years?
- You have been a part of the journey of Haryanvi cinema, what changes or developments have you seen in the industry?
- Why Haryanvi cinema couldn't grow like the other regional ones?

Interview 4

- Yashpal Sharma's experiences as debut Director, producer and actor in his film Dada Lakhmi, the questions asked were:
- You are an established and successful actor in India. What made you direct and produce a Haryanvi film?
- Why people are not making films in Haryana?
- Haryanvi language is considered vulgar or rude, but now its nature has changed in TV serials and films also. What according to you has changed when talking about the Haryanvi language?
- When and where are you planning the release of your film?



Command on English Language and Content Writing: An Essential Strategy for Media Education

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ABSTRACT

The modern world is teeming with huge information with time. This information is edited and added regularly due to demand for content writing that caters to the needs of academic, web content, professional and technical spheres. This paper highlights the aim of effective content writing to converge English language and technology. Reliable, appealing and perfect content persuades the readers and audience more than any other technique. Content writing creates a cohesive pattern of information that resonates with the target audience and elevates the brand and writing goal. User-Generated Content (UGC) is another way to use content for marketing a brand. One should take time to create an enticing title for the blog or an article that can build required curiosity and appeal in the minds of the readers. The paper attempts to study all these aspects in detail focusing on the need of English language in content writing.

Keywords: English language, Language skills, Content writing, Blogging, Academic writing, Web content Writing, Professional writing, Technical writing

Introduction

With a huge increase of content available on the internet and other forms of written material, writing has become a consistently comprehensive and complex process that demands the skill of creating reliable, appealing and perfect content that can persuade the readers and audience. The assumption that writers are born with the innate ability to write and create all kinds of content effortlessly is not true. Many pieces of research have proved that with constant practice, many writers have learned the art of writing effectively. Writing is a skill of learning what to say and how to say efficiently. An effective piece of writing involves various steps like planning, consideration of the readers' minds, investigation of the topic, recognizing new ideas, their organization, writing a full draft and subsequently revising and refining it.

Effective Content Writing Style: News writing is short with paragraphs containing information having the vital part in the beginning. Blog writing is sociable, pleasant, presentable, winning, and assertive and has one-sided opinions. Advertisement writing is concise and persuasive. The writing style differs according to the content and that makes the content influential and compelling.

With the process of Ideation, writers develop and convey prescriptive ideas to their readers in graphical, written or verbal terms. In the marketing industry, this buzzword is all about generating ideas that are very crucial to build up convincing and enthralling content.

Writers know it well that they need to understand their audience. Only then they can write what the audience wants to read. It is important to write for their audience and not just for their brand, company or themselves. If they perform keyword researches, it will also help them build a better title for their content and restructure the content according to the popularly used keywords.

The title of the article should be engaging that can help catch the attention of the readers and can make them eager enough to read it thoroughly. The originality of the writers makes them popular and unique with their distinctive styles and perspectives. High-quality content is always preferred and in-depth content written from a unique aspect keeps it in demand.

Visual content is an important medium to convey the message. Infographics make the point straight by emphasizing facts over lengthy descriptions. The content writers always focus on light-hearted presentation of ideas that are easily grasped.

Readers can discover the key points of the content better if it is presented in short paragraphs, subheads, bulleted lists, bold text, words in colour and links. One should write crisp and short sentences to convey the message clearly. Often, some short words convey better:

~~Indicate~~ Show

~~Eliminate~~ get rid of

~~Utilize~~ use

~~In order to~~ to

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Facilitate help

Obtain get

A good content writer should use simple phrases and trim superfluous language. One should avoid euphemisms. Let us look at the following example:

In an effort to clear the excessive amount of unpleasant garbage from the open plots, the municipal committee has expressed a desire to adopt a proposal to hire more sanitation workers to address the problem.

This sentence can be reframed with less words:

The municipal committee wants to hire more workers to pick up the garbage from open plots.

This rephrasing is simpler, shorter and comprehensible.

Style is “The particular mixture of words, constructions, rhythms, and forms of expression characteristic of a writer,” the renowned writer Jacques Barzun opines. A writer should pay close attention to his/her choice of words, by concentrating on simple, direct expression of his/her thoughts, and by experimenting with the structure of his/her sentences and paragraphs. He/she should have mastery of the vocabulary and love English language enough to play with each usage so that the message comes out effectively.

Sometimes a writer’s style is immediately noticeable and draws the reader’s attention to itself but some writers have subtle and modest writing style. Whatever may be the style, it should come natural and be clear to the readers. E.B. White opines that write in a way that comes easily and naturally to you, using words and phrases that come readily to hand. But do not assume that because you have acted naturally your product is without flaw.

White observes that a person’s merits and demerits will be shown in his/her work. If the person is lazy, he/she will prefer using clichés of thought and expression. If he/she is systematic and scrupulous, the writing will be carefully structured. Reading is very essential as it lends thickness to the writer’s thoughts and enriches his/her expression and presentation. If the person focuses on improving the style, he/she should begin reading more analytically and observe other writers’ techniques of attracting reader’s attention.

Use of Unfamiliar words: Jacques Barzun suggests about the selection of words, “Prefer the short word to the long; the concrete to the abstract; and the familiar to the unfamiliar.” The writer should not overuse new and unseen words in his/her work. It may be argued that there is nothing wrong with using a few unfamiliar words for which the reader has to use a dictionary. But most of the readers get irritated

when a writer uses many unfamiliar words and they turn to another article. Myrick E. Land observes that one should consider simple and short words:

position	job
endeavour	try
utilize	use
verification	proof
ascertain	find out

One’s writing should be natural and easily understood without being pretentious.

Overuse of the simple, declarative sentence: It is generally advised not to write long and complex sentences. But one should not discard long and complex sentences completely. Sometimes, paragraphs having simple, declarative sentences make writing boring and dull.

Smriti did a certificate course in Fashion Designing in 2010. She opened a boutique in her city. She then started her own business. She became successful. She invested a lot of money in property and made a huge profit.

Each of these sentences is direct and clear but all simple sentences make the writing tedious and boring. But look at the following sentences from ‘The Postmaster’ written by Rabindranath Tagore:

The surest proofs meanwhile are disbelieved. One clings desperately to some vain hope, till a day comes when it has sucked the heart dry and then it breaks through its bonds and departs. After that comes the misery of awakening, and then once again the longing to get back into the maze of the same mistakes.

The first paragraph is a series of flat and factual statements about Smriti. The sentences do not vary in form. A subtle variation is present in the structure of Rabindranath Tagore’s sentences. Also, Rabindranath Tagore has deliberately stripped away every unnecessary word for a specific purpose, that is, to present a tightly compressed description of a story’s ending. Hence, these examples prove that a good writer should make the balance of various sentences in his/her writing.

Passive Constructions: Jefferson D. Bates observes in *Writing with Precision*, “The active voice gives writing a sense of strength, energy, vitality and motion. The passive voice slows things down.” Now, one should not eliminate the passive voice from the work but one should avoid its overuse and should not make its usage a habit. At times the passive voice serves the purpose of focusing the reader’s attention on the most important element in a sentence. For example, the sentence “The sarpanch was shot at 10:07 a.m. today.” is stronger than “An unknown

person shot the sarpanch at 10:07 a.m. today”. Here, the receiver of the action is more important than the creator of the action.

Many writers who overuse passive voice often tell the readers that something happened but do not tell what caused it to happen. For example, “An order was given that the investigation is stopped”. Who gave the order? The writer should let the reader know the important details and shift to active voice giving specific details like, “Major Amrinder stopped the investigation.”

Empty Phrases: Any writing will lose its effect if it contains the phrases that add nothing. One should watch for unnecessary words like

As has often been said...

It has been pointed out that...

It is expected that...

Due to the fact that...

There have been statements to the effect that...

Vagueness: A writer should not use unclear expressions like ‘a few years later’, ‘a woman in her forties’, ‘many millions of rupees’. He/she should instead state facts and figures precisely and specifically like ‘three years later’, ‘a 43-year-old woman’, ‘₹ 22 million’ respectively.

Wordiness: A writer should omit words like ‘at the present time’, ‘on a few occasions’, ‘in a number of instances’ which can be substituted with ‘now’, ‘occasionally’, ‘often’, respectively. Myrick E. Land cites a very effective example for avoiding wordiness:

Wilson, who is 40 years old, then expressed his strong feelings about the waste of time involved in filing a whole series of “worthless reports nobody is ever going to take a look at.”

The 34 words in the paragraph can be reduced to 16:

Wilson, 40, objected to filing “worthless reports nobody is ever going to take a look at.”

If the writer trims a passage like this he/she should reread the shortened version to make sure that some important detail is not left out.

In television news writing, the media writer should use words instead of phrases.

Phrases	Words
Prior to	before
Subsequent to	after
In the near future	soon
Is of the opinion that	believes
At this point in time	now
At this particular point in time	now

Cliches: Cliches are expressions that are easy to understand and are memorable like ‘as old as hills’, ‘as brave as lion’ but by now such clichés are used so

often that they make little impression on many readers. The writers who use clichés add nothing new. He/she is only repeating someone else’s thought in someone else’s words. Avoid using the following clichés:

Last but not the least

Few and far between

A foot in the door

When all is said and done

At the end of the day

In the final analysis

Remains to be seen

Only time will tell

Hail of bullets

Barrage of bullets

...and the list goes on

Decoding jargon: A writer should explain jargon used in professions like science, medicine or law. Jargon is a highly specialized language of a profession. It should be translated simply so that a common person is able to understand. One should try to explain the terms clearly by paraphrasing the passage. Eric K. Gormly cites an example of the jargon used by the police in public statements:

At approximately 7:57 a.m. in the morning on this date, I espied the subject traversing the lawn area in front of said subject’s domicile. Upon arriving at the portal, the subject effected egress into the domicile.

It can be said differently:

At about eight this morning, the man walked across his lawn and went into the house.

Trite statements: A good writer should not use trite or obvious statements in the writing like “Indian festivals have become too commercialized” and “the early years of childhood are very important”. These sentences are accurate but do not bring in a fresh thought. The readers already know all this. One could include a clear illustration of just how commercialized Indian festivals have become and just how much a child learns before entering school. The general statements become ineffective.

Sentence Length: A media writer should not burden the sentence up with multiple ideas and make it very lengthy. In television news writing, it will be very difficult for the listener to understand a long sentence with too much supplemental information. The best way is to write one main idea per sentence. The complex sentence can be broken into two and turned into simple and declarative sentences. One should be particular about each word chosen judiciously according to the story. It is pertinent here to mention that there should be a variety of sentences. A writer should make balanced sentences. If the entire

story has sentences of same length, it will become boring and dull. If the sentences are a mixture of simple, compound and complex sentences, the story will become interesting.

Sentence Structure: A writer should keep the verb close to the subject to make the sentence easy to understand.

The Election Commission today ordered repolling in eight booths of Mewat.

The Election Commission, which received continuous allegations and complaints of rigging, today ordered repolling in eight booths of Mewat.

In the first sentence, the verb ‘ordered’ is close to the subject but in the second sentence, the verb ‘ordered’ is separated which may challenge viewers or listeners to understand the message. The dependent clause in italics detracts listeners’ understanding. They hear *The Election Commission* but after the dependent clause, they come to know what it does. In television news writing, one should write different sentences for different thoughts like:

The Election Commission received continuous allegations and complaints of rigging. Therefore, it ordered repolling in eight booths of Mewat.

Checking one’s own style: After the writing is over, the writer may check some important aspects of his/her work. The work should be clear. It should have judicious choice of words. There should be some variety in sentence structure and sentence length. There should be an easy flow from the beginning to the end. If one looks closely at one’s writing, it will become an appealing and impressive work.

Gender-Sensitive Language: Even today, when in a context where the gender of a person is unclear or variable, writers use masculine nouns and pronouns. This is because they have been taught traditionally to use such words (like “Men”) which imply for both men and women. In recent times, however, as women have started sharing the space equally with men in the public sphere of Indian life, writers should reconsider the way they express gender identities and relationships. Now, a change can be observed in most English readers who no longer understand the word “man” to be synonymous with “people”. So, it is pertinent to think more carefully about the language style(s) they employ for gender expression to convey their ideas clearly and accurately to their readers.

Gendered noun	Gender-neutral noun
policeman	police officer
fireman	firefighter
steward, stewardess	flight attendant
Dear Sir:	Dear Sir or Madam., Dear Editor., To Whom it May Concern:

Newsletters: A newsletter is aimed at an institution, association, industry or political group. Its articles are not more than four paragraphs. These focus on a highly specific topic. Its tone is straightforward and conversational. The style is serious and never playful and light-hearted. Such articles are written from the perspective of industry or political expert. Newsletters include at least one profile of some renowned industry person, an association leader, an outstanding employee of a company, a political personality. These also include short news items and a calendar of events.

Advertisements: Ads assert their value through persuasive language. Their claims lie on the isthmus—neither completely fake nor useful information. The ads rely on the manipulation of the language that catches the attention of the consumers to their products. Some depend on one word, others use phrases, slogans, trendy lines, jingles, informal English and slangs and language of short messages. Advertisers use compound words and use them as adjectives like top-quality, full-on, economy-size, chocolate-flavoured, feather-light and longer-lasting. They normally use positive words and stress on the reason for their product being unique and extraordinary. Advertising language includes comparatives when no real comparison is made. For instance, in a detergent ad, one can see the claim “It gets clothes whiter.” It is never made clear – “whiter than what?” Alex Grijelmo mentions in his book *“Seduction of the Words”*, that advertising uses phrases, such as “Free as the Sun” in order to promote liberating qualities in certain products, which are actually inaccurate, considering that the Sun remains static all the time, always coming out at the same time and serving a rigid period very far from being as free as it is mentioned.

The way language is used in ads, creates an illusion in the minds of consumers about a product without directly claiming it to be true. Thus, consumers are drawn towards a product because they assume certain things about the product from its claim. This is also true that most of things are not true of the product itself. Companies rely heavily on their slogans, jingles, and advertisements to make a profit, and the language used in these various forms of media have a huge impact on their effects on the consumer.

Gendered noun	Gender-neutral noun
man	person, individual
mankind	people, human beings, humanity
the common man	the average (or ordinary) person
to man	to operate, to cover, to staff
chairman	chair, chairperson, coordinator

Newspaper language

Ernest Hemingway used to say that the best rules of writing he ever learned came from the first paragraph of the Kansas City *Star* style book given to him as a young reporter:

Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs.

Use vigorous English, not forgetting to strive for smoothness. Be positive, not negative.

News writers would definitely agree with the above given points. A good media writer knows the art of skilful deletion, lexical substitution, syntactic changes and so on. To begin with, one can examine the style of news story writing with just one linguistic variable. A rule characteristic of news language is to omit the determiner in appositional naming expressions. E.g [the] Inquiry officer PS Gill, [the] Top Indian Mujahideen terrorist Zia Ur Rehman, [the] veteran BJP leader Jaswant Singh.

Grammar of Newspaper Headlines: Headlines have to be short with a string of phrases. "French satellite spots floating objects", "Admin gives clean chit to SAD." Sometimes Subject-Verb-Indirect-Object and Direct Object sentence pattern is used like in "Haryana hinterland denies girls voting right." Articles and the verb 'be' are not included in headlines. "3 aides [were] nabbed", 'Waqas [is] in 10-day police remand', '[the] EC nod to [the] government for naming [the] new Navy Chief'.

Simple present tense is often used as "Jaitley advises Jaswant", "French Satellite spots floating objects", "Admin gives clean chit to SAD". In passive structures, helping verbs are usually dropped, leaving past participles:

Six killed in explosion.

Six people have been killed in explosion.

Infinitives are used to refer to the future in headlines 'PM to visit China in May'.

Syntactical patterns: Language in newspapers includes the use of a dependent clause as a separate sentence after the main clause to put an emphasis before readers. A good writer should know the functions of various sentences. He/she should work on phrases and clauses carefully to make their news and ideas interesting and clear. The complex sentence develops a major, central idea and provides structured background information:

Miffed at the violation of the coalition 'dharma' by its alliance partner, with which it runs a government in neighbouring Punjab, the state unit of the BJP today termed it as undesirable.

Though a number of satellites of different countries spotted floating debris fields, this is the first time a search plane spotted the objects

which the captain said could be that of missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370.

A writer should know subordinators used in complex sentences: since, although, before, when, and after. Relative pronouns in complex sentences include who, that or which. Another key point in complex sentences is an independent clause that stands by itself. It is indeed a simple sentence joined by a comma to another clause.

Just as a good orchestra has a sound harmony created by different instruments played judiciously, a good media language also has a harmony of the play of different sentences used sensibly according to the contexts and situations. A long complex sentence will show that information depends on other information. A compound sentence will stress balance and parallelism. A short simple sentence will draw readers' attention. There is a galaxy of illustrations that shows long simple sentences are widely used in newspapers.

Describing the poll battle as one between its secular liberal nationalism and BJP's narrow-minded communalism, the Congress manifesto starts with a chapter on why people should choose the Congress over the BJP.

This sentence is simple enough to convey the message clearly and effectively. In most news stories, simple sentences are employed extensively to make the news clear and easily understandable. Sometimes, simple sentences are filled with appositives.

By fielding 66-year-old Kamal Kanta Batra, mother of Kargil martyr Captain Vikram Batra, from Hamirpur, the Aam Aadmi Party is set to pose a new challenge to the traditional rivals-Congress and BJP.

A loose sentence tells the readers in advance how to interpret the given information. In a loose sentence, the main point is put at the beginning of a long sentence. A periodic sentence leaves the reader in suspense until the very end. In a periodic sentence, the main point is given at the end of the sentence. A declarative sentence avoids any emotional impact. An exclamatory sentence shakes the readers' views and beliefs. An interrogative sentence forces readers to think. An imperative sentence makes it clear that the writer wants readers to act the right way. It is important to note here that periodic and exclamatory sentences are very effective but they are used once or twice in newspaper writing. Such sentences make the writing sound monotonous and pretentious.

A compound sentence also used, for example:

Chidambaram has chosen not to contest the Lok Sabha elections and the Congress has now

nominated his son Karti from his constituency of Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu.

Such sentences help build a sequence of events and create balance.

Compound-Complex sentences have two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause. This structure uses a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) to separate the independent clause(s), like:

BJP veteran L. K. Advani, who was sulking since yesterday over the party's decision to field him from Gandhinagar instead of Bhopal, on Thursday agreed to abide by the wishes of his party and fight the Lok Sabha elections from the constituency ear-marked for him. (March 21, 2014)

BJP veteran L. K. Advani....on Thursday agreed to abide by the wishes of his party is the first independent clause that is broken by the dependent clause "who was sulking since yesterday over the party's decision to field him from Gandhinagar instead of Bhopal." After the conjunction 'and' "fight the Lok Sabha elections from the constituency ear-marked for him" is the second independent clause.

Transitional words can be used to join sentences and make a link between sentences like however, therefore, in addition, also, but, moreover etc. One should avoid stringing nouns together which creates confusion like:

This report explains our investment growth stimulation projects.

May be

This report explains our projects to stimulate growth in investments.

One should use verbs when possible rather than nouns. The sentence "The implementation of the plan was successful" can be "The plan was implemented successfully"

News language through active and passive voice: Passive sentences are used according to the law of primacy in news headlines like "three aides nabbed", "five militants arrested". In news stories, these are used as in "Waqas was brought to Delhi by a Special Cell of the Delhi Police." "Waqas was wanted for his role in several terror attacks", "They have been booked under the Explosive Substance Act", "The Rajasthan Police was deployed at the railway station" etc., all these sentences prove that the agent is either less important or is already known.

When passive sentences are used in the news stories, the person who does the action is sent to the backseat. The passive sentence is used when the media writer does not want to call attention to the doer. If we consider the following news:

A 24-year-old woman's breasts were cut off by three persons, including a brothel keeper after she refused to be pushed into the flesh trade in the district.

The passive sentence is almost always used when violence is reported against women. So, the person who committed the crime, usually a man, disappears from the story. Violence becomes just something that happens to women, rather than something violent people do to others. It shifts blame from the perpetrators of sexual harassment to the victims. There is another way of reporting a case of sexual abuse through active voice:

The local police have booked a man for raping and sexually exploiting an 11-year-old girl of Sanjay Colony here.

Generally speaking, active voice is stronger, clearer and shorter. It makes writing better and carries meaning and gives information. It forces the writer to know the subject performing the action and include it in the sentence. A writer may use passive voice when the person acted on (object) is the focus of the story:

The president has been shot but her wound is not life-threatening...

Here, the most important part is the shooting of the president, not the person who did it. That information comes later.

The passive can be used when the doer is unknown:

An assistant professor on examination duty was beaten mercilessly this afternoon...

Police are still searching for the attacker.

This sentence can be rewritten in active voice:

An unidentified man beat an assistant professor mercilessly...

Word Choice

Firth (1890-1960), a renowned English linguist states, "You shall know a word by the company it keeps."

Linguists argue that even synonyms vary in different connotations. Therefore, it is indispensable to consider every word a reporter chooses to use. He/she should select the best possible and least biased word or phrases. A media writer should avoid misusing words, words with unnecessary connotations or meanings, using unclear pronouns, using jargon or technical terms and overloaded words. Jargon is the specialized phrases and words associated with certain professions like doctors, lawyers, policemen, soldiers, pharmacist, mathematician, journalists and so on. The verbosity in newspapers' language can be a hindrance in its effectiveness. One should avoid using words (in italics) like *end* result, *completely* finished, *very* unique, *final* outcome, *point in time*, *blue in colour*,

large *in size*, *mutual* agreement, *consensus of opinion*, whether *or not*, *future* prospects, *reconsider again*, *inadvertent* error.

The Handout of The University of North Carolina outlines some relevant points in bringing clarity with word choice. It states that one should understand the difference between good repetition and bad repetition. Repetition in many cases is good because it helps emphasize significant points in the writing and indicates to the readers that the argument is still being supported with the key terms. It makes writing cohesive. On the other hand, when the writer merely repeats the same nouns, verbs or adjectives or repeats the same point, he/she is likely to be redundant. The Handout of The University of North Carolina gives a list of unnecessary words which must be replaced with one word:

Concerning the matter of	About
During the course of	During
In the event that	if
In the process of	During, while
Regardless of the fact that	although
Due to the fact that	because
In all cases	always
At that point in time	then
At this point in time	now
Prior to	before
Dead as a doornail	dead
Last but not least	last
Put the emphasis on	emphasize
Is reflective of	reflects
Make an effort to	try to

In *The News Business*, Walter Mears and John Chancellor mentioned special rules from Harold Evans' *Newsman's English*:

1. Never use a double negative.
 2. Make each pronoun agree with its antecedent.
 3. Join clauses with suitable conjunction.
 4. Check subject-verb agreement.
 5. Avoid run-on sentences. They are difficult to read.
 6. Avoid unnecessary commas.
 7. Use punctuation marks carefully
 8. Check spelling errors.
- Robert M. Knight adds the following rules:
9. Prepositions are not good words to end sentences with.
 10. Be sure to use adjectives and adverbs correct.
 11. Parenthetical remarks (even when relevant) are distracting.
 12. Avoid unnecessary redundancy.
 13. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
 14. Be less or more specific.

15. Watch out for irregular verbs which have crept into our language.
16. Who needs rhetorical questions?
17. Above all, writing should be sincere, whether you mean it or not.
18. And the ever-popular, *Avoid clichés like the plague*.

Conclusion

Judicious use of language is the pivotal part of the communication process that conveys the message effectively and makes the readers aware of the brand/company/institution. The English language has paramount importance in conveying the issues of science, technology, and business. The knowledge of grammar and syntactical structures definitely helps the writers in framing quality content.

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The Historic Dawn of Hindi Cinema and Our Society

KIRTI SISODIA¹

ABSTRACT

Cinema is a powerful reflector of society. It mirrors the transformations, cultural tensions and new trends that are surfacing in society in many interesting ways. In short, cinema captures the essence of life. Cinema is a mode of mass communication and has a huge impact on the people. It also portrays incidence and issues happening within the society. From 1913 till now subjects of films change according to the social issues discussed in society. This article shows how films have an impact on society in various ways and how films create awareness about certain social.

Keywords: Hindi Cinema, Society, Storytelling, Films

Introduction

It is a well-known fact that the Indians are very passionate about films. More than 1600 films made across India every year, in around 35 different languages. It may be a typical masala, commercial entertainers or experimental documentaries; India has viewers for every kind of film. Movies have since long served as one of the prime modes of entertainment and a verifiable pastime.

The most significant aspect of Cinema is the impact of visuals and designs. Cinema is an effective storytelling medium. Like other art forms, Cinema is also highly attached to the country, era, social environment and the problem of society. Cinema is a mixed form of different arts like – literature, painting, music, dance, etc. Cinema is also a very modern and technology-rich art, which acts as a powerful medium to express human emotions.

The debut of Indian cinema

Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, more commonly referred to as Dadasaheb Phalke introduced Indian Cinema with *Raja Harishchandra*, advertised as “the first film of Indian manufacture” shot with an entirely Indian crew featuring a tale drawn from India’s rich mythological epic, *Mahabharata*. The film made its debut in Bombay’s Coronation Cinematograph Theatre in 1913. While the play *Pundalik* was filmed in its entirety in 1912, it is usually not accorded the status of the first feature film because it was a stage play rather than a production created specifically for the screen. Phalke’s interest in film sparked when he saw the *Life of Christ* in a Bombay theatre in 1910. He wrote about his experience in the Marathi language journal *Navyug* in December 1917:

‘While the Life of Christ was rolling fast before my physical eyes I was mentally visualizing the gods, Shri Krishna, Shri Ramachandra, their Gokul and Ayodhya. I was gripped by a strange spell. I bought another ticket and saw the film again. This time I felt my imagination taking shape on the screen. Could this really happen? Could we, the sons of India, ever be able to see Indian images on the screen? The whole night passed in this mental agony.’
(Phalke Dossier in *Shoemsmith*, 1988)

Phalke initiated a new genre of mythological films and followed it with other productions like *Mohini Bhasmasur* (1913), *Satyavan Savitri* (1914) and *Lanka Dahan* (1914).



Fig. 1 A still from the first Indian movie *Raja Harishchandra*

Breaking the silence: The advent of talkies

The year 1913, saw the coming of the “talkies” with a bang which broke the long silence and introduced the Indian viewers to sound and music on the celluloid for the very first time. The release of the film *Alam Ara* (*Beauty of the world*), at the Majestic Theatre in Bombay, marked the historic event. Advertised as, the all-talking, all-

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singing, all-dancing film” this was a production by Ardeshir Irani. During the same period, Southern India also saw the release of two talkies- *Bhakta Prahlada* in Telugu and *Kalidas* in Tamil. In the 1920s, filmmaking as an industry started gaining ground. The first Indian love story Dhiren Ganguly’s *Bilat Ferat* released in 1921. Kohinoor Studios of Bombay followed the mythological path with Bhakt Vidur from the *Mahabharat*. Other prominent filmmakers of the time were V. Shantaram, Ardeshir Irani, Baburao Painter, Chandulal Shah and Suket Singh.

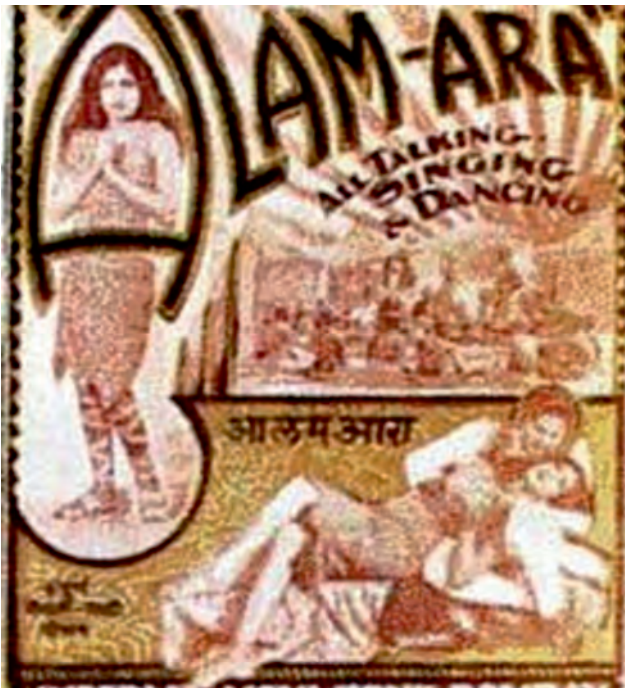


Fig. 2 Poster of the first talkie film of India: *Alam Ara*

The golden era and its architects (1947-1960)

The 1940s to 1960s, known as the golden age in the history of Indian Cinema rose to such glory only because of the architects of the superstructure named Bollywood. It was due to their ability to undertake risks, think ahead of their times and have the courage and vision to implement their ideas. Here are some leading architects of the edifice known as the “Golden Era of Indian Cinema”.



V. Shantaram (1901-1990)

The director who made movies, not for the glamour or the money or the fame, Shantaram Rajaram Vankudre fondly known as Annasaheb was an Indian filmmaker, producer and actor who made films such as *Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani* (1946), *Amar Bhoopali* (1951), *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje* (1955), *Do Aankhen Barah Haath* (1957), *Navrang* (1959), *Duniya Na Mane* (1937), *Pinjra* (1972), *Chani, Iye Marathiche Nagari* and *Zunj*.

He made his first film, ‘*Netaji Pulkar*’ in 1927 and never looked back from there. He was the man who went on to find Prabhat Film Company along with V.G. Damle, K.R. Dhaiber, S. Fatelal and S.B. Kulkarni leaving the same in 1942 to form “Rajkamal Kala Mandir” in Mumbai which became one of the most sophisticated studios of the country. He was conferred by the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1985 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1992, after a long and satisfying filmy career V. Shantaram died on October 30, 1990, in Mumbai.

Bimal Roy (1909-1965)

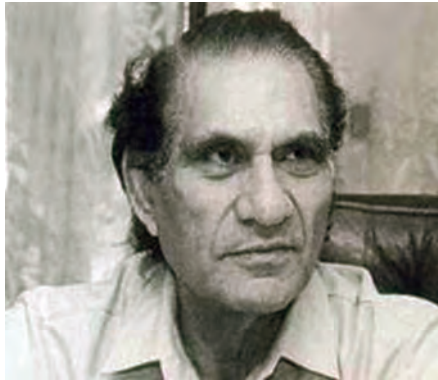


Lovingly known as Bimal Da and celebrated as the maestro of Hindi Cinema, he was a man who was to leave a lasting influence on the way movies were to be made. He worked on close to ten films as a cameraman before venturing forth as a director with his film, *Udayer Pathay* (1944, a Bengali movie which was remade in Hindi as *Humrahi* in 1945). He was a man with a deep understanding of human nature and high intellect which was portrayed very craftily in his films so that every common man can relate to them. He was the man who brought art Cinema and mainstream Cinema together providing a blend of both with his film, *Do Bigha Zameen* (1953). The movie still remains a classic and was probably the first one to have won accolades critically as well as appreciation by the mainstream Cinema viewers. The movie also went on to win the International Prize at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival Some of his other masterpieces were *Parineeta* (1953), *Madhumati* (1958), *Sujata* (1959), and *Bandini* (1963).

He was an endowed director loved by all and worshipped by some, even his competitors respected

him. It was a sad day for the nation when he passed away at the young age of 55. In his honour, a postage stamp, bearing his face, was released by India Post on 8 January 2007. Also, the restoration work on his films is being done by the National Film Archives of India (NFAI) at Pune.

B. R. CHOPRA (1914-2008)



Born on 22 April 1914 was Baldev Raj Chopra, the man who years ago bought the whole country to a standstill on Sunday mornings at 9 AM. People would literally be found glued in front of their television sets as Doordarshan aired B.R. Chopra's Mahabharat. Even now, the charm has not been diluted, and B.R. Chopra's Mahabharat still holds a place of reverence. He was the creator of movies such as *Naya Daur* (1957), *Sadhna* (1958), *Kanoon* (1961), *Gumrah* (1963) and *Humrāz* (1967). In 1955, Chopra formed his own production house, *B.R. Films* and the first movie made by the house, *Naya Daur* was a golden jubilee hit. The films made by him catered to the popular sentiment but at the same time conveying a social message.

He was a man not afraid to explore new horizons and provide a fresh new take on controversial issues. He was regarded by many as being ahead of his times. He portrayed the plight of an Indian Widow and touched upon the subject of Widow remarriage in his film *Ek-Hi-Rasta* (1956) at a time when the adage that a girl should come to her husband's home in a doli (Palanquin) and leave only on her deathbed was still the norm. His experiment with the Movie *Kanoon* (1960) – a courtroom drama with no songs at a time when *only* good music can lure the audience to the theatres. His movie *Gumrah* (1963) which was a story of a woman's adulterous behavior was released at a time when the husband was still considered as the *parameshwar* (God) by the wives. Such was his contribution to Indian Cinema that in 1999, he was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

“Your attitude towards life is bound to be reflected in your work.”

“Today only success counts. That passion for filmmaking has vanished into thin air.”

- *Hrishikesh Mukherjee*

Hrishikesh Mukherjee (1922-2006)



Born in Calcutta was Hrishikesh Mukherjee, lovingly known as Hrishi-da, a distinguished Indian film director who was the brain behind films such as *Satyakam*, *Chupke Chupke*, *Anupama*, *Anand*, *Abhimaan*, *Guddi*, *Gol Maal*, *Aashirwad*, *Bawarchi*, *Kissi Se Na Kehna* and *Namak Haraam*. He directed a whopping 42 films in his career spanning over four decades from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Although he made only three films in the Golden era; his debut directorial venture *Musafir* (1957), *Anari* (1959) and *Anuradha* (1960), his contribution cannot be overlooked. In his 1960's movie *Anuradha* he introduced a novel narrative strategy of unfolding the story in a flashback, which was to become his trademark in the later years.

He had the quality of delivering deep social messages with a hint of sarcasm and a touch of laughter. He began his career as a cameraman and then film editor in B.N. Sircar's New Theatres in Calcutta in the late 1940s. He was honoured with the Dada Saheb Phalke Award in 1999 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2001 in recognition of his contribution to Indian Cinema by the government of India. The dawn of his long filmy innings came with the movie *Jhooth Bole Kauwa Kaate* (1998). He died of old age and illness on 27th August 2006.

Born on December 14, 1924, was the “Showman”, the man who had done it all, be it being a director, actor, editor or producer and astonishingly succeeded in it all. Most of the movies that Raj Kapoor made became box office hits besides winning him critical acclaim: *Boot Polish* (1954), *Jagte Raho* (1956), *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* (1960), *Sangam* (1964), *Mera Naam Joker* (1970), *Bobby* (1973), *Prem Rog* (1982) and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili Hai* (1985). Only

his later films such as *Around the World* (1966) and *Sapnon Ka Saudagar* (1968) were box office flops. In 1970, he produced, directed and starred in his film *Mera Naam Joker* which was a box office disaster and a harbinger of the financial crisis. In 1948, he established his own studio, R. K. Films, and made his directorial debut with *Aag*. Through the 1950s and 1960s, he made films that carried the socio-political message and portrayed the world of underprivileged, marginalized sections of society, bringing out the iniquitous and inequitable parts of Indian society.

Raj Kapoor (1924-1988)



The golden era also witnessed one of the most loved and sensational performances of all time by none other than the actor-director Raj Kapoor in the film *Awara* (1951). The movie not only gained name and fame for him in India but also established him on the world map. As he puts it:

Guru Dutt (1925-1964)



Guru Dutt was a man with deep intellect and insatiable curiosity, his chief scriptwriter and close friend Abrar Alvi relate an incident about his unquenchable curiosity in his book *Ten years with*

Guru Dutt: Abrar Alvi's Journey; he says: "*Guru Dutt laughed a lot over the fact that soap was*

savon in french and saboon in Hindi. It showed his childlike delight in small things and his alert sensibilities. He traced the origin of the similarity to the fact that savon was named after the place where it was first manufactured and the word had mutated into saboon. He collected a whole range of such similar-sounding words, including ananas (pineapple), all this at the cost of a few thousand francs. When something whetted his curiosity, he did not think of the money spent on pursuing it."¹⁰

In the short span of his life, he made a mammoth and lasting contribution to the Indian Cinema with films such as *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* and *Chaudhvin Ka Chand*. Although many people say that he was a better director than an actor, one can't deny the fact that he was a versatile man skilled in the art of both direction and acting. Many of his movies have a cult status and are treated as every time classics, in particular, *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* are included among the greatest films of all time, both by the Time Magazine's "All-Time 100 best Movies" and by the "Sight & Sound" critics' and directors' poll.

Guru Dutt began his career working for small roles, as an assistant director and even gave a shot to choreography in Prabhat Film Company. It was only in 1951 that Guru Dutt's first film Navketan's *Baazi* was released.

His death has left many unanswered questions for us and even for his loved ones. On 10th Oct 1964, he was found dead in his bed, some say his death was an accident due to alcohol and sleeping pills which make a lethal combination while some believe he deliberately committed suicide.

Manoj Kumar



"My films are not films of rich men; they are the films of the common man. As a responsible citizen, if you see the plight of your countrymen, it haunts

you and then the bitterness comes to you. You wonder why this is happening.”

- **Manoj Kumar**

The maestro is known for his powerful roles as the archetypal common man contributed much to the Indian Cinema by starring and directing in hits like *Upkaar* (1967), *Purab Aur Paschim* (1970), *Shor* (1972), *10 Numberi* (1976) and *Kranti* (1981). Known as ‘Mr. Bharat’ for his patriotic flicks, he made his debut with *Fashion* in 1957 but found success only with the 1962 movie *Hariyali Aur Raasta*. He was awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1992. His real name being Harikrishna Giri Goswami, he adopted the name Manoj Kumar himself after Dilip Kumar’s character’s name in *Shabnam*.

Other such icons who boundlessly influenced in those times were great actors and actresses such as Dev Anand, Dilip Kumar, Mala Sinha, Meena Kumari, Nargis, Nutan, Madhubala, and Waheeda Rehman.

Evolution of Indian Cinema

In the very early days of Cinema when Phalke was beginning to make films, women were not willing to act due to the stigma attached to public performance. How can women of good breeding and descent act, sing or dance for an audience, that was associated with prostitutes and courtesans, and thus outside the boundaries of decent society. This was just the beginning but views quickly changed and Cinema began to be accepted as a mass means of entertainment and raising awareness. During the Golden Era, the Cinema occupied a hesitant cultural status and was frequently perceived by the State and middle-class society as frivolous and corrupting. Times and perception changed as brilliant filmmakers started making films with which people could easily associate and connect, people began to take interest in the movies. The common element in every kind of movie made at the time was optimism about the possibility of a better life in future. There was hope for people and these themes of strong family ties, friendships, sacrifice, love, culture entwined in a single story made spicier with the melodrama made an irresistible temptation for the people. By the end of the 1950s, most people had a positive and welcoming attitude towards Indian Cinema and enjoyed watching them. This was a time when a movie with a strong social message was appreciated. The movies at that time revolved around the common man, who faced various struggles in life, which the audience could relate to and would finally come out as a man with the right morals. These stories showed the protagonist

to be poor who even though wavered from his path (mainly due to greed and success) would finally realize his mistakes and be a better person in the end and overcome his troubles in a just manner. From the late 1960s and early 1980s, romance and violence became an integral part of the movies. It was during this time that the blockbuster *Sholay* (1975) was released. This was the period that created the ‘forever to be desired by girls’ image of an ‘angry young man’ who would always be there to play the knight in shining armour for the girl, the man who has that intense, deep and mysterious air around him.

As times changed other factors started influencing films such as the economic changes in the country, the two most significant processes and events that have shaped the context for contemporary filmmaking are the process of economic liberalization initiated by the Indian government in 1991 and the entry of satellite television in 1992. The Cinema changed drastically since 1998 when the overseas market blossomed and filmmakers started making movies for an overseas audience. The Cinema became more liberal, bringing in western concepts and way of life. One example of changing times could be the depiction of characters, for instance, wealthy businessmen were frequently the symbol of exploitation, injustice, and even criminality in Hindi films from the 1950s to 1980s but by the mid -1990 they were depicted as benign, loving, and indulgent fathers. The times were definitely changing and the narrative pattern, the storyline; the personalities of the leading characters were all a testimony to this. While the past love stories often had a class difference as the source of parental disapproval and therefore conflict, contemporary love stories showed the internal conflict between individual desire and societal norms.

The roles and stereotypes have changed, earlier Hindi films used stereotypes about the west as immoral, individualistic, materialistic, and lacking in culture to contrast with the moral, cultural, and spiritual superiority of India, while now Indian movies try to present a blend of both the cultures. The movies still favour the Indian culture but the west has been shown as a glamorous, alluring and tempting option that can be adopted in an Indian way. Even the idea of beauty has evolved from a sedate, sari-clad femininity to more confident sexuality. Filmmakers have become bolder with experimenting on controversial issues such as gay and lesbian relationships, live-in relationships and issues such as adultery. Now, the films do not present a black and white picture of anything rather venture into the grey side. A change in the depiction of live in relationships can be seen by comparing

two movies dealing with the same issue. The movie *Salaam Namaste* (2005) portrayed the idea of live-in relationship as an essentially western concept and showed the characters living outside India, moreover, the movie ended with the lead protagonists deciding to finally marry, while the recent movie *Sudh Desi Romance* (2013) portrays the idea of live-in between two middle-class individuals living in Jaipur who finally decide *not to* marry.

The subject matter and treatment of films have constantly evolved, reflecting changes in social and political concerns. As *Jeetendra* puts it in an interview to interview to the India Today magazine (December 27, 2010 issue). "Everything has become instant now, intimacy is also quick to happen and so is the discord. From *Purdah*, we have gone to live-in relationships and no one is shocked." It might sound a bit cliché but it is truly said that films are a mirror of society and have evolved with the evolution of society.

Hindi cinema and our society

The impact of Hindi cinema on society has been recognized from the very beginning of Cinema itself. For instance, the Editorial Board of *Sudha* (A movie magazine) had, in its first issue of 1927 voiced this concern when it studied the impact of Cinema on Indian youth and had recommended strict control over films that were corrupting young minds:

'The bioscope-cinema tamasha is becoming very popular in India. We have seen ourselves that in Benares, children aged eight to ten years who cannot get a good education but can easily acquire bad habits - buy two anna tickets and watch Cinema daily. We have even seen that because of this habit..... students of Sanskrit are selling lemonade soda inside....in this situation it is imperative for the government to exercise control over Cinema'.

In a 1963 report for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), looking at Indian Cinema and culture, the author (Baldoon Dhingra) quoted a speech by Prime Minister Nehru who stated, "The influence in India of films is greater than newspapers and books combined."

Furthermore, the fact that we have a statutory body, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) with its vision being, 'To ensure good and healthy entertainment in accordance with the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952 and the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules 1983, is testimony to the undeniable fact that Cinema has crept into our lives so much and has had such a profound impact that if not

regulated, it can create havoc.

Also, the apex court of the country, Supreme Court (SC) in a 1989 judgment dwelling on the question that why is it necessary to obtain a film certificate before its public exhibition has gone on to say that, 'A film motivates thought and action and assures a high degree of attention and retention as compared to the printed words. The combination of act and speech, sight and sound in the semi-darkness of the theatre with the elimination of all distracting ideas will have a strong impact on the minds of the viewers and can affect emotions. Therefore, it has as much potential for evil as it has for good and has an equal potential to instil or cultivate violent or good behaviour. It cannot be equated with other modes of communication. Certification by prior restraint is, therefore, not only desirable but also necessary.'

The recognition that Bollywood has the power to impact society has dawned on us from the early days itself, but people have different notions on how to use this piece of information. For instance, Mahatama Gandhi said that films can corrupt young minds and should be shunned while Nehru was of the view that they can be used for educational purposes. In the modern-day context, films have obtained a cult status; they have entered into every part of our lives, and have even hijacked our imagination. The present section deals with the impact of Hindi Cinema on various sectors of society such as the impact on children, youth and the general populace; impact on culture; impact on fashion and music; impact on television and other areas of life where films have entered.

Impact of films on children

Children are the young minds of any nation and its future citizens on whose shoulders rest the responsibility to shape the future of the country. These young minds are the most vulnerable and susceptible to the influence of Cinema. Children are immature and ape what their favourite actors do, we have heard many stories of children being influenced by superheroes such as *Krish* and *Shaktiman* and committing fatal acts. Not only kids harm themselves but can also harm others, for instance, many a time kids commit heinous crimes as learnt in the movies. Apart from major impact such as the above, minor influence on language, behaviour etc., can always be found. Nowadays, parents allow kids to watch films to give themselves a little breathing space, but it can make a huge impact on a child's mental development. If regulated, films can teach children many skills easily and enjoyably such as language skills, moral

values, the difference between right and wrong, it can act as a social tool that can help to prepare the child for the big bad world. On the other hand, there is conclusive evidence that films for young children have become significantly more violent in recent years and are contributing to inculcating negative values in the children.

For children, movies can be a portal that can nourish their imagination, take them to places they have never been, make them understand different facets of human behaviour, different cultures, and the value of money and make them appreciate whatever they have however it can also have a negative impact on their young minds. Nowadays, movies contain explicit sexual scenes which can result in premature sexual awareness, crude language and violence can instil the same in them. All in all, the extent to which Cinema can affect children depends heavily on parents who can regulate what their kids watch.



Fig. 10 Picture depicting the impact of movie *Krish* on Children

Impact of films on the youth

This is the segment most powerfully affected by the movies; youth mimics the language in the movies, the clothes and even the food. The movies shape the ideology with which the youth abides; one of the surest ways to put an idea across their minds is through films. In this day and age, films have increased showcase and even glorification of violence, premature and adulterous sexual behaviour is no longer a sin and the characters in Hindi movies are more often than not larger than life itself, imprinting on the young minds the image to ‘make it big’ as getting rich, having flashy cars and going on exotic holidays. Achal Bhagat, a New Delhi Psychiatrist who runs a counselling centre for troubled youth, offered the following explanation for the increasing youth crime rate:

“In a world where cutthroat competition begins from Kindergarten and the concept of having ‘made it’ is defined by TV and films images of the rich and famous, most children today prowl tirelessly for a better deal that will free them from the restraints that their parents

faced. Ambitions soar and images of making it big (cars, exotic holidays) constantly play on the mind. But when failure strikes, most can’t handle it. A squeeze in the job market and the general lack of opportunities frustrate them. And soon the tremendous pressure to succeed builds up anger.”

Not only the growing crime rate be attributed indirectly to films, but also the acceptance of promiscuous behaviour and vulgarity in the language a gift from the Hindi Cinema. Indian film actress Deepti Naval said that “Vulgarity in Hindi songs today shows that filmmakers take the audience to be buffoons and even a little retarded. I call today’s age the ‘Pelvic age’ where hero and heroine simply gyrate to the music”. The Hindi film industry is heavily influenced by western films and as such the influence of western culture can be traced from the attitudes and behaviour of young adults. This varies from food habits to sexual orientation. In 2002, 2004, and again in 2005 the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named tobacco in the movies a major factor in teen smoking. The research explains that non-smoking teens whose favourite stars frequently smoke on screen are sixteen times more likely to have positive attitudes about smoking in the future. Equally important, exposure to smoking in the movies quadrupled the chance that non-smokers’ kids would start. As per the Indian law, India enacted legislation called “Cigarette and other tobacco products Act 2003” which specifically called for an end to a direct and indirect form of tobacco advertisements as such advertisements encourage youth to smoke tobacco. This legislation is an indication of the fact that the Indian legislature is not blind to the effect of tobacco and drugs on screen. As we have seen that Bollywood has an effect on almost every part of our lives, so how can our thinking, ideologies remain unaffected. Hindi films affect the nation’s moral fabrics. Ten years back, live-in relationships would not have been tolerated by society but today the same is acceptable, although not wholeheartedly; earlier alcohol and smoking was considered to be a sin but today it has gained acceptance as a choice, although people are still discouraged from doing the same citing health reasons. We see that society has become more tolerant and western ideas have gained acceptance, west is no longer depicted as evil in the movies. Nowadays, a typical Indian movie will contain group dancing with music set to foreign Arabic/Urdu lyrics while semi-clad girls gyrate as pole dancers in bar scenes watched by the leading actor playing the role of a drunkard or contract killer. This has had a negative

impact of increasing violence in the country. But it would be wrong to see only the negative impact of the movies on the youth, as is rightly said, there are always two sides to a coin, similarly, the films can inspire the youth to do something worthwhile, there are films such as *Baghban* (2003) which can instill family values in an individual; other inspiring movies can be *Rang De Basanti* (2006) and *Nayak* (2001), which motivate us to fight against corruption, *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* (2013) and *Mary Kom* (2014).

Impact of films on fashion and culture

One look at the recent movies will tell us that however far Bollywood has reached, however modern it may become, there will always be a depiction of the Indian culture in the Hindi movies. Taking some recent releases, we observe that the movie *Goliyon Ki Rasleela: Ram-leela* (2013) portrays the Gujarati culture from outfits to language to food; Bengali culture was portrayed in *Gunday* (2014) and *Bullett Raja* (2013) and Lucknowi culture in *Dedh Ishqiya* (2014). Bollywood films have always been a huge part of Indian culture. These films traditionally feature different aspects of India, its culture, and religion. Although, Bollywood films and music have become more westernized in recent years yet the fact that movies are a great reflector of the culture in a country still stands true. Such movies have played a role in constructing a global identity for our nation.

Not only this, the film industry is the backbone of the fashion industry. The clothes worn by lead protagonists of hit movies are immediately manufactured and sold. Even the fashion designers design clothes keeping Bollywood as a benchmark, there is no denying the fact that people in India are largely influenced by the style and glamour of the stars and we can always listen to the shopkeepers saying, “Mam, this is the sari which was worn by Katrina Kaif in so and so movie or award night”. Another example can be the trademark Salman Khan bracelet with bluestone and chains which has become an instant hit among the boys and can be seen on the hands of many young boys. Many such other examples can be easily found. In short, Hindi Cinema is responsible for the way people dress across the country and also for the way Indian culture is reflected globally.

Conclusion

There are no two ways about the magnitude of impact that the Cinema has on the Indian people. Sheer common sense dictates that a medium as wide-reaching as Cinema is bound to create some flux and leave some imprint on the minds of its viewers.

This study also attempts to illustrate the positive change that a film and a movie icon can play in framing the mindset of a society. However, there is an important caveat here. Since films and film stars wield such an important power and control over society, they also have to bear the burden of an associated responsibility as well. It is said that Cinema is a mirror of society. The causal link between Cinema and society is such that society is the cause and the cinematic content is the effect. However, in the case of filmmakers, the reverse was also true. More than often, these filmmakers shaped society by way of their films. Contemporary Hindi Cinema, where “Bollywood” had emerged as a separate genre on the global stage. Through the changing times, there has been an observable (but not empirically recorded) shift in the perception of the general society of common masses towards the Cinema. While earlier the films used to reflect what kind of societal pressures and issues existed in the society whereas the current Cinema is a reflection of the aspirations of the society.

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IIMC GLIMPSES

JANUARY-MARCH 2021

Folk culture has got a new identity through media: Smt. Malini Awasthi

New Delhi, January 8, 2021: Padma Shri, Malini Awasthi, a noted Folk Singer and Centenary Chair Professor, Banaras Hindu University was invited as speaker on the occasion of Friday Dialogue on the topic 'Folk Culture and Media' organised by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC).

While speaking on the folk culture and media, Smt. Malini stressed upon the preserving of folk culture in the era of globalization. "Although it is a challenging task, but through media, the folk culture has got a new identity which is a positive sign" she said. Smt. Malini also highlighted the strong values of Indian culture which has countless evidence of scientific temperaments. Elaborating the values of folk culture, she said that our ancestors simplified the scientific ideas and adapted them to their lifestyle which is clearly visible in the form of our folk songs, verses and festivals. They beautifully passed on those values to the next generation and now it is the responsibility of the youth to take this legacy forward and keep such arts alive.



Smt. Malini Awasthi addressing the Friday Dialogue on Folk culture and media

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General, IIMC and Shri K. Satish Namboodiripad, Additional Director General (ADG), IIMC and Faculty Members, Officers, Students also attended the Webinar.

Ease and simplicity are the qualities of a successful communicator: Smt. Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

New Delhi, January 15, 2021. Smt. Nivedita Raghunath Bhide, Vice President, Vivekananda Center, Kanyakumari was invited in the Webinar on 'Swami Vivekananda as a Communicator' organised by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication. Describing Swamiji's qualities, Smt. Nivedita Raghunath Bhide said, it is very important to have qualities like ease and simplicity to be a communicator like Swami Vivekananda. Owing to this quality, Swamiji was able to convey his point to the last man of the country. While narrating the books Swamiji read, she said that Swami Vivekananda not only gained-knowledge for himself, but also gave a message of service and sacrifice to others. Smt. Bhide elaborated that education does not mean collecting or storing information in the mind which is of no use in life. Our education should be based on life building, person building and character building.

On this occasion Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG, IIMC, said that now the disciplines of communication and management are in front of us, we can imagine how Swamiji struggled to achieve these disciplines throughout his life. In his actions, life, writings, speeches and overall presentation, he appears as an ideal manager and communicator.

Senior officers, faculty members, and students participated in the webinar.



Smt. Nivedita Raghunath Bhide, Vice President, Vivekananda Center, Kanyakumari, interacting with Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG, IIMC during the Webinar

Netaji believed in action more than words: Ms. Renuka Malaker

New Delhi, 22 January 2021: Ms. Renuka Malaker, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's grandniece and Secretary General of Netaji Subhas Bose-INA Trust addressed the Friday Dialogue. As a keynote speaker of the Webinar, Ms. Malaker stated that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose believed in action more than words. In fact, the secret of his 'Communication' was hidden in his actions. Stressing on the topic, 'Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: A Communicator', Ms. Malaker said that Netaji was one of those great freedom fighters of India, who gave a new energy to the whole nation. His personality is the source of inspiration for youth of today's era also. As a true leader he believed in the idea of equality between man and woman. This was the reason that he set up the 'Rani Jhansi Regiment' in Azad Hind Fauj, presenting a unique example of women empowerment. She added that, the dream of modern India that we are able to foresee today was envisioned by Netaji long ago. His vision for India was far ahead of his time.



Ms. Renuka Malaker, Grandniece of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose addressing the Webinar

On this occasion, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General, IIMC said that if we want to remember Netaji, then we should remember his thoughts as a communicator which reaches the last person of the group. He said that Netaji became popular even after having limited means of communication before independence and the important reason behind the success and popularity of Netaji's was ease and simplicity. Prof. Dwivedi said that Netaji was a committed person. With his ideas, he opened up new doors of success for the unsuccessful and the downtrodden.

Cleanliness is very important for our country and our lives: Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi

New Delhi, 20 January 2021: A special plantation drive was organized at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) under Swachhata Pakhwada. Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General of IIMC, Shri K. Satish Namboodiripad, Additional Director General including all the employees, faculty members and officers participated in the drive. During the drive, Mrs. Mamta Verma, Additional Director General (Training), Mrs. Navneet Kaur, Prof. Sangeeta Pranavendra, Mrs. Pratibha Sharma and Mrs. Vishnupriya Pandey planted the saplings and gave a message to make aware everyone to be environmentally responsible.

On this occasion, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that cleanliness does not only mean cleaning the dirt from your home, society and country, but it is very important to keep your body, heart and mind clean as well. Cleanliness is very important for our country and our lives.

A cleanliness fortnight has been organized at IIMC during 16 to 31 January 2021. On the occasion of the inauguration of the fortnight, a pledge of cleanliness was undertaken by all the employees of the institute. Various activities related to cleanliness organized during this period. This includes making employees aware of cleanliness, organizing essay contests and webinars on the subject of cleanliness and broadcasting various radio programs related to cleanliness on the Apna Radio of IIMC.

It has been resolved to avoid the use of single-use plastic at IIMC during the cleanliness fortnight. Swachhata Pakhwada was launched in April 2016 under the Swachh Bharat Mission, which aims to make people aware of cleanliness in the purview of the Ministries and Departments of the Government of India.



Planting of saplings during Swachhata Pakhwada at IIMC, New Delhi Campus

Come forward against those who tarnish the image of the army: Lt Gen (Retd.) Raj Kadyan

New Delhi, 23 January 2021: Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Raj Kadyan, Former Deputy Chief of Army Staff was invited as a Chief Guest at the online Valedictory Function of the Media Communication Course organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) for military officers.

Expressing his views, Mr. Kadyan said that India's opponents are using social media for psychological warfare and fraud. We should use this to increase our strength. Social media can be used to fight terrorism. He said that in the modern era of information and technology, the Army needs to make the best use of social media. Social media has grown faster than we think. If we are unable to keep pace with it, then we will be left behind.

According to Mr. Kadyan, the correct use of information during war is very important. We have to use artificial intelligence to increase our strength by connecting ourselves with social media. Mr. Kadyan said that the courage, valor, commitment and dedication of the Indian Defense Forces are unique. But there are some elements in the country that are active around the clock to tarnish the image of the Indian Army. We can counter such vicious campaigns against the defense forces by adopting the right media approach and using various media platforms in an organized manner.

On this occasion, the Director General of IIMC Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that in our country, the army is always regarded with high honour, respect and pride. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all military officers to maintain that image of the Indian Army with their communication skills and proper use of media. Prof. Dwivedi said that today fake news has become a big business in itself and digital media has also influenced it. In such a situation, the importance of media education has also increased.

Indian Institution of Mass Communication conducts short term training courses on media and communication for military officers every year. Captain to Brigadier level enrol for these courses. The training focused on information on public media, new media and modern communication techniques.



Lt. Gen (Retd.) Raj Kadyan, Former Deputy Chief of Army Staff during his address

Gandhiji believed that we should communicate in the language that people understand: Shri Banwari Ji

New Delhi, 29 January 2021: An online Friday Dialogue on 'Mahatma Gandhi: A communicator' was organised by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in which Shri Banwari Ji, Senior Journalist and Gandhian Thinker and Shri Sanjay Kamble, Social Worker graced the session as keynote speakers. Enlightening the students, Shri Banwari Ji said that if we want to be a communicator like Mahatma Gandhi, we will take the support of technology. But we need to understand that today's technology is based on the mass communication, whereas Gandhiji used to rely on 'conversation'.



Sh. Banwari Ji, Senior Journalist and Gandhian Thinker and Sh. Sanjay Kamble, Social Worker graced the session

Mr. Banwari said that Mahatma Gandhi also used to convey the message of cleanliness through his communication. After seeing the filth spread in the temples, he said that a society which cannot keep its holy places clean, has no right to freedom. Gandhiji believed that we should communicate in the language that people understand well.

On this occasion, Social Worker, Shri Sanjay Kamble said that Mahatma Gandhi considered cleanliness even more important than independence. He was not only in favour of external hygiene but also in favour of cleanliness of mind. He believed that if the mind and our surrounding would not be clean, then genuine and honest thoughts are not possible to flourish. On cleanliness, Shri Kamble added that if a person is neither sensitive towards cleanliness of others and nor of himself, then such cleanliness has no meaning.

If you want to succeed, you must have a passion for success:

Ms. Megha Parmar

New Delhi, 5 February 2021: Ms. Megha Parmar, the very first woman from Madhya Pradesh to climb Mount Everest, was invited as speaker during the Friday Dialogue on 'Journey to the Mount Everest' organized at IIMC. Mount Everest Winner and Brand Ambassador of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign, Madhya Pradesh, Ms. Megha Parmar said that if we want to succeed, we must have a passion for success. Our passion makes us to do everything that we can never think of doing.

Sharing experiences about her journey, Ms. Parmar mentioned that in her first attempt, she had missed from just 700 feet to reach Mount Everest but it was her determination that she made it to Mount Everest with the National Flag of India at 5 am on May 22, 2019. Ms. Parmar also said that climbing is not easy, as one does not always get water to drink during the climb process, the body breaks from inside, sometimes one cannot even breathe properly as oxygen level is very low at high altitude. Emphasizing on fitness, she advised the practice of performing Yoga which works great in both physical and mental wellbeing and it is because of Yoga, she is able to achieve her dreams.

On this occasion, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG, IIMC said that we should learn from Ms. Megha that how to set goals in life and put all efforts to accomplish it. The story of Megha, who hails from a small village of Madhya Pradesh and conquering Mount Everest is really an inspiration for all of us.



Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG, IIMC is felicitating Mountaineer Ms. Megha Parmar



Ms. Megha Parmar addressing the online participants during Friday Dialogue

Harmony in words and action makes one a perfect communicator:

Prof. (Dr.) Kuldeep Chand Agnihotri

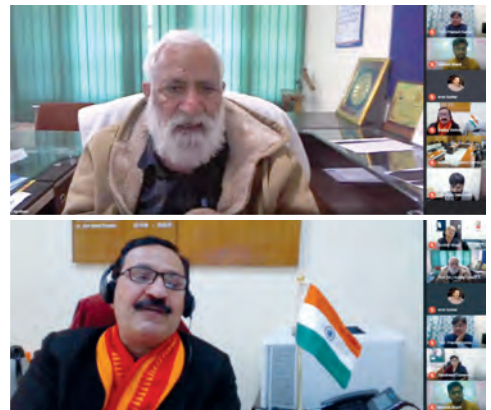
New Delhi, 12 February 2021: Prof. (Dr.) Kuldeep Chand Agnihotri, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala while speaking at the Friday Dialogue organised by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) said that harmony in words and action makes one a perfect communicator and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay is a good example of it. Heart to heart communication was his speciality. Expressing his views on Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay: A Communicator, Prof. Kuldeep Agnihotri said that Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay was a skilled communicator and an exclusive worshiper of the Indian culture. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay established dialogue with the Indian public through compactness and simplicity.

He said that media should play their purposeful role in the society, always keep social interest and national interest on priority instead of sensationalism.

According to Prof. Agnihotri, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay laid the foundation of modern India and today Integral Humanism and Antyodaya are important parts of this new India. He believed that the wrong path can never achieve the right goal.

Prof. Agnihotri said that the purpose of communication should always be public welfare. Deendayal Upadhyay used to communicate easily on difficult subjects to achieve this objective. Deendayal Upadhyay can rightly be called the pioneer of national journalism. With his visionary thinking, he flowed one such Indian stream in journalism.

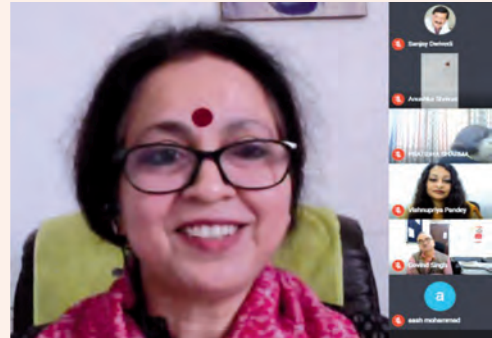
On this occasion, the Director General of IIMC Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that Deendayalji was not just a politician, he was also a journalist, writer, historian and economist. His thinking gave the country an Indian idea like Integral Anthropology. He said that Deendayal Ji truly understood India and was able to provide solutions to various societal and national problems.



Prof. (Dr.) Kuldeep Chand Agnihotri, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Himachal Pradesh and Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG-IIMC, during Friday Dialogue on Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay : A Communicator

Books serve as a medicine for the soul: Prof. Alpana Mishra

New Delhi, 16 February 2021: Prof. Alpana Mishra, an Eminent Storyteller and Writer, Hindi Department, University of Delhi was invited as a keynote speaker during the online lecture on the occasion of Vasant Parv. Speaking on the topic 'Culture of Reading', Prof. Mishra said that Media and the Internet have developed people's interest in the books. With books, we upgrade ourselves. I believe that books serve as a medicine for the soul. According to Prof. Mishra, books help in recovering from mental disorders of a person, and even release a person's frustrations. "Despite the technological advancement, printing of books has not stopped yet. Even today people like to read physical books instead of e-books. Books are essential to understand society, solve our problems and sometimes they suggest a new path, she added.



Prof. Alpana Mishra, Storyteller and Writer, Hindi Department, University of Delhi on the occasion of Vasant Parv at IIMC

During the webinar Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG-IIMC opined that the culture of reading is being questioned today. In the current education system, children are placing more emphasis on rote learning. Therefore, a culture of reading has to be necessarily developed among children.

Prior to the lecture, another programme was organized to mark the occasion of Vasant Panchami in which DG, IIMC, Faculty Members and Officers worshiped the Maa Saraswati idol at the main gate of the IIMC Campus. During the programme, a lecture was also organized at the IIMC Library to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mahakavi Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' which was addressed by Prof. Govind Singh, Dean (Academics), IIMC.

Hybrid warfare is a new-age way of fighting with the enemy: Major General (Retd.) Dhruv Katoch

New Delhi, 19 February 2021: Major General (Retd) Dhruv Katoch was invited as a Keynote Speaker in the valedictory function of media and communication course for defence personnel organized by the IIMC.

During his address, Mr. Katoch said that 'Hybrid warfare' is a new-age way of fighting with the enemy. In this war, data plays a key role and after analyzing that data, strategies are made to fight against the enemy. In today's era, information has a crucial role. In the era of new media, media literacy is very important for every section of the society. Media literacy will also help us in combating the psychological warfare that we witness all over the world today. "We have to be conscious of this psychological warfare being adopted by anti-India forces as a tool and to learn how to use the power of the media for betterment of the country and the countrymen", he added.

On this occasion, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG-IIMC said that the Indian Army is always regarded with high honour, respect and pride. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all defence personnel to maintain that image of the Indian Army with their communication skills and proper use of media. He further added that currently we are passing through a change and the 21st century is considered as a century of the 'Internet and social media'. Fake news has become a big business and digital media has also influenced it. We need to understand this mechanism and tackle it carefully.



Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Dhruv Katoch and Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General - IIMC addressed the participants during of valedictory function of media and communication course for defence personnel

Shri K. Satish Namboodiripad, Additional Director General (Administration), Ms. Mamta Verma, Additional Director General (Training), Prof. Govind Singh, Dean (Academic) and Prof. Pramod Kumar, Dean Students Welfare were present on the occasion.

Marshall McLuhan was the father of change in media:

Mr Ajay Upadhyay

New Delhi, 19 February 2021. Mr. Ajay Upadhyay, Senior Journalist and Former General Secretary of the Editors Guild of India graced the Friday Dialogue on the topic “Reinventing Marshall McLuhan”. Mr. Upadhyay said that about 30 years before the arrival of the World Wide Web (www), Marshall McLuhan had predicted the web technology and also explained its impact. It is believed that McLuhan was the father of all the changes we are witnessing in the media today. Mr. Upadhyay further added that McLuhan came into the light in 1960 when he explained that our society would be affected by the way we share technology and information. For McLuhan, human history was divided into four major communication periods, such as the literal era, the literary age, the print age and the electronic age.



Mr. Ajay Upadhyay, Sr. Journalist and Former General Secretary of the Editors Guild of India during the Friday Dialogue

In the book ‘The Gutenberg Galaxy’, written in 1962, McLuhan had described how the world would be connected as a ‘global village’ due to electronic technology. Referring to his book, he also predicted the web technology currently being used all over the world. According to Mr Upadhyay, McLuhan had accepted the fact that print media played a decisive role with the advent of democracy, capitalism and nationalism in Western countries. ‘Medium is the message’ statement became popular, which was embedded in his book ‘Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects’.

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General, Shri K. Satish Namboodiripad, Additional Director General, Faculty Members, Officers and students attended the webinar.

Media task is not to create disappointment in society:

Shri Alok Mehta

New Delhi, 26 February 2021: An on-line Friday Dialogue on “Limitation of Journalism” organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in which Shri Alok Mehta, Padma Shri Awardee Senior Journalist and Former President of Editors Guild of India was invited as a key note speaker. Shri Alok Mehta stressed upon to follow the code of ethics of journalism, said that the path may be full of thorns, but if we have facts and evidences and if we are aware of our legal rights, then we should speak out without any fear.

According to Shri Alok, while doing journalism, there should be no repugnance to anyone. In the current era, most people are doing their work responsibly, but some are crossing their boundaries. The code of conduct is strictly followed in Britain, but so far in India, we have not been able to implement the code of conduct on a compulsory basis. Addressing the aspiring journalists, Shri Alok advised the students to always be ready to listen. Our code of ethics for journalism strictly mentions that ‘Journalists should not mention any community, caste or religion’ to maintain harmony in society. The Journalists can decide their own code of conduct and the freedom of press should be enjoyed with responsibility.

Elaborating about why media need to maintain transparency, Shri Mehta said, that we have to understand what the future generations will get from the current generation and follow the values of journalism accordingly. “You should build your credibility with your responsible writings and remember the duty of the media is not to create disappointment in society but to work responsibly and report accurately”, he added.

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General, Shri K. Satish Namboodiripad, Additional Director General, Faculty Members, Officers and students attended the webinar.



Padmashri Alok Mehta, Sr. Journalist and Former President of Editors Guild of India expressing his views in the Friday Dialogue

The agreement will encourage academic and interdisciplinary research: Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi

New Delhi, 2 March 2021: Memorandum of Understanding between Mahatma Gandhi Central University (MGCU), Motihari, Bihar and the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi was signed to establish the research, educational programs and community engagement through joint extension activities between them. Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General, IIMC and Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi Central University (MGCU), Motihari, Bihar signed the MoU.



Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, VC, Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Motihari, Bihar and Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi during signing of MoU

On this occasion, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG-IIMC said that through this agreement, the two institutions will promote research on topics such as TV, print media, digital media, public relations and advertising. He further said that with this agreement we will get an opportunity to establish a framework for academic cooperation and coordination, undertake activities of mutual interest between the two institutions- bring both the institutions, Faculties, research scholars and students to work together towards a common goal and to pursue joint research projects availing themselves of research facilities developed/to be developed at both MGCU and IIMC.

Prof. Dwivedi said that IIMC also aims to provide to provide short-term training, summer training, Studio facility to the students, research scholar and faculty members of MGCU in their respective areas of specialization. Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, VC-Mahatma Gandhi Central University, said that IIMC is the most prestigious mass communication institute in the country and with this MoU, we will get the benefit of IIMC's expertise of journalism and research studies.

On the occasion all faculty members, officers of IIMC and Head of Journalism Department, Mahatma Gandhi Central University were also present.

There is no better system than EVMs for fair elections: S. Y. Quraishi

New Delhi, 12 March 2021: "There is no better system than EVMs for transparent and fair elections. If there was scope for tampering, then no government would have been defeated." said Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, the former Chief Election Commissioner of India during the Friday Samvad, a program organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC).



Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, Former Chief Election Commissioner of India addressing the webinar

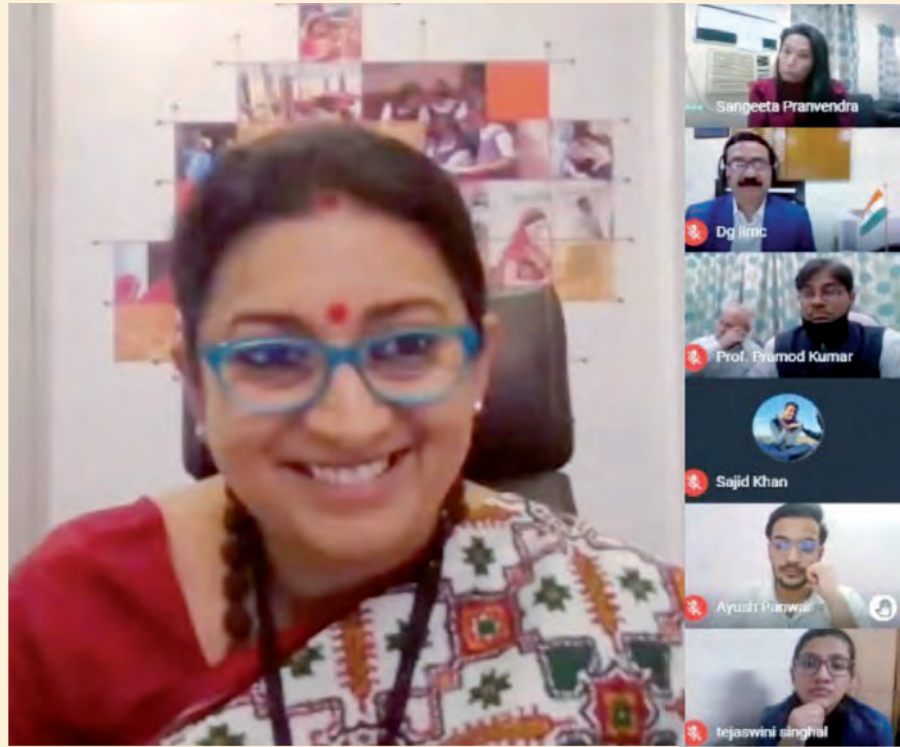
Expressing his views on the topic of 'Election Reforms and Democracy', Dr. Quraishi said that India's EVMs are used in elections in many countries of the world. No complaint has come from anywhere. He said that there are several levels of investigation before the use of EVMs in elections. It is sealed in front of polling agents before voting. EVM is shown even before the counting of votes begins. In such a situation, there is no question of disturbance at any level. Pointing fingers at EVMs is to question the fairness of the Election Commission.

The former Chief Election Commissioner of the country said that the Election Commission of India is the most powerful Election Commission in the world. Indian democracy is known as the best governance system in the world and reliable elections are the most important lifeline of democracy. He said that when a country moves forward, then many old and new challenges arise, which motivates the Election Commission to take fast and decisive decisions. The misuse of power of money and muscle power to influence voters is a matter of concern, but the judiciary has always acted to preserve democracy.

According to Dr. Quraishi, publicity of money during elections gives rise to all kinds of corruption. There are many issues related to electoral spending reforms and making politics crime-free, on which the Election Commission of India has been working for the last several years. Dr. Quraishi said that every vote is important in elections. He said that in our country, the proportion of men to women is less, but the participation of women in elections is more than that of men today.

Women contribution is significant in India's Independence: Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani

New Delhi, 5 March 2021: "When we are happy for the successful women who get out of the house, we should not ignore women who like to stay at home on their own free will." Those women also have an important contribution in the development of India. This idea was expressed by Hon'ble Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Textiles, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani at the 'Friday Samvad', organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC).. On this occasion, the Director General of Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi was specially present.



Expressing her views on the topic 'Women Power in

Hon'ble Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Textiles, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani addressing the participants during Friday Dialogue on Women Power in democracy

democracy', the Union Minister said that whenever we talk about women power in democracy, it is only about women serving in Parliament. But we forget those women working in different fields of society, because of which India has achieved a place.

Smt. Smriti Irani said that I was raised in Gurugram. At that time, if I had said that a girl born in a tabala would decide the distance of 20 km from Gurugram to Delhi in 40 years, people would probably laugh at me. But I was confident that my thinking, passion and aspiration could not stop a city boundary. I never saw the difficulties coming in the way as obstacles, I saw this as a creative opportunity to find a solution, she added.

The Union Minister said that equality means that every woman should have the right to live her life, as per her own will. She said that a Woman Sarpanch has as much importance in Indian politics as a woman chief minister.

Expressing her views on International Women's Day, Smt. Smriti Irani said that there is no justification for the honor of women on just one day. A woman's struggle is not limited to just one day. She has to face new challenges every day. Therefore, women are entitled to get respect every day.

On this occasion, the Director General of IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that woman is the form of power. The entire life of a man is based on the woman. If any man is successful, then the woman is the basis of that success. Prof. Dwivedi said that in the new education policy, the entire focus of the government is focused on that girls should not be left behind and they should get equal opportunities for education.

Prof. Sangeeta Pranvendra conducted the programme and Smt. Mamta Varma (ADG) did the vote of thanks. Prof. Govind Singh-Dean Academic, Prof. Pramod Kumar-Dean Students Welfare, Professors, Officers and students participated in the webinar.

Don't make women great, give them equality and respect:

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi

New Delhi, 8 March 2021: On the occasion of International Women's Day, "Stree Shakti Samman Samaroh" was organized at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). Director General of IIMC Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi was the Chief Guest. The function was chaired by Mamta Verma, Additional Director General (Training), IIMC. Senior Journalist and Editor of Dainik Sanmarg, Kolkata, Mrs. Sarjana Sharma attended the event as the keynote speaker.

On this occasion, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that the culture of India is great, but the construction of any society depends on the conduct of the people. We talk big on the day of Women's Day, but I want to say that do not make women great by doing such things, rather give them equality and respect.

Prof. Dwivedi said that what women did not do to make the world beautiful, but what we did for women. As we continue to tighten the laws on atrocities against women, vandalism towards women is also increasing. Actually, we need reforms in human conduct, not stringent laws. Prof. Dwivedi said that woman is a form of 'Shakti'. Only a woman in this world can wish that her husband, her son should get ahead of her.

Expressing her views as the keynote speaker of the event, senior journalist Sarjana Sharma said that there has been a glorious tradition of women power in India. Women are the greatest power of any institution. He said that whenever there is talk of women empowerment in India, the opposition of men starts, whereas in Indian culture both men and women are complementary to each other.

Sarjana Sharma said that the time has come when women should be compared to men. Imagination of society is not possible without men. In building a beautiful society, man and woman should work together and not oppose each other.

He said that most of the women in our society are 'familists' rather than 'feminists'. Those women have their family at the center and that is our greatest strength. Ms. Sharma said that women should be vigilant about their rights and stay away from false female discourse.

Mamta Verma, Additional Director General (Training), IIMC, said that such honors ceremony boosts the spirits of women working in the institute and instills new energy in them. Dr. Pratibha Sharma, library in-charge of IIMC gave a welcome speech at the program and Ms. Rita Kapoor proposed a vote of thanks. The stage was conducted by Vishnupriya Pandey.

Earlier, a Hindi workshop was organized for women officers and employees working at IIMC on the occasion of International Women's Day. The workshop was addressed by Dr. Rekha Sethi, Associate Professor in the Hindi Department of Indraprastha College.



Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Director General - IIMC welcoming senior journalist, Mrs. Sarjana Sharma during Stree Shakti Samman Samaroh

Role of 'New Assam' is crucial in 'New India': Dr. Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, 14 March 2021: "When India is entering the 75th year of independence, Assam's journalism has completed 175 years. After 25 years from today, when India will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of independence, then Assam's journalism will be completing 200 years. I believe that Assam's journalism will play an important role in the then New India. This view was expressed by Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region, Dr. Jitendra Singh in a seminar organized by Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) to mark the completion of '175 years of journalism in Assam'. Director General of IIMC Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Mr. Samudragupta Kashyap-Information Commissioner, Assam State Information Commission, Mr. Prashant Jyoti Barua, Executive Editor of 'The Assam Tribune' and Vashisht Narayan Pandey, Executive Editor of 'Dainik Purvanchal Prahari', expressed their views on this occasion.



Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region, Dr. Jitendra Singh during a webinar on 175 years of Assam Journalism

Expressing his views as the chief guest of the program, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the Northeast region has a rich tradition of journalism. The history of journalism in Assam is linked to the history of the freedom struggle of India as well as the Northeast. Assam's journalism was devoted to social subjects around 1970, but after that the media has played an important role in the social and political sphere.

The Union Minister said that after 2014, a democracy has emerged in Assam which has changed the title of newspapers. Whereas terrorism and corruption used to be the subjects of journalism, now good governance and prosperity are becoming the headlines of newspapers. He said that Assam has a significant contribution in the upliftment of Indian economy today. Dr. Singh said that Assam's journalism should now set a target for the next 25 years. We should work on new ideas and solve problems of society and make new achievements.

On this occasion, the Director General of IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that the occasion of completion of 175 years of media in Assam is an occasion to remember the sacrifice of Assamese literature and journalism veterans who laid the foundation of media in Assam. Due to such great personalities, Assam was established not only as the watchdog of North-East India, but also in the field of literature, culture and spirituality.

Mr. Samudragupta Kashyap, Information Commissioner of the Assam State Information Commission, said that Assam is known by the name of Mr. Bhupen Hazarika, but people do not know that he was the first person in the country to do PhD in Mass Communication from Columbia University in 1949. He said that Mr. Bhupen Hazarika was not only a lyricist and composer, but also a skilled journalist.

Mr. Vasishtha Narayan Pandey, Executive Editor of Dainik Purvanchal Prahari, said that there was a time when reporting against terrorism was a risky job in Assam. During this period, many journalists lost their lives, but despite this, the media struggled for the truth. He said that today a phase of competition has started in the Hindi journalism of Assam and the readers are getting to read the material according to their interest.

Mr. Prashant Jyoti Barua, Executive Editor of The Assam Tribune, said that journalism started in Assam by bringing people's problems to the authorities in their own language. Apart from Assamese, Hindi and English, other Indian languages made their significant contribution in solving the problems of society through journalism. He said that the role of media has also changed over time, but its purpose is still the same.

The program was convened by Prof. Pramod Kumar, Dean (Students' Welfare) and vote of thanks proposed by Prof. Shashwati Goswami. All students, Professors and employees of the institute participated in the function.

If all languages are jewels, Hindi is like our crown jewel:

Dr. Sumeet Jerath

New Delhi, 16 March 2021: "Hindi is now emerging as a global language, after being a mass language, contact language and official language. The growing use of Hindi in many countries of the world is a prime example. These views were expressed by Dr. Sumit Jerath, Secretary, MHA during one day Rajbhasha Sammelan organized by IIMC and TOLIC, South Delhi

The program was chaired by the Director General of IIMC, and Chairman of Town Official Language Implementation Committee, South Delhi. Prominent story writer and novelist of the country Prof. Alpana Mishra joined was the chief guest. Famous satirist and editor of 'Vyangya Yatra' magazine, Dr. Prem Janmejaya and Dean (Academics) of IIMC. Prof. Govind Singh expressed his views as the keynote

speakers. Apart from this, Deputy Director of Rajbhasha Department, Home Affairs, Kumar Pal Sharma and Assistant Director, Sh. Raghuveer Sharma attended the conference as distinguished guests.

Expressing his views as the chief guest of the program, Dr. Sumeet Jerath said that if all languages in India are gem, then Hindi is like our crown jewel. Hindi is a scientific and practical language. Today, the use of Hindi in government work is increasing. The main reason for this is that use of simple and easy words of Hindi in government offices has increased, he added.

On this occasion, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that it is time to look for opportunity in disaster. Today the whole world is looking towards India. In such a situation, we should also break our inhibitions and promote and propagate Hindi language vigorously. He said that language is only a medium of expression. There was a time when Raj and society worked in different languages in India, but today the situation is changing. Any language gets its respect from its children and this is the time to honor Hindi.

Dr. Alpana Mishra said that Hindi is a symbol of national identity. Today, the use of Hindi has increased all over the world and the main reason is its flexibility. There is an ability to adapt within the Hindi language and it engages everyone. Languages have come increasingly close to each other due to technology, shed added.

Dr. Prem Janmejaya said that language is the medium of communication, but we have made it a criterion of social status. India's new education policy is a strong weapon to fight against this mentality. According to Dr. Janmejaya, if we love our country, then we should also love its languages. Today everyone has to become an Indian language soldier. He said that Hindi is a vast ocean. There was a time when the Sun of the British Raj did not sink, but today the Sun of Hindi does not sink.

Prof. Govind Singh said that the market understood the power of Hindi and insisted on advancing Hindi. But we cannot leave Hindi in the hands of the market. Till the Hindi-speaking society wakes up, Hindi cannot develop.

Sh. Kumar Pal Sharma, said that the power of dissemination is hidden in the Hindi language itself and that power is its simplicity. This broadcasting power has brought Hindi from dialect to pen and from pen to computer. He said that you should take anything from abroad, but promote and use it in your language. On this occasion, Raghuveer Sharma informed the people about the Kantasth tool of the Department of Official Language of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Through this tool, translation work can be done in very easy way, he added.

The program was conducted by Ms. Vishnupriya Pandey and Dr. Pawan Koundal. Welcome speech presented by Prof. Sangeeta Pranvendra and Ms. Rita Kapoor gave the vote of thanks. All members of the Town Official Language Implementation Committee, South Delhi participated in the conference.



Dr. Sumeet Jerath, Secretary, Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI, Dr. Prem Janmejaya, renowned satirist and editor of 'Vyang Yatra' magazine and Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG-IIMC during Rajbhasha Sammelan

Need to convert 'Jal Agitation' into a 'Mass Movement':

Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

New Delhi, 19 March 2021: “Realizing the importance of water, every person should try to conserve water. The time has come when the ‘Jal agitation’ should be converted into a ‘mass movement’”. This idea was expressed by Union Water Power Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in ‘Friday Samvad’ organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). On this occasion, the Director General of IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi was also present.



Expressing his views on the topic of 'Water Culture of India', the Union Minister said that we all have to think together how India can be made water rich. For this, the youth power has to be associated with the water movement. We have to make such a plan that the role of society can be decided along with the government. He said that with the efforts of the government, 7 crore 5 lakh rural households of the country have started getting clean drinking water.



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said that the river is not called 'mother' in any country of the world except India.

Our culture has a tradition of learning something new every day. If the youth want to understand the water culture

of the country, then they should travel from Bundelkhand to Kutch. The prosperity of the country is possible only with water prosperity. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has discussed the most on water conservation in the 'Mann Ki Baat' program.

Hon'ble Union Water Power Minister of India, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Director General of IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi during the program Friday Samvad on water culture in India

Regarding the water quality, the Union Minister said that the government has trained 5 women in every village and provided them with field testing kits. So far, 4 lakh 60 thousand women have been trained. He said that water is the basis of life, but no effort was made to check its quality. But our government has started setting up a laboratory for testing of water in every block of every district.

On this occasion, the Director General of IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that India's water culture is inspiring for the whole world. All the rivers of India have been environment friendly. He said that the government, society and the media need to be active about water. Media is an effective medium that can awaken the public on the issue of water conservation.

Faculty Members, Officers and students were present during the webinar.

Emphasis on Learning then Learn in National Education Policy: Shri Amit Khare

New Delhi, 22 March 2021. "If we want to make India a 'knowledge power' in the year 2040, along with acquiring knowledge, we will also have to create new knowledge". Therefore, the National Education Policy has emphasized on 'Learning to Learn'. " said Mr. Amit Khare, Secretary, Ministry of Education and Information and Broadcasting and Chairman, Indian Institute of Mass Communication. He expressed his views on the occasion of an online consultative meet on National Education Policy and its implication on Media Education organised by IIMC in collaboration with Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha, Maharashtra (MGAHV).

On this occasion Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG-IIMC, Prof. Rajaneesh Kumar Shukla, Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya-Wardha, Prof. Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Vice Chancellor of Kushabhau Thakre Journalism and Mass Communication University-Raipur, Mr. Atul Kothari, Convenor of Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas, along with prominent scholars of the country from the field of media education participated in the consultative meet.

Expressing his views as the chief guest of the program, Mr. Amit Khare said that the vision of India's new national education policy is global, but has its roots in Indian culture. We are part of the world community, so our education policy should be such that Indian institutions are counted among the best educational institutions in the world. He said that there are many important challenges before media education. Institutions have not changed their courses for many years. Therefore, media educational institutions should make syllabus according to the needs of the present time.



Chief Guest, Shri Amit Khare, Secretary, Ministry of Education and Information and Broadcasting, GoI, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, DG-IIMC and other participants during the online consultative meet on National Educational Policy

Khare said that the field of media and entertainment has seen a growth of 34 percent in the last year. This has led to the largest increase in the field of animation, games and VFX in particular. Therefore, media teachers need to pay more attention to these subjects. He said that our aim should be to create an education hub where students can get information related to other institutes of the country and their courses. By this, the knowledge tradition of India can be carried forward.

Director General of IIMC, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi said that the Media Education Council is needed to enhance the quality of media education. With its help, not only will the curriculum of journalism and mass education be improved, but journalists will also be prepared according to the needs of the media industry. He said that Indian tradition has better communication models than foreign models. Therefore, we should make the Indian model of dialogue and communication a part of the media curriculum.

Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha, Prof. Rajneesh Shukla said that till now the emphasis was on institution-centric education system, but the new national education policy has shown us the way to 'read all and grow all'. Through education policy, teachers are getting opportunities for new experiments. Therefore, it is our responsibility to prepare our students in such a way that they can turn challenges into opportunities.

On this occasion, Sh. Atul Kothari, convener of the Education Culture Uplift Trust said that the Ministry of Education was formerly the Ministry of Human Resources, but I believe that a human being can be a 'source' but not a 'resource'. He said that this policy talks about the upliftment of all sections of society. Therefore, all media institutions have to adopt the nature of shared work. Apart from this, new topics such as content production, content management and content distribution will have to be included in the syllabus.

The Chairman of Journalism Department of Kashmir Central University, Srinagar, Prof. Shahid Rasool said that the National Education Policy has been made keeping in mind the India of 2040. India is a country of youth and emphasis has been laid on making it a new economic power through the National Education Policy. He said that if we want to become world gurus, then every person in India should get equal education opportunities.

Presiding over the second session of the program, Prof. Baldev Bhai Sharmam, Vice Chancellor of Kushabhau Thackeray Journalism and Mass Communication University, Raipur said that there was a time when people believed that journalists are born and journalism cannot be taught by studying but now times have changed. Today the field of mass communication has become very important from the point of view of education. He said that media teachers should have formal education in journalism as well as direct experience of working in media, only then they would be able to teach children effectively.

In this session Prof. Mrinal Chatterjee, Dr. Anil Kumar, Prof. Pradeep Nair, Prof. Ehtesham Ahmed Khan, Prof. Sapna, Prof. Anil Ankit, Dr. Shipra Mathur, Dr. Sonali Nargunde and Dr. Dhananjay Chopra also expressed their views. Prof. Anubhuti Yadav and Prof. Sangeeta Pranavendra coordinated the program and Prof. Govind Singh, Dean (Academics) of IIMC, and Prof. Pramod Kumar, Dean (Student Welfare) gave the vote of thanks.



The sole aim of Journalism should be service.

- Mahatma Gandhi



AUTHORS' GUIDELINES

Articles having the following sequence will be considered for publication in the Journal:

- Title, Name(s) of author(s), complete postal address(es) of affiliations (place where work was conducted).
- Present address(es) of author(s) if applicable; Present designation with complete correspondence address including e-mail address to which the proofs should be sent (these are to be given as footnote on the first page).
- Abstract (not more than 250 words)
- Keywords (indexing terms), normally 5-6 items.
- Introduction
- Review of literature
- Research objectives
- Research questions
- Research methodology
- Findings and analysis
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- References

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

1. Images/Photographs/Line drawings

Authors are required to submit high-resolution images, preferably with the initial submission but no later than revision stage. Electronic images (figures and graphs) must be at a minimum resolution of 600 dpi. for line drawings (black and white) and 300 dpi and for colour or greyscale. Colour figures must be supplied in CMYK not RGB colours.

2. **File Format:** A number of different file formats are acceptable, including: Tagged Image File Format (.tiff), Joint Photographic Experts Group (.jpg), Portable Network Graphics (.png), Microsoft Word (.doc), and Excel (.xls) Portable Document Format (PDF) files are not accepted.
3. **Tables** (clearly labeled with its table number and caption).
4. **Figure** (clearly labeled with its figure number and caption). Send separate files for all figures and tables.
5. Titles and subtitles should not be merged within the text. They should be typed in a separate line, without indentation. Use lower-case sentences.

The IIMC reserves the right to retain the submitted manuscripts and illustrations which are not in proper formats as per the guidelines stipulated by the IIMC.

Authors are advised to prepare the manuscript in the following sequence of order and should check that articles have all the sections listed below:

1. Title

The manuscript of the paper starts with the TITLE. It should be short, specific and informative. It should be phrased to identify the content of the article and include the nature of the study, and technical approach, which is essential for key-word indexing and information retrieval. Title should be as brief as possible, and include the species involved in the research when applicable. Abbreviations are not permitted in the title.

In addition, a SHORT TITLE not exceeding 50 letters should be provided separately for running headlines.

The BYLINE should contain, in addition to the names and initials of the authors, the place where research was conducted. Naming an author on a paper implies that the person named is aware of the research reported and agrees with and accepts responsibility for any results or conclusions reported. The address of the institution should include the name of the institution, city, country and pin code. When a paper has several authors from different institutions, key the author to the address with superscript Arabic numerals and present the additional addresses as footnotes at the bottom of the page, e.g. Present address: Give designation, present address of all the authors and email of corresponding author.

¹Designation, Division of... (¹email of first author); ²Designation, Division of... (if second author is from different division), ³Designation, Division of... (if the author is from different place).

2. Abstract

The ABSTRACT, written in complete sentences, should not have more than 250 words. It should contain a very brief account of the materials, methods, results, discussion and conclusion. The abstract should summarize pertinent results in a brief but understandable form. The abstract should start with a clear statement of the objectives of the study and must conclude with one or two sentences that highlight important conclusions. "An abstract is defined as an abbreviated accurate representation of the contents of a document, preferably prepared by its author(s) for publication with it. Such abstracts are also useful in access [abstracting] publications and machine-readable databases".

3. Key words

At the end of the abstract, Key-words are to be listed in five to six keywords that best describe the nature of

the research. Because major words in the title are not used in the subject index, appropriate words from the title (or synonyms) should be listed as keywords.

4. Introduction

It should be brief and limited to the statement of the importance of the study, problem or the aim of the experiment. And may briefly justify the research and specify the hypotheses to be tested. The review of literature should be pertinent to the problem.

5. Review of literature

A literature review pertaining to the specific area of research investigation should be selected like the surveys of books, scholarly articles, newspapers, social media and any other relevant sources for a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by doing so, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works.

6. Research objectives

The research objectives are to be described concisely and should focus on what the research is trying to achieve. Objectives of the research should be in view of latest references.

7. Research questions

The questions should focus towards specific questions to be answered or predictions based on the hypotheses to be tested.

8. Research methodology

This includes experimental design, sampling and the techniques employed. All modifications of procedures must be explained. Experimental materials and statistical models should be described clearly and fully. Calculations and the validity of deductions made from them should be checked and validated.

9. Findings (Results) and analysis

Findings and Analysis should preferably be combined to avoid repetition.

Results should be presented in tabular form and graphs when feasible but not both. Mean result with the relevant standard errors should be presented rather than detailed data. The data should be so arranged that the tables would fit in the normal layout of the page.

Self-explanatory tables should be typed on separate sheets and carry appropriate titles. The tabular matter should not exceed 20% of the text. Any abbreviation used in a table must be defined in table. Paginate the tables in series with the text at

appropriate place. All tables should be cited in the text. If an explanation is necessary, use an abbreviation in the body of the table (e.g. ND) and explain clearly in footnotes what the abbreviation means. References to footnotes in a table are specified by superscript numbers, independently for each table.

The text should explain or elaborate on the tabular data, but data should not be repeated extensively within the text. Sufficient data, all with some index of variation attached, should be presented to allow the reader to interpret the results of the experiment.

10. Discussion

The discussion should interpret the results clearly and concisely. Discussion should relate to the limitations or advantage of the author's experiments /survey/ interview in comparison with the work of others. Authors must obtain permission to reproduce any copyright material, and include an acknowledgement of the source in their Article. They should be aware that the unreferenced use of the published and unpublished ideas, writing or illustrations of others, or submission of a complete paper under a new authorship in a different or the same language, is plagiarism.

11. Conclusion

Conclusion section should not be of more than one paragraph after the discussion and explain in general terms the implications of findings of this research. Abbreviations, acronyms, or citations should not be used. Though some speculation is permitted, this section should also caution the reader against over-extrapolation of results. For manuscripts with direct applications, this section will consist of an interpretive summary. If results have no implications, this should also be stated.

12. References

References should conform to the stylistic guidelines of the Publication Manual of the *American Psychological Association* (APA) 6th edition (Refer: www.apastyle.org/).

A recent issue of the journal should be consulted for the methods of citation of References in the text as well as at the end of the article. Reference citations in the text are typed as follows: Black (2006) or (Black, 2007); Dickerson et al., (2011) or (Dickerson et al., 2015); Smith and Jones (2017) or (Smith & Jones, 2018).

References lists should be typed in alphabetical order. The reference list should be first sorted alphabetically by author(s) and secondly chronologically.

References examples to be followed by the author:

Author(s), (date of publication).Title. Journal title (full name and in italics) Volume number (italic) Issue Number (regular),first page- last page.<to be ended by period>

Reese, S. D.& Ballinger, J. (2001). The Roots of a Sociology of News: Remembering Mr. Gates and Social Control in the Newsroom. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78(4), p. 641-658. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jmq>

Authors should ensure that all references in the text appear at the end of the paper and vice-versa, and those names and dates at the two places correspond.

JOURNAL ARTICLE• **In-Text Citation**

- 1) Last names of author(s), date of publication, and page number(s) are placed in brackets at the end of the sentence: (Spitz & Hunter, 2005, p. 172).
- 2) Alternatively, the citation may be integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: Spitz and Hunter (2005) examined how some assumptions about Napster have gained currency while others have not (p. 172).

• **Reference list with doi**

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Date of publication). Title of article in sentence case: Capitalize first word of subtitle. Title of Journal in Mixed Case and Italics, volume number in italics(issue number in brackets), first page-last page. doi:10..xxx/yyyy

Example:

Reese, S. D., & Ballinger, J. (2001). The Roots of Sociology of News: Remembering Mr. Gates and Social Control in the Newsroom. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78(4), p. 641-658. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900107800402>

• **Reference list without doi**

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Date of publication). Title of article in sentence case: Capitalize first word of subtitle. Title of Journal in Mixed Case and Italics, volume number in italics(issue number in brackets), first page-last page. Retrieved from <http://www.journal.com>

Example:

Reese, S. D., & Ballinger, J. (2001). The Roots of a Sociology of News: Remembering Mr. Gates and Social Control in the Newsroom. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78(4), p. 641-658. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jmq>

BOOK CHAPTER• **In-Text Citation**

- 1) Last names of author, year of publication, and page number(s) are placed in brackets at the end of the sentence:...(Kaye, 2012, p. 39).
- 2) Last name of author, year of publication, and page number(s) integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: As stated by Kaye, definitions of addiction also include "the interference" that addictive behaviour "poses for normative social obligations, particularly in relation to work and the family" (2012, p. 39).

Reference:

Chapter, Article, Story, Or Poem In A Print Or E-book With Author(S) And Editor(S)

For print book:

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Example:

Dillard, J. P. (2020). Currents in the study of persuasion. In M. B. Oliver, A. A. Raney, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (4th ed., pp. 115–129). London:Routledge.

For a chapter in an ebook, replace city, country and publisher with a retrieval statement of the library database OR the web address (URL), e.g.:

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sentence. If there are no page numbers, refer to the paragraph number or heading within the text: (Sisler, 2014, para. 8).

- 2) Alternatively, the citation may be integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: Sisler (2014) reported the amount of time allowed before declaring cardiac death is considerably less in the U.S. (para. 9-11).

REFERENCE LIST

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of article in sentence case. Title of Newspaper in Mixed Case and Italics. Page number

Example

Constantine, Z. (2010, June 15). UAE efforts on human trafficking 'significant': US State Department removes country from watch list. *The National*. pp. 1, 5.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE FROM A WEBSITE

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of article in sentence case. Title of Newspaper or News Website in Mixed Case and Italics. Retrieved from <http://www.newspaper.com>

Example

Constantine, Z. (2010, June 15). UAE efforts on human trafficking 'significant': US State Department removes country from watch list. *The National*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/uae-efforts-on-human-trafficking-significant-1.486936>

Without Author

- In-Text Citation
- 1) A shortened version of the title (2 - 3 words) or the full title if it is short, date of publication, and page number(s) are placed in brackets at the end of the sentence. Write the shortened title in mixed case and in quotations marks. If there are no page numbers, refer to the paragraph number or heading within the text: ("Recovering America's Missing Children," 2016, para. 2).
 - 2) Alternatively, the citation may be integrated into the sentence with a signal phrase and narrative: "Recovering America's Missing Children: 20 Years of the AMBER Alert System" (2016) reported the AMBER Alert System is used in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Indian country, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and 22 other countries" (para. 2).

Reference list

Title of article in sentence case. (Year, Month Day). Title of Newspaper in Mixed Case and Italics. Page number

Example:

FB knew about malicious Russian activity in 2014. (2018, November 28). *The Hindu*. p. 12.

Newspaper Article From a Website

Title of article in sentence case. (Year, Month Day). Title of Newspaper in Mixed Case and Italics. Retrieved from <http://www.newspaper.com>

Example:

Facebook adds 5 new partners to fact-checking network in India. (2019, February 12). *The Sentinel*. Retrieved from https://www.sentinelassam.com/national-news/facebook-adds-5-new-partners-to-fact-checking-network-in-india/?infinite_scroll=1

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Author, A. A. (Date of publication). Title of web page in sentence case. Retrieved from <http://website.com/>

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- A premier institute of journalism and mass communication in India
- Enjoys pride of place in mass communication education, training and research
- Ranked No.1 Mass Communication Institute in the country by multiple media surveys

THE BEGINNING

- Came into existence on August 17, 1965
- The setting up of the Institute was part of Government of India and UNESCO's plan to build mass communication training infrastructure in Developing World
- A team of UNESCO experts headed by Dr. Wilbur Schram - considered father of Communication Studies - guided with its course structure and pedagogy



GOVERNING STRUCTURE

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- PG Diploma in English Journalism (all 6 Campuses)
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Thrust on Language Journalism

- PG Diploma in Urdu Journalism, New Delhi
- PG Diploma in Odia Journalism, Dhenkanal
- PG Diploma in Marathi Journalism, Amravati
- PG Diploma in Malayalam Journalism, Kottayam

IIMC NETWORK

- IIMC Main Campus, New Delhi (1965)
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- Aizawl (2011)
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- Jammu (2012)
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