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From the Chief Editor's Desk



Anupma Bhatnagar
Director General
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Communication

We can see that the impact of media on people's lives is as varied as the impact of different seasons on our lives. This issue spans from January to June, and during that time, we witnessed the seasons shift from winter to spring and then to extreme summer.

The media has such a significant impact on the public that it can change their attitude and behaviour. Various media portrayals can have a wide range of effects on our thinking. When the media addresses the issue of gender sensitisation sensitively, the audience becomes sensitive and treats all equally. When the media takes environmental issues seriously and explains them to the public, the public becomes more environmentally conscious and concerned.

This issue begins with a paper on green communication and how it can persuade readers to adopt green products. The paper goes in-depth about the environmental effects of green and non-green consumer products. The comparative study covered the urban Indian population's attitude towards green and non-green apparel. This is a quasi-experimental study in which three test experiments are taken up: a green advertisement, a non-green advertisement, and a brand advertisement containing both green and non-green aspects.

Virtual classes were the new-normal when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world and lockdown was imposed worldwide. A paper on this issue deeply discusses virtual learning and the gender gap. The study showed how female teachers were more prompt in adapting to new technologies for teaching purposes compared to male teachers. Even the interactive level responses of women teachers are better than those of men teachers.

A paper on gender disparities in Indian cartoon shows showcased that animated cartoon programmes on Indian television play an important role in the idealization and internalization of gendered behaviour. The paper presents a study based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of 15 children's cartoon shows in India. The study highlighted the typical masculine traits of male characters and the stereotypical gender-based roles of female characters in leading children's cartoon shows in India.



We noticed the remarkably good performance of Indian sportspersons in the Paralympics 2020. In a paper on the comparative study of coverage of the Paralympics 2016 and 2020 in two Indian dailies, it was found that the number of articles in 2020 increased two to one and a half times more than in 2016. Additionally, the way of presenting the story was rather positive in the 2020 news coverage of the Paralympics than in 2016.

We very well know that the cyberworld has engrossed our lives in every way. So, being alert about cyber-security is a must in the present world. In a paper on cyber security, the authors have taken up all kinds of cybercrime happening, and a survey study in this regard was conducted to come to a solid conclusion. Even some sorted interviews of experts in the field were conducted, and a comparative study of the same was taken up. It is aptly concluded that cyberspace and cyber-security are not matters of concern for any individual nation but for all the nations of the world.

Today, we see the promotion of products and services on digital platforms as a common practice. India's growing population's reliance on the internet for a variety of purposes is what is driving the country's digital marketing landscape. A paper in this issue examines the current state of digital marketing in India, claiming that various digital marketing strategies such as SEO, SEM, influencer marketing, and content automation have provided significant benefits to businesses.

There are many other interesting topics taken up in this issue, like Indian folklore and web series, media opinion on successful programs like Mann Ki Baat, the portrayal of gender in print media in India, and the role of social media in interpersonal communication during the COVID-19 lockdown.

I would like to thank the editorial team, the editorial board, and the reviewers for their continuous support. It is always a pleasure to receive insightful suggestions from readers.

Anupama Bhatnagar



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When Communication Goes Green! Receptivity of Green Advertising in High Involvement Products among Urban Millennials in India

KULVEEN TREHAN¹ & SAKSHI MALLIK²

ABSTRACT

The study compares millennials' attitude in urban India towards the green and non-green denim wear (apparels are high involvement products for millennials) advertisement and to know whether millennials are willing to spend more on a green product after exposure to such advertisements. A quasi-experimental study where three test advertisements; a green advertisement, a non-green and a brand ad containing both elements were presented as visual stimuli to the respondents. The test ads created based on the Means-End Chain Conceptualisation of Advertising Strategy (MECCAS Model). The results show high level of concern for environment and positive attitude towards green advertisements. It further revealed that post-exposure to green advertising; millennials are willing to spend more on a green product. However, no significant relationship was reported between environmental concern and purchase intention. Salience of the study lies in its interrelationships between green advertising as mediated communication specifically in relation to the apparel industry and their environmental consciousness. It reveals that use of green communication persuasive tactics (ad appeals) can be a starting point in persuading the millennial consumers towards green products.

Keywords: Green advertising, Millennials, High involvement products, Ad attitude, Purchase intention

Introduction

Communication about the environmental effects of product composition by government and non-government bodies has increased in the last few years. Consequently, the producers and consumers have directed their attention towards environment-friendly products with features like low-power-consuming (energy-efficient) electrical appliances, organic foods, lead-free paints, recyclable paper, and sustainable fabrics (Grillo *et al.*, 2008; Wagner & Hansen, 2002).

Over the last few decades, consumers, particularly the millennial generation have become increasingly aware of the consequences of their purchase decisions on the environment (Cohn & Vaccaro, 2013; Finisterra do Paco, 2012). As a result, the market has seen a rise in products labelled as eco-friendly, organic, or sustainable (Baum, 2012; Parguel, 2015) We find more labels with green colour schemes; advertisements with natural images and commercials boasting environmental claims marking a surge in green advertising (Segev, 2016).

Green advertising: Form and functions

Green advertising came to the limelight during the 1970s when a recession resulted in skyrocketing of oil prices turning attention towards environmental issues (Haytko & Matulich, 2008). It is defined as “advertising that emphasises the environmental friendliness of [a] product” (Manrai *et al.*, 1997, p. 511). Either the green advertisements use message execution strategies to communicate the product's environmental friendliness explicitly or implicitly by using rational, emotional or moral appeals; it may propagate the idea of green lifestyle in general or advertise the modes and measures of corporate environment responsibility of an organisation or a brand (Banerjee *et al.*, 1995; Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibanez, 2009). Chan (2004) noted that green advertisement is a marketing tool where qualities of the advertised product such as the raw materials, packaging, etc or related production process contribute towards protecting the environment or has some other positive effect on the environment. The dominant function of green advertisements is to

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convince the consumers that the brand is concerned about the environment and subsequently influence the purchasing behaviour of the consumers by providing them with environment-friendly choices of products and directing their purchasing behaviour to positive consequences (Cherian & Jacob, 2012).

In the environmental and marketing literature, research studies have sought to identify, analyse, and understand 'green consumers' (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2003); (Jain & Kaur, 2006); (Straughan & Roberts, 1999). On the contrary, green consumption is regarded as a process that is influenced strongly by norms, habits and values of consumer (Peattie, 2010).

Review of literature

According to a Nielsen report (2015), 73% of surveyed millennials were willing to pay more for a product, if it is produced by a sustainable brand. Highly-environmentally-concerned millennials have reported more positive advertising attitude and purchase intention after viewing a green versus non-green ad for a low involvement product, i.e., laundry detergent (Schuhwerk, 1995). Similarly, a study by Lorez and Helgeson (2013) showed that millennials respond better, i.e., have more positive attitudes towards pro-environment ad appeals versus more generic ad appeals (i.e., romance, jealousy, greed, sharing, etc.) for a shampoo, another low-involvement product. Some other studies also show a divide in millennials' green consumption habits based on different variables such as ecological knowledge (Kanchanapibul *et al.*, 2014), lifestyle (Jang *et al.* 2011), and social influence (Lee, 2008). Consumers belonging to the millennial generation are found to be similar to their older counterparts, wherein they value accessibility, affordability, and quality and often associate green products with inconvenience, high costs, and lower performance (Chen & Chai, 2010); (Mainieri, *et al.*, 1997). Significant to note is the focus on young consumers, how their environmental behaviours and attitudes are developed and shaped (Casalo & Escario, 2016; Otto & Kaiser, 2014) and examining the factors that may encourage or hinder pro-environmental behaviours among this segment of consumers (Fischer *et al.*, 2017). Certain studies regarding urban young have shown that for a company to attract their interest, being environmentally friendly is the key, and that millennials seek brands they regard as having a positive effect on the environment (Rosenburg, 2015). However, other studies refute such generalisations and suggest that their attitudes are greener as compared to their behaviour (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2003) (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Characterised as

the largest generation of consumers, defining years of the millennial generation vary across the world. However, for the purpose of this study, the definition by Pew Research Center would be taken into account.

They contend that people born between 1981 and 1996 will be considered as millennials. Dimock, 2019; Tanyel *et al.* (2013) found that millennials encompass a large purchasing power and that marketers should promote their products to them.

In recent times, several studies have examined the consumer behaviour to determine the factors influencing acceptance and attitude towards green advertising / marketing resulting in purchase or not. In a survey, Sharma and Bansal (2013) found that research on green advertising in India is still in its nascent stages because most studies published are confined to a conceptual review of green marketing. This underlines the absence of a nuanced comparative study of perceptions towards green and non-green ads. Empirical research constitutes only a meagre percentage, especially vis-à-vis persuasive ability of green advertising, its elemental value and reliability. Therefore, the present research study fills the gap to evaluate Indian millennials' environmental concerns, their attitude towards green advertising, and any possible effect that these aspects may have on green buying intention and behaviour. Since, apparels a product category report high share of market, this research could have significant value about the role of the advertised mind in the green advertising sphere, specifically in relation to the apparel industry and their environmental concern. Further, it could reveal which strategies that companies should adopt to understand better the millennial consumers' needs in term of green products. This research also extends Davidson's (2016) work by exploring differences in high-versus low-environmentally-concerned millennials' ad attitudes and purchase intentions after viewing green and non-green ads for a high involvement product, i.e., a pair of denim jeans. This research specifically investigates whether or not green ads are more effective than non-green ads aimed at millennials in influencing their ad attitudes and purchase intentions. It will also investigate whether or not millennials are willing to spend more on a 'green' product as opposed to a 'non-green' product.

Scholars analysing attitude towards green advertising, purchase of green goods, consumer scepticism, purchase behaviour, and perceptions relied on the use of experimental designs and survey research to gain insights into perceptions and purchase intentions of consumers regarding green advertising (Patel & Chugan, 2015; Bing, 2012). Research into millennials has identified three smaller

cohorts within the generation that behave differently in terms of consumption. These cohorts include single college students, single young professionals, and married young professionals (Gurău, 2012). The first and second cohort is the population of interest for this study.

Research objectives

1. To know the attitude of millennials towards the green ad and the non-green advertisements of the high involvement product, i.e., apparel goods.
2. To know the relationship between attitude towards the green/non-green advertisements and purchase intention.
3. To know the gender differences, if any, towards willingness to spend on green advertising amongst millennials.

Research methodology

Quasi-experimental research design was used for the study wherein three test advertisements—t1 (green ad), t2 (a non-green ad) and t3 (brand ad with green and non-green elements) for a pair of denim jeans (from the apparel category, a high involvement product) were designed (Annexure - 1, 2, 3 respectively). Jeans were selected in the apparel category because they are commonly worn as work wear, semi-formal wear, and even on formal occasions by college students in India just like USA and other parts of the world (Bennur & Jin, 2013); .

Survey method

Survey conducted to obtain primary data from the respondents (Ohaja, 2003) after exposure to the test ads. A purposive sample of 150 respondents from University School of Mass Communication (USMC) University School of Management Studies (USMS) of GGS Indraprastha University, Dwarka Campus, New Delhi; and Post Graduate Diploma in Fashion Technology (PGFT), Pearl Academy, New Delhi, responded to the survey. University and college students were selected as members of the university community are literate (Akpan *et al.*, 2015) and wear branded and non-branded jeans.

Conducting the experiment

The experiment was conducted using three-test advertisements (See Annexure 1, 2 & 3) amongst three groups. The first group comprised of 55 participants, the second group included 60 and the third group included 35 students. The total sample size is 150 (n=150).

The participants, including young men and women belonging to the millennial generation, were at first exposed to t1 (green ad). Post ad exposure,

they were given a questionnaire which had questions concerning their attitude towards the advertisement and their purchase intention. Then they were shown second test advertisement (t2) and asked questions concerning their attitude towards the advertisement, purchase intention, demographics and their environmental concern.

Presentation of the test ad (t3) was followed by administration of the questionnaire part 3.

Creation of the visual stimuli (the test advertisements)

The test advertisements were created on adobe photoshop using a stock image taken from a free stock photos website, 'Pexels'; clicked by Mica Asato. The green test advertisement was created using the following variables:

Means-End Chain Conceptualisation of Advertising Strategy (MECCAS Model) (Grillo *et al.*, 2008; Wagner & Hansen, 2002).

- 1) Integration of an important environmental claim that is a prominent part of the ad and not hidden within the body copy.
- 2) Executional framework which refers to the fact that the ad looks 'green' by using, for example, green colours or green imagery.
- 3) Mentioning of the product's life cycle phase, either raw material, production, packaging, transportation/distribution, consumption, or disposal.
- 4) Mentioning of a driving force, which refers to planet preservation, animal life, or personal health.
- 5) The final characteristic is the presence of a leverage point linking the driving force with tangible message elements: either rational, emotional, moral or zeitgeist.

Tool of data collection: designing the questionnaire

A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure the attitude towards green advertising.

The structured questionnaire was divided into eight sections:

- (1) Demographics
 - For green test ad:
- (2) Ad attitudes (3) Purchase intentions
 - For non-green test ad:
- (4) Ad attitudes (5) Purchase intentions
 - For green+non green test ad:
- (6) Ad attitudes (7) Purchase intentions
- (8) Environmental concern

Further, it was divided into two more sections, namely:

The data was submitted to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive statistics, correlations and non-parametric statistical analysis.

Data presentation and analysis

Sample distribution

Gender wise, the millennial respondents from USMC, USMS and PGFT were almost equally distributed.

Almost an equal number of male (46.7%) and female respondents (52.7%) and less than 1% (.07) identifying themselves as others participated in the

survey, post exposure to the visual stimuli.

It is evident that the sample population is not very dispersed as the mean value for appeal, persuasiveness, purchase intent of the test advertisements and environmental consciousness is moderately high and standard deviation is not very high (M=above 4.4; SD= 1.3 to 1.5 in all cases) as shown in (Table 1).

Table 2 to 5 present the responses of sampled

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample Population

S. No	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
1	Green AD: Boring?/Interesting	150	4.4867	1.40343	1.970
2	Persuasiveness of green AD	150	4.8400	1.12375	1.263
3	Appeal of green AD	150	4.8267	1.29401	1.674
4	Likely to buy green jeans	150	4.4067	1.52429	2.323
5	Purchase green jeans on need	150	4.3133	1.49333	2.230
6	Trial of green jeans	150	4.9667	1.55618	2.422
7	Spending on green jeans	150	4.6533	1.67887	2.819
8	Non-green AD: Boring?/Interesting	150	4.4600	1.49554	2.237
9	Persuasiveness of non-green AD	150	4.5667	1.33822	1.791
10	Appeal of non-green AD	150	4.6733	1.36837	1.872
11	Likely to buy non-green jeans	150	4.4933	1.51390	2.292
12	Purchase non-green jeans on need	150	4.5867	1.46634	2.150
13	Trial of non-green jeans	150	4.8467	1.60007	2.560
14	Spending on non-green jeans	150	4.4733	1.62900	2.654
15	Blended AD: Boring?/Interesting	150	4.7467	1.47091	2.164
16	Persuasiveness of blended AD	150	4.8067	1.45028	2.103
17	Appeal of blended AD	150	4.9267	1.41941	2.015
18	Likely to buy blended jeans	150	4.7600	1.52685	2.331
19	Purchase blended jeans on need	150	4.7800	1.48310	2.200
20	Trial of blended jeans	150	5.0267	1.49696	2.241
21	Spending on blended jeans	150	4.6333	1.61127	2.596
22	Limit of people	150	5.4600	1.41246	1.995
22	Adaptation to natural environment	150	5.8600	1.39525	1.947
23	Poor air quality	150	5.9867	1.46543	2.147
24	Water scarcity	150	6.0200	1.44923	2.100
25	Climate change	150	5.8733	1.51634	2.299

Table 2: Distribution of respondents for increasing climate vulnerability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Disagree	5	3.3	3.3	6.0
	Somewhat disagree	3	2.0	2.0	8.0
	Neither disagree nor agree	15	10.0	10.0	18.0
	Somewhat agree	38	25.3	25.3	43.3
	Agree	49	32.7	32.7	76.0
	Strongly agree	36	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

respondents regarding environmental concerns that include increasing climate change, need to preserve the environment, pollution and consciousness towards going back to natural products.

Out of the total 150 urban youth, 24% strongly agreed and 32.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement that we are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support. Therefore, we note that cumulatively majority of the respondents are in varying degrees of agreement towards the increase in climate vulnerability. Seemingly, the respondents are aware of the precarious climate situation and recognise the hazards created by imbalance in nature and environment created by population explosion and consequent man-made decisions (Table 2).

Out of total, 42% of the respondents strongly agreed that humans need to adapt to the natural environment because they cannot remake it to suit their needs. An overwhelming majority of urban youth leans towards agreeing to the need to adapt to natural environment (Table 3). Respondents admit that there is certain need to change our ways and adapt to natural environment. Need recognition by the urban youth in India establishes the merit in proposing that climate change communication can be used to spread awareness, knowledge and advocacy by various stakeholders so that people can adapt to natural environment.

Out of total, 46% of the respondents strongly

agree that poor air quality is a cause of concern for them. Cumulatively too, majority of the respondents (82%) agree that the poor air quality in India is a cause of concern for them (Table 4).

Out of total, 50.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that water scarcity in India is a cause of concern for them (Table 5). Cumulatively too, majority of the respondents agree that the water scarcity in India is a cause of concern for them. Around 80% respondents felt that water is getting increasingly scarce in the country. Water crisis emerged as the most important issue in climate change as perceived by respondents. The result above acts as positive reinforcement for advertising industry to create messages based on value propositions on less consumption or conservation of water in product manufacturing and processing.

It was encouraging to note that the data reported seriousness towards climate change out of total, 46% of the respondents strongly agree and 27.3% agreed that climate change in India is a cause of concern for them. Cumulatively too, majority of the respondents (84.6%) agree that climate change in India is a grave issue (Table 6). Three-fourth of the respondents finds evidence of climate change in their daily lives. They feel climate change is visible and hence a serious concern now; its redressal requires urgent attention.

Table 7A to C: Response towards green and non-green test advertisements created for denim wear.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents for need to adapt to natural environment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	3	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Somewhat disagree	6	4.0	4.0	8.0
	Neither disagree nor agree	7	4.7	4.7	12.7
	Somewhat agree	25	16.7	16.7	29.3
	Agree	43	28.7	28.7	58.0
	Strongly agree	63	42.0	42.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Distribution of respondents for existence of poor air quality in India

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	2	1.3	1.3	5.3
	Somewhat disagree	4	2.7	2.7	8.0
	Neither disagree nor agree	6	4.0	4.0	12.0
	Somewhat agree	9	6.0	6.0	18.0
	Agree	54	36.0	36.0	54.0
	Strongly agree	69	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Distribution of respondents for water scarcity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	1	.7	.7	4.0
	Somewhat disagree	6	4.0	4.0	8.0
	Neither disagree nor agree	8	5.3	5.3	13.3
	Somewhat agree	10	6.7	6.7	20.0
	Agree	44	29.3	29.3	49.3
	Strongly agree	76	50.7	50.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Distribution of respondents about gravity of climate change in last 5 years

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	3	2.0	2.0	6.0
	Somewhat disagree	1	.7	.7	6.7
	Neither disagree nor agree	13	8.7	8.7	15.3
	Somewhat agree	17	11.3	11.3	26.7
	Agree	41	27.3	27.3	54.0
	Strongly agree	69	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 7A: Showing the persuasive ability of green advertising

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.7	.7	.7
	Disagree	5	3.3	3.3	4.0
	Somewhat disagree	6	4.0	4.0	8.0
	Neither disagree nor agree	45	30.0	30.0	38.0
	Somewhat agree	46	30.7	30.7	68.7
	Agree	42	28.0	28.0	96.7
	Strongly agree	5	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 7B: Showing the persuasive ability of non-green advertising

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	3	2.0	2.0	6.0
	Somewhat disagree	20	13.3	13.3	19.3
	Neither disagree nor agree	36	24.0	24.0	43.3
	Somewhat agree	47	31.3	31.3	74.7
	Agree	32	21.3	21.3	96.0
	Strongly agree	6	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Out of total, 30.7% of the participants said that the green advertisement shown to them was slightly persuasive. Cumulatively, 62% of the participants found the ad to be on the persuasive side (Table 7 (A).

The result concurs with existing studies that underlined millennials positive response well to green advertising as a message strategy, product descriptors, and labelling.

Table 7C: Showing persuasiveness of generic advertising with green and non-green elements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Disagree	4	2.7	2.7	7.3
	Somewhat disagree	10	6.7	6.7	14.0
	Neither disagree nor agree	38	25.3	25.3	39.3
	Somewhat agree	34	22.7	22.7	62.0
	Agree	45	30.0	30.0	92.0
	Strongly agree	12	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 8A: Showing responses towards spending on green jeans

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	5.3	5.3	5.3
	Disagree	15	10.0	10.0	15.3
	Somewhat disagree	12	8.0	8.0	23.3
	Neither disagree nor agree	20	13.3	13.3	36.7
	Somewhat agree	45	30.0	30.0	66.7
	Agree	31	20.7	20.7	87.3
	Strongly agree	19	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 8B: Showing responses towards spending on non-green jeans

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Disagree	14	9.3	9.3	14.0
	Somewhat disagree	20	13.3	13.3	27.3
	Neither disagree nor agree	27	18.0	18.0	45.3
	Somewhat agree	41	27.3	27.3	72.7
	Agree	24	16.0	16.0	88.7
	Strongly agree	17	11.3	11.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Out of total, 31.3% of respondents said that the non-green advertisement was slightly persuasive. Interestingly, close to half of the participants lean towards the advertisement being on the persuasive end (Table 7B). The results imply that strong price benefit may overpower the climatic concerns of the respondents.

Out of total, 30% of respondents said that the blended advertisement was persuasive. Overall, 60.7% participants lean towards the brand advertisement being persuasive end. This indicates that the majority of the participants may not strongly align with the green goals as much as by the blended advertisement, which presents green and non-green components received favourable response

Table 8A to C presents millennial respondents'

willingness to buy environmentally friendly denim wear. Survey reveals that more than 60% urban young are positively inclined to spend on environment friendly jeans indicating clear purchase intent. Out of total, 30% of the respondents somewhat agree to the statement that they are willing to spend more on the environmentally friendly jeans in the advertisement. Cumulatively, the majority of the participants, i.e., 63.4% are inclined towards spending on green wear (Table 8 A).

Out of total, 27.3% of the respondents somewhat agree that they would purchase the jeans at a lower price even though they are not environmentally friendly. Cumulatively, 54.6% of the participants are in agreement towards spending less on the advertised jeans, even though they are not environmentally friendly (Table 8B).

Table 8C: Showing respondents spending on jeans with both green and non-green elements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Disagree	12	8.0	8.0	12.7
	Somewhat disagree	16	10.7	10.7	23.3
	Neither disagree nor agree	26	17.3	17.3	40.7
	Somewhat agree	37	24.7	24.7	65.3
	Agree	37	24.7	24.7	90.0
	Strongly agree	15	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 9A: Correlation between green advertising and millennial buying

		Persuasiveness of green ad	Spending on green jeans
Persuasiveness of green AD	Pearson Correlation	1	.704**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Spending on green jeans	Pearson Correlation	.704**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9B Correlation between non-green advertising and millennial buying

		Persuasiveness of green ad	Spending on green jeans
Persuasiveness of green AD	Pearson Correlation	1	.458**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Spending on green jeans	Pearson Correlation	.458**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Significantly, 49% respondents, i.e., 24.7% somewhat agreed and agreed that they would purchase the jeans at a higher price because they are environment-friendly and trendy (Table 8C).

Cumulatively, 59.4% of the participants agree towards spending more on advertised jeans. This again indicates that the participants are willing to spend more on blended jeans because they also inculcate the characteristic of trendiness.

Pearson's r-value to explore correlation between persuasive ability of green advertising and spending is positive indicating an interrelationship, however, is not so strong. It can be said that millennial find green advertising pleasing and effective, also high on persuasive ability but they are not willing to spend more on green jeans merely based on its green message strategy ($r = .404$), i.e., environmentally friendly denim wear (Table 9A). In comparison,

the correlation between non-green advertising and spending ($r = .458$) is weak, indicating that it may not have an effect on buying behaviour of the millennials either (Table 9B).

Table 8 shows that there exists a strong positive correlation of 0.704 between persuasiveness of the green advertisement and the willingness to spend more money on the green jeans. This indicates that the participants are willing to spend more on green jeans, after being exposed to a green advertisement.

The table indicates that there exists a weak but positive correlation of 0.458 between the two given variables, i.e., persuasiveness of the non-green advertisement and spending on non-green jeans. This indicates that the affordable price of the trendy jeans in the non-green advertisement can persuade the participants to purchase them, even though the product is not environmentally friendly.

Table 10A : Cross tabulation of responses on persuasiveness of green advertisement adaptation to natural environment

		Adaptation to natural environment							Total
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Persuasiveness of green AD	Extremely dissuasive	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Dissuasive	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	5
	Slightly dissuasive	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	6
	Neither dissuasive no persuasive	1	2	2	3	13	12	12	45
	Slightly persuasive	0	1	1	2	6	15	21	46
	Persuasive	1	0	1	2	4	15	19	42
	Extremely persuasive	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	5
	Total	3	3	6	7	25	43	63	150

Table 10B : Cross tabulation of responses on persuasiveness of non-green advertisement adaptation to natural environment

		Adaptation to natural environment							Total
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Persuasiveness of green AD	Extremely dissuasive	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	6
	Dissuasive	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
	Slightly dissuasive	1	0	1	2	5	3	8	20
	Neither dissuasive no persuasive	0	1	0	3	6	11	15	36
	Slightly persuasive	0	1	2	0	8	20	16	47
	Persuasive	1	0	1	2	4	7	17	32
	Extremely persuasive	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6
	Total	3	3	6	7	25	43	63	150

In order to find whether millennial respondents' understanding of environmental issues determine their preference for green advertising, cross tabulation of related variables was done as under [Table 10 (A,B,C)] :

According to the table, it is clear that 42% of the participants strongly agree with the statement that humans need to adapt to the natural environment because they cannot remake it to suit their needs. In addition, majority of the participants

agree with the aforementioned statement. In terms of the persuasiveness of the green advertisement, majority of the participants found it to be slightly persuasive (Table 10A). This indicates that participants are persuaded more by the green advertisement; who are more concerned about the environment.

It is clear that 47% of the participants strongly agree with the statement that humans need to adapt to the natural environment because they cannot

Table 10C: Cross tabulation of responses on persuasiveness of generic brand advertisement adaptation to natural environment

		Adaptation to natural environment							Total
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Persuasiveness of green AD	Extremely dissuasive	1	0	2	1	1	0	2	7
	Dissuasive	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	4
	Slightly dissuasive	0	0	0	2	3	2	3	10
	Neither dissuasive no persuasive	0	0	1	2	6	11	18	38
	Slightly persuasive	0	2	2	1	8	7	14	34
	Persuasive	1	0	1	1	2	22	18	45
	Extremely persuasive	0	0	0	0	4	1	7	12
	Total	3	3	6	7	25	43	63	150

Table 11: Showing Chi-Square Test Statistics

	Test Statistics			
	Gender	Persuasiveness of green AD	Spending on green jeans	Willingness to buy green jeans
Chi-Square	72.840 ^a	129.627 ^b	45.067 ^b	32.933 ^b
df	2	6	6	6
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 50.0.

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 21.4.

remake it to suit their needs. However, majority of the participants found the non-green advertisement to be slightly persuasive, which is in contrast to their concern for the environment (Table 10B).

Out of total, 47% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement that humans need to adapt to the natural environment because they cannot remake it to suit their needs. However, there lies the contradiction when majority of the respondents do not reject the generic advertisement with green and non-green message elements (Table 10C). In many ways, it indicates consumerist dispositions of material benefit are strongly entrenched in the urban youth of India, who is acknowledging the need to 'go green' is yet not vehemently rejecting the existing brand strategies that blend individual profit and notional sustainability.

Discussion of results

Chi-square goodness of fit test results show

that three null hypotheses for gender difference in response towards green ads, ad attitude and purchase intent and spending on green jeans were rejected. Significance of gender difference in consumer receptivity of green ads amongst the urban youth to conclude that their attitude towards green ads varies based on respondents gender as observed ($p=.000$, $X^2=72.80$, $df=2$). Furthermore, persuasive tactics used in green advertising were found to be significant ($p=.000$; $X^2=129.627$, $df=6$) and also, desirability to spend on green jeans was found to be significant ($p=.000$; $X^2=45.067$ $df=6$) (Table 11).

1. To study whether millennials are environmentally conscious about apparel brands.

We focused on environmental concerns questions by seeking responses pertaining to environmental issues.

Forty-six percent of the respondents 'strongly agreed' that poor air quality is a cause of concern

for them, 50.7% ‘strongly agreed’ that water scarcity in India is a cause of concern for them and 46% ‘strongly agreed’ that climate change in India is a cause of concern. Therefore, we noted that millennials have high levels of awareness about precarious condition of air, water and climate change. Additionally majority of the respondents ‘agreed’ that we are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support. The results indicate that cumulatively, the participants are highly environmentally conscious and concerned. However, when asked about their purchase intention towards the green jeans, non-green jeans, their concerns did not reflect fully in their buying preferences in the case of high involvement products such as jeans.

More number of participants is likely to purchase any jeans (a blend of green and non-green elements) as compared to the green jeans.

Interestingly though, when it came to the trial of green jeans, more participants were inclined towards it as compared to the trial of the non-green variant. Hence, it can be concluded that millennial who are highly environmentally concerned are not only conscious about their apparel choices but also are affected by the quality of the apparel being trendy and other price related factors.

2. To assess the difference between their attitude towards the ad and purchase decision towards a green product.

The participants found the green advertisement interesting, persuasive and appealing and thus, had a positive attitude towards the ad. Therefore, we found that the results are similar to a previous study wherein ten different ad appeals were analysed and concluded that the millennial generation had a positive response towards environmentally focused appeals (Lorez & Helgeson, 2013). In addition, the purchase intention of the participants towards the green jeans was high. When asked about if they are likely to buy the environmentally friendly jeans shown in the green ad, 26% of the participants opted for the option ‘somewhat agree’. Cumulatively, the majority of the participants, i.e., 52% are in agreement with the aforementioned statement in line with the study by OEKO-TEX® wherein it was found that 60% of millennials are interested in certified sustainable clothing, while 69% of millennials check claims like ‘eco-friendly’ or ‘sustainable’ when buying clothes that belong to high involvement category. When asked if they would purchase the environmentally friendly jeans if they need jeans, cumulatively, 50.1% of the participants agreed. Besides, majority, of the participants (70%) wanted to try the jeans. Hence, it can be concluded that millennials who have

a positive attitude towards a green advertisement also have higher purchase intention for the green product, though the final decision to buy rests on other factors like design, trendiness, and price favourability as well.

3. To know whether millennials are willing to spend more on a ‘green’ product after exposure to green advertising.

When asked about if they are likely to buy the environmentally friendly jeans shown in the green ad, 26% of the participants opted for the option ‘somewhat agree’.

Majority of the participants (52%) expressed positive intent to buy. This is in line with the study by OEKO-TEX® wherein it was found that 60% of millennials are interested in certified sustainable clothing, while 69% of millennials check claims like ‘eco-friendly’ or ‘sustainable’ when buying clothes.

The correlation table (Table 9A) indicates that there exists a strong and positive relationship between the appeal of the green advertisement and the spending on green jeans. Cumulatively, the majority of the participants are inclined towards spending more on green jeans. The findings concur with the study revealed that 66% of global millennials are willing to spend more on brands that produce sustainable clothing (BoF & MC, 2018). Hence, it can be concluded that millennials are willing to spend more on a green product after they have been exposed to a green advertisement.

Conclusion

From the study, it is evident that the millennial generation in India is increasingly becoming environmentally concerned. This is receptive to green communications especially advertisements that contain green messages for high involvement products such as jeans or denim wear. However, their purchase decisions for apparel are not singularly defined by their high environmental concern and gravity of the climate change. As expected, millennials with high environmental concern showed positive ad attitudes and purchase intentions towards a green product. Further, the majority of participants in this study were willing to spend more on the pair of jeans that are environment-friendly, but their response to spending on non-green jeans or apparel that used blend of both persuasive tactics was also not favourable. They would lean towards non-green products too if otherwise beneficial. It brings to the fore, that green advertising as message execution strategy can deliver results if used in an integrative manner by rational and emotional advertising appeals in brand communication.

Since various research studies, including this one, underscore that millennials respond well to green advertisements and are willing to spend more money on green products, it becomes important for marketers and advertisers to create more green advertisements. Organisations that produce environmentally friendly products can also benefit from this research as it proves that green advertisements are an effective way to reach millennials with high environmental concerns. However, since the ad attitudes and purchase intentions of the participants in this study were also not low for the non-green jeans as well, it is imperative for advertisers to make sure that green advertising needs to be more persuasive in order to compete with the plethora of non-green advertisements. In addition, it is important to note that green advertising alone might not be able to suffice to reach out to environmentally concerned millennials and hence, it needs to be supported with other marketing and promotional efforts.

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Annexure 1



Annexure 2



Annexure 3





Virtual Learning and Gender Gap: Exploring Technological Adaptation among Indian Higher Education Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Virtual classes have become a norm with the advent of the COVID-19-induced pandemic and subsequent global lockdown. Vast segments of populations have had to adjust to the new normal, which involved adapting to technologically aided human interaction. Fields like teaching where one-to-one interaction has been coveted by academicians worldwide also switched to virtual tools and platforms. Different researchers delving into the field of education have explored the idea of varying technological adaptation vis-à-vis gender. Few fields, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), have traditionally been seen as male bastions, while softer pursuits like teaching were left for women. But online education has brought both male and female academicians and instructors on the same ground. This research explores the gender gap in adapting to new technologies and tries to evaluate if the attitude towards virtual interaction focused on teaching and learning is dependent on the sex of the individual. Surveying instructors from higher education institutes all over India, the paper utilises quantitative data to ascertain the attitudes of both genders towards online teaching and learning. Lastly, the researchers try to estimate the sociological reasons behind the growth and decline patterns in the interest of various segments of the population.

Keywords: Virtual learning, Indian educators, Gender gap, Technology adaptation, Higher education, Technology-aided human interaction

Introduction

Virtual classes have become a norm with the advent of the Covid-19-induced pandemic and subsequent global lockdown. According to a report by the United Nations, the pandemic has caused the largest disruption in the history of education worldwide and has affected more than 1.5 billion students in 190 countries (United Nations, 2020). Vast segments of population have had to adjust to the new normal, which involved adapting to technologically aided human interactions in the form of video lectures, virtual classes, and other tools and platforms for e-learning.

While remote learning was always an option, it wasn't favoured well because of the perceived importance of one-to-one interaction, hands-on training in skill-based education, and peer involvement that classroom education offers. Educators too favoured this mode, as it allowed them to be spontaneous in their lectures and get instant

student feedback. The feedback allowed for further modification to teaching styles, like including more examples or planning an activity. But the pandemic removed the choice entirely and imposed online education as a necessity for all levels of education, from primary to higher degrees (de Oliveira Dias *et al.*, 2020).

Technology has made its pathway in the education industry in the form of information and communication technology (ICT) tools over the past decade. These ICTs were helping in delivering the curriculum and keeping track of the student's progress. Several studies propounded that ICTs affected the student's attention and involvement in the classes, thus affecting their performance positively. But the digital divide across the country affected the process adversely. Access to technology, internet penetration, and lack of resources ensured that the pace of adaptation wasn't uniform across the country. Universities dealing with distance education

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and open learning, like Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), had been also utilising various methods to reach out to the students, involving many platforms of mass media as well as television and radio. Virtual classes brought the focus to internet-facilitated classes to maintain the momentum of education even with lack of resources. The academic calendars needed to be matched up even at the time of lockdown (Pregowska *et al.*, 2021).

Various tech giants cashed on the opportunity and extended the services. Platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, Cisco WebEx, and Microsoft Teams offered various packages to educational institutes, ranging from free for limited services to institutional packs with resources and funds. Virtual teaching brought many challenges for the educators, not only did they have to master these digital platforms and run their classes online, but they also had to plan their course content into a lecture, create material that could be disseminated online and ensure that students were learning through this method as well. They could not plan any group activities or activities involving physical participation, two things students immensely enjoyed in the classrooms (Wilcha, 2020).

Another challenge is the limited student interaction. With restrained bandwidth, attending classes from a distracting environment, and an option to switch off the microphones and cameras, students were less inclined to participate in the classes. Teachers all over the globe, across disciplines, reported a great decline in the response from students. Collaborative exercises came to a halt as the online environment made it easier for students to perform individual tasks and not in teamwork (Angelova, 2020).

Discussing India's education industry, women comprise about 55% of India's teaching force. Teaching is supposed to be a softer pursuit that allows teachers to maintain a work-life balance. But despite being a majority, the distribution across levels isn't uniform. On the one hand primary education sees more than one lakh female teachers compared to only 27,000 men. On the other hand, at secondary and higher secondary levels, about 8 lakh women were teaching compared to 10 lakh men. The gap widens with an increase in levels (India Education, World Bank Development Indicators, 2022). Higher education, especially in the fields of STEM, has been seen as a male-dominated area, with few female educators making their way into the field. On the domestic front, studies claim that the lockdown added extra work pressure on women, as the domestic help was unable to travel and men's participation in domestic chores in the country is negligible in general (Nazir, 2022).

Virtual classes have brought men and women across the entire education sector on the same front, workwise. Education being an old and established discipline, several types of research have been conducted on how male and female educators adapt to technology. Gothwal *et al.* (2022) discuss the impact of the lockdown on learners and educators while commenting that the attitude towards virtual classes improved tremendously over two years.

Review of literature

While the research on the effectiveness of online tools, adaptation struggles in teachers, and effect on students is long-standing, papers published post or during the pandemic were picked up for this study, due to their microscopic approach.

Due to unprecedented times, there has been a lack of consensus on the adaptation of technology, specifically in education. The variety of tools available makes it even more difficult to implement an industry-wide standard (Ilin, 2020). The leadership in the industry has been held responsible for influencing education technology adoption and implementation in the higher education sector. Other components which affect the adaptation are financial management and handling social networks online as these two factors have contributed heavily to making the workers comfortable working from the home situations (Lalani *et al.*, 2021).

Al-Obaydi (2020), in a paper titled, 'Using Virtual Learning Environments as a Medium of Instruction in EFL Context: College Teachers' Attitudes,' found that teachers prefer a mix of learning environments, they prefer mixing traditional face-to-face teaching and online learning. The study also brought out the fact that teachers felt that only online learning may increase the learners' autonomy but affects the teacher-taught relationship negatively. So a blended approach was preferred. Also, the study highlighted that a lack of trained staff and lack of infrastructural facilities may be a reason why online teaching may not be fruitful. The teachers must also be trained in the use of technology, online platforms and apps so as to be able to use them for their teaching-learning transactions.

The effectiveness of using multimedia in teaching and learning has been verified and approved, and the adoption by educators and learners has been less researched. Park *et al.* (2019) propose a model specifically for studying the adaptation levels with different moderators, such as individual characteristics. They suggest that it is the intersectionality of these factors that affect multimedia adoption for learning.

On the contrary, while studying attention spans

and distraction in individuals within personal learning environments, Wu and Cheng (2019) explored perceived attention problems (PAP) and self-regulatory strategies (SRS) as reported by the individuals. It was found that males reported a greater number of perceived attention problems and females reported having more versatile strategies to regulate their attention. Males reported having lesser attention spans and disorientation while using social media during teaching and learning (Wu & Cheng, 2019).

In the Indian context, Rashid and Yadav (2020) emphasize on the lockdown's role in revealing the shortcomings of the education system and a pressing need to train the educators to be well-versed with digital technologies in order to adapt to the rapidly changing global education industry. Further, another research by McLaughlan (2022) probes into the challenges faced while training the trainers through contribution analysis. The researcher compares the effectiveness of online training vis-à-vis offline one and lays down the groundwork for bridging the digital divide in India. Interviewing educators from higher education institutes from India, Jain and Singh (2021) identified few major concerns—advantages of digital learning, pros and cons of traditional learning, and challenges and prospects of digitalisation of education.

Technology and virtual working have been credited to shed attributes associated with reflection of online identity or depersonalising virtual identity. Tome and Vaart (2020) have associated technology with depersonalisation, as it reduced emotional demands from workers, thus, possibly removing the gender barrier that stands tall in offline learning.

The review helped in identifying a gap in studies exploring the technological adaptation in teaching and what role gender plays in it.

Theoretical framework

A few theories that were found to be overlapping with the aims and objectives of the study were:

Transformative Learning Theory: Mezirow (2018) proposed that learning is a process of “examining, questioning, validating, and revising one’s perspectives”. The theory builds upon the existing adult learning theories and propounds that a person’s experiences formulate their perspectives and help an individual in critically understanding and appreciating his/her thought process around various concepts, virtual learning in this case (Mezirow, 2018).

Another theory that finds resonance with the aims of the paper is the Theory of Connectivism Learning. Connectivism has been hailed as a theory

of learning in a new digital age, where all mankind, and thus all information is connected. In a time when access to information is not the problem, learning is recognising the patterns in data, and the ability to critically replicate the action. The teachers and students are not just bound by a syllabus, but the boundaries of text are expanding with time (Siemens, 2004).

Research objectives

The overarching aim of this paper is to estimate the levels of technological adaptation in virtual teaching and learning among Indian educators.

The specific objectives of the research are:

1. To estimate the comfort level of Indian educators with virtual learning tools.
2. To approximate their adaptation to information and communications technologies (ICTs) in the post-Covid era.
3. To explore and identify a correlation between gender and comfort level with it.

Social significance of the problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has completely altered the way we perceived education. Virtual learning has become a part of our new normal. But in the event of adopting to the new normal, educators had less time to learn. Yet, all the stakeholders in the education sector have made efforts to meet the expectations that the pandemic has brought forth. This study is relevant from that context, as the educators are the experts the society depends on for training the youth to enter the workforce. In these testing times, their learning and comfort level with virtual teaching-learning tools is the factor that decided the quality of education imparted. Hence, the researchers found it important to investigate the research problem.

Research methodology

Method: Acquiring a quantitative approach to obtain comparable results, an online survey was designed and adopted for the study. The survey was conducted over a week in an online mode and had a response ratio of 18%. Six months after the faculty development programme (FDP), the respondents were also surveyed to find the specific areas where they were putting the skills learnt in the FDP to use and how beneficial they then thought the programme was. The response rate was 15% for this feedback survey.

Tool: A questionnaire based on the Likert scale was utilised for this purpose. Questions ranged from ascertaining the demographic profile of the respondent to recording attitudinal responses towards various implementations of ICT.

Sample: Indian educators from the fields of STEM, teaching at the collegiate level (+2) and above. In 2020, 61 female instructors and 124 male instructors answered the survey and, in 2021, 24 female and 57 male instructors responded.

Data collection

A five-day online faculty development programme was held with educators from across the country. The FDPs were organised by IGNOU, from June 8–12, 2020 and August 23–27, 2021. Though both the programmes were organised on different subjects, the commonality was that both were technical in nature and organised to facilitate knowledge upgradation through technology platforms. The attendees were exposed to various methods and tools for online teaching and data was gathered on the workshops' first and last day. The survey in the form of Google Forms was floated at the end of the sessions each day and generated responses to elucidate their attitudes and perspectives towards online teaching and learning. Various factors, such as enjoyment of the course (EC), perceived effectivity (PE), level of interaction (IN), and ability to retain attention (RA),

were taken to be the key areas of exploration.

Data analysis and findings

The data was obtained in Excel sheets resulting from Google Forms. Further, the questions were related to the four variables, that is—attitudes towards the enjoyment of the course (EC), perceived effectivity (PE), level of interaction (IN), and ability to retain attention (RA), which were coded so. After coding these variables, data were segregated based on gender, vis-à-vis day 1 and day 3. After the segregation of data, the table was collated listing the degrees of responses to these variables. The tables are as follows:

Respondents were asked to report how interactive they felt the workshop was on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Table 1 depicts the levels of interactivity as reported by the participants. The majority of the participants reported a high level of interactivity witnessed in the online training program.

The next set of questions probed the level of enjoyment in the participants. They were asked to report how well they were enjoying the workshop on a scale

Table 1: Levels of interactivity

2020					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 61)	1.64%	3.28%	6.56%	31.15%	57.38%
Male (N = 124)	0%	0.80%	6.45%	39.52%	53.23%
2021					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 24)	0	0	8.33%	25	66.67%
Male (N = 57)	0	0	8.77%	42.11%	49.12%

Table 2: Level of enjoyment

2020					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 61)	1.64%	0	11.48%	34.43%	52.46%
Male (N = 124)	0	0.81%	4.03%	38.71%	56.45%
2021					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 24)	0	4.17%	0	37.5	58.33%
Male (N = 57)	0	1.75%	3.51%	50.88%	43.86%

Table 3: Attention retained

2020					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 47)	2.13%	4.26%	8.51%	48.94%	34.04%
Male (N = 104)	2.88%	4.81%	8.65%	56.73%	26.92%

2021					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 30)	3.33%	0%	10%	60%	30%
Male (N = 85)	4.71%	2.35%	3.53%	63.53%	28.24%

Table 4: Perceived effectivity

2020					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 61)	1.64%	1.64%	4.92%	29.51%	62.29%
Male (N = 124)	0	0.81%	4.84%	33.87%	60.48%

2021					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Female (N = 24)	0	0	8.33%	20.83%	70.83%
Male (N = 57)	0	0	7.02%	43.86%	49.12%

Table 5: Growth in parameters based on gender

	Interactivity	Enjoyment	Attention	Effectivity
Female	9.29%	5.87%	7.02%	8.54%
Male	-4.10%	-12.59%	8.11%	-11.36%

of 1–5, with 1 being the lowest again. Table 2 depicts the level of enjoyment as reported by them. Most of the participants reported enjoying the workshop.

The next set of questions explored the retention of attention of the respondents. Table 3 displays their feedback on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest attention and 5 being the highest. Most of the samples reported retaining their attention for a longer period.

Lastly, the sample was asked to rate the effectiveness of the workshop on a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the lowest again. Table 4 denotes their responses. Very few respondents opined that the workshop was not as effective as they had expected it to be.

After collating two years of data, and representing it in percentages to make a better comparison, their growth rate was tracked across the four parameters for both genders over a year. There was an observed

rise in the levels of all parameters for women, as they reported a 9.3% hike in interactivity, around 5.8% increase in their enjoyment levels, 7.02% responded with greater attention spans and 8.5% felt a rise in the effectivity of the workshop. On the contrary, men reported a drop of 4.1% in interactivity, 12.6% in enjoyment, and 11.36% in overall effectivity of the workshop. The only category that saw a rise was attention retention which was around 8.11% (Table 5).

Conclusion

Tracing the growth patterns, it can be summarized that women have reportedly adapted better in comparison to men when it comes to adapting to virtual learning tools. They respond better to the interaction levels, possibly breaking the online barrier to communicating more often than men in

an online session. Women also reported enjoying these sessions more than men, surprisingly in a time when the work-life balance has been a talking point across the world. Being primary caregivers and in charge of domestic tasks, working women have been relying on the force of house help, in handling work and home simultaneously. But, working from home opened several possibilities for women and helped them multitask as well. This could also explain the comparable attention spans in women as well as in men. Lastly, the perceived effectiveness of the workshop was much higher in women than in men. While the number in participation reflects the disproportionate access to technology in various sections.

Thus, it can be concluded that women have adapted better to technology in case of the education industry, facilitating a smooth teaching and learning process. The results find a semblance in results with a report that stated that women use the internet for more educational purposes and men use it for recreational purposes, and this stands true even in the case of the Covid-induced lockdown. A report correlates gender equality in society to gender participation in the digital economy and suggests that growth in either of them would lead to a societal change (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). The anonymity and deindividualisation the virtual tools offer, help them in looking beyond gender to represent themselves better. The loss of self-awareness that comes with social situations helps women to focus more on the teaching-learning process (Jaidka *et al.*, 2022).

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Socialising Children in an Unequal World: Gender Disparities in Indian Cartoon Shows

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ABSTRACT

Various initiatives are being undertaken by governments and concerned authorities at different levels in the country to realise gender equality. However, it is to be kept in mind that gender sensitisation as part of the process of socialisation begins at home, right from one's childhood. Mass media has the power to simulate and construct ideas of what comprises 'proper' gendered mannerisms and characteristics for both sexes. While adults have the ability to negotiate the meaning of media messages to variable extents, the young and impressionable minds of children are at a greater risk of being moulded by the different forms of audio-visual content on various media platforms. One of the earliest forms of media content that children are introduced to is animated cartoon programme on television which plays an important role in their idealisation and internalisation of gendered behaviour. Given the exponential growth of the number of such cartoon channels and programmes in India with more than 20 channels at the national and regional level exclusively targeted at children, it becomes imperative to examine the nature and narrative of this content. This study critically examines some of the animated cartoon shows of Indian origin and identifies the trends of gender representation in these shows. The study takes into account 15 cartoon shows that are currently being aired on some of the most popular children's television channels in India.

Keywords: Children, Gender, Cartoon, Socialisation, Development

Introduction

Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 with the aim to ensure peace and prosperity, equality and development across the world by the year 2030. The 5th goal therein intends to ensure that there is an end to all kinds of discrimination and violence against women. Empowering women and promoting gender equality are crucial to accelerating sustainable development (United Nations, 2015).

Issues like skewed sex ratio, gender-based discrimination at home and workplace, crime and violence against women, social practices like child marriage, dowry and honour killing, as well as sexual objectification of women, have been issues of major concern for several decades now. Although various policy initiatives on the part of the government for achieving gender parity have been introduced in recent years, statistics show that the sex ratio has further declined in recent years and the number of reported and unreported cases of crime against

women has only been increasing over the last decade (NCRB Report, 2019).

Empowerment of women and gender equality are not the sole responsibility of the government. Various agents and stakeholders of the society have multiple roles to play in this matter. Even though various initiatives are being undertaken by the governments and concerned authorities at different levels in the country to realise gender equality, it is to be kept in mind that gender sensitisation as part of the process of socialisation begins at home, right from one's childhood. Gender is essentially a social construct that children start learning very early in life (Brooks & Hebert, 2006). Mass media along with other socialising agents like family, friends, school and religion play an influential role in the development of a child's gender schema (Aubrey & Harrison, 2004; Holtzman & Sharpe, 2014).

Stereotypical representations in the media can result in normalising certain gendered behaviour amongst the audience (Matheson, 2005). While

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adults have the ability to negotiate the meaning of media messages to variable extents, the young and impressionable minds of children are at a greater risk of being moulded by the different forms of audio-visual content on various media platforms. Given that media representations are discursive constructions (Lemish, 2010), their analysis is crucial to the understanding of gender.

Children nowadays start watching animated cartoon programmes on television at a very early age. They turn into acquisitive watchers as soon as they reach 2 to 4 years of age (Malhotra *et al.*, 2018). The role of television in developing ideas on gender roles and identities has been researched in different global contexts (Jaggi, 2015). Visual description as an essential mode of communication has been spreading without fail all over the world and is “the most persistent, persuasive and powerful” (Wood, 2014). In television, different characters communicate with one another, and children often adopt their way of communication. The way cartoon characters communicate with each other influences the behaviour of children (Magotra & Kaur, 2018). This plays an important role in their idealisation and internalisation of gendered behaviour.

Review of literature

Kumar (1994) observes that in the present age, media influence has augmented in such ways that without using media as the reference point, an individual finds it difficult to maintain an identity and arrive at an understanding of the self. The media is no longer simply a mere supplier of information, but it plays an extremely crucial role in affecting our perceptions about ourselves and the environment we live in. It is even said that the media can now ‘create reality’. It can shape public opinion, influence personal beliefs and even change people’s self-awareness. Ideologies, thought processes and methods of socialisation are greatly influenced by the media (Kumar, 1994).

The significant role that media representations play in moulding the audience’s perception of gender as well as their understanding of the world around them has been highlighted by scholars over the years. As suggested by Matheson, mass media has the power to simulate and construct ideas of what comprises ‘proper’ gendered mannerisms and characteristics for both the sexes (Matheson, 2005). It is agreed upon by many scholars that stereotypical representations of men and women in the media can result in normalising certain gendered behaviour amongst the audience, given that the media are important sites of representation, construction and contestation of gendered identities and ideologies.

It has been long recognised by feminists all over the world that there is a significant and long-lasting influence of the media in either challenging or perpetrating existing constructions of gender which contributes to the fuller understanding of the multiple roles of the media in gender construction in contemporary societies (Sharda, 2014).

While women are either invisible or stereotypically represented in traditional gender roles, toxic and hegemonic masculinity is another common feature found in most media analyses of gender. The ideas of the ruling class come to be seen as the norm; they are seen as universal ideologies, perceived to benefit everyone whilst only really benefitting the ruling class. In gender studies, hegemonic masculinity is a concept popularised by the sociologist Connell (2005)—of proposed practices that promote the dominant social position of men, and the subordinate social position of women. Conceptually, hegemonic masculinity proposes to explain how and why men maintain dominant social roles over women, and other gender identities, which are perceived as ‘feminine’ in a given society. The portrayals of men and women in mainstream media encompass the criteria of hegemonic masculinity and encourage emphasised femininity in compliance to hegemonic masculinity. These images reinforce the dominance of males over females in the gender hierarchy (Connell, 2005).

Gender stereotypes are found not only in media content for adults but also in those meant for children who are much more vulnerable to the deep consequences of gendered representations in the media. Smith and Cook (2008), in an extensive content analysis of media content in different categories to identify the trends of gender portrayal in the same, found that stereotypical representation reflecting gender inequality is prevalent in both films and television shows aimed at children. The results from these investigations reveal that much work is needed to achieve gender parity and improved portrayal in film and in children’s television (Smith & Cook, 2008).

England *et al.* (2011) in their study of gender role depictions of prince and princess characters with a focus on their behavioural characteristics and climactic outcomes in Disney films found that the prince and princess characters differ in their portrayal of traditionally masculine and feminine characteristics. These gender-role portrayals are complex, and trends towards egalitarian gender roles are not linear over time. Content coding analyses demonstrate that all of the movies portray more or less stereotypical representations of gender. Although both the male and female roles have changed over time in the Disney Princess line, the male characters

exhibit more androgyny throughout and less change in their gender-role portrayals (England *et al.*, 2011).

Anuradha and Kanan (2016) in their study on cartoons aired on Indian television find that because of the presence of a large number of non-Indian origin shows, the risks of Indian children being influenced by foreign culture are high.

George Gerbner's theory of media cultivation and the theory of social learning provide the foundation of the present study as children acquire behavioural traits from the social surroundings, media and human relations. The theory of media cultivation explains the effect of long-term television viewing on the audience (Gerbner *et al.*, 2002). This theory explains how the viewer's attitude and ideas change due to heavy television viewing. Gerbner claims that more time children spend watching TV, more they believe in the reality, which is shown on television. The ability to comprehend information from what television conveys and what children perceive is dominated by the mental comparison between reel and the real. The reason why children perceive television as real may be related to the fact that television represents its characters in real-life situations.

Jaggi (2015) in her study of four popular cartoon shows telecast on Indian television found that these shows were male-centred and represented a plethora of gender stereotypes. Quoting Lemish (2010), she observes that "boys are identified with 'doing' in the 'public sphere', while girls are associated with 'being' in the 'private sphere'", thus highlighting that the discourse on gender portrayals is such that one finds masculine representations to have higher social status in comparison with feminine representations in the media. A similar representation of stereotypical gender biases was found in a study conducted by Gauravam and Deb (2020) as well.

The impressionable minds of children see it as a social reality unaware that it is only fictional. The visual representation of objects and characters is disseminated through television which influences the perception of the true world. The portrayal of gender in TV cartoons can also influence the behavioural process of children regarding their concepts about gender and society. Martin *et al.* (2004) stated that according to social learning theory, the way TV cartoons portray gender may play an important role in influencing the children's ability to perceive and develop their concepts and ideas about gender and their roles. Ebere-Anaba (2016) claims that such "representations of the ideal male and female figure are portrayed and young children often identify with these beloved characters, thereby affecting the way that they conceive beliefs regarding their future roles in society."

Cartoon shows on Indian television

In India, the public broadcaster Doordarshan was the primary channel to introduce cartoon shows in the early 1990s. Doordarshan allotted specific time slots as the children's hour and ran a mixture of indigenously produced programmes like *Magic Lamp*, *Santakukdi*, *Gaayab Aaya*, *Malgudi Days* and *Khel Khilone* along with acquired foreign cartoon shows like *Duck Tales*, *The Jungle Book*, *Dennis the Menace*, *Aladdin*, *Chip and Dale*, and *Tale-Spin* among others (Kini, 2016).

The potential of children's cartoon programming, however, got unlocked with the introduction of Cartoon Network in India (Rashid, 2015). Cartoon Network was launched on May 1, 1995 as the first children's network in India post liberalisation and with the arrival of satellite television channels in the country. It is an Indian cable and satellite television channel operated by AT&T's Warner Media under its international division. Cartoon Network, with its international and never-before-seen library of cartoons, revolutionised children's programming in India. Broadcast solely in English in the initial years, by 1999 they started dubbing their cartoons in Hindi and Tamil in order to increase their reach (Thevar, 2014).

The success of Cartoon Network caused more channels to jump into the fray like Disney Channel, POGO, Nickelodeon India, Hungama TV, Animax India, Toon Disney, etc. Since then, the number of television channels for children has only grown exponentially and now includes regional giants like Chutti TV and Kochu TV that telecast only in a single regional language (Bhagia, 2013).

Ever since Cartoon Network started airing in India, there has been an open dependence by almost all channels on foreign programming (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry–KPMG, 2015), which was considered to be of superior quality to Indian productions in terms of content, visuals and entertainment value. While American programming has long dominated the scene in India due to its vast collection of inexpensive children's programming content (Lemish, 2007), it is now facing stiff competition from Japanese programming. The success of popular cartoons like *Doraemon*, *Crayon Shin-Chan* and *Pokémon* has seen them become the flagship shows of the channels in which they are aired (Kini, 2016). The significant reach of both American and Japanese content can be attributed to the increasing 'Indianising' of content where a choice of multiple language feeds and Indian references within the dubbed dialogue help children relate more to the content that they are seeing onscreen (Bhagia, 2013). The battle to increase the number of locally

produced content has been long drawn out. The now defunct Splash TV was the first private player to buck the trend of relying solely on imported content, when it offered, as early as 2001, Indian animated content through programmes like Pot Pourri and Indian folk tales (Kini, 2016).

The real awakening for Indian-produced children's programming occurred much later when Pogo, Hungama and the Disney channel started tasting success with their locally produced Indian programming content. Chhota Bheem, an animated cartoon series named after a popular Indian mythological character from the epic Mahabharata, first aired on Pogo in 2008, became the trendsetter and went on to prove that quality Indian content had the potential to gain audience attention (India Infoline News Service, 2009; Raghunath, 2012). Inspired by this success, many other channels started investing in domestic programming content in both the fields of animation and live action. Eventually this led to a growth in the percentage of domestic content in children's programming from 10% in 2008 to 40% by the end of 2014 (FICCI-KPMG, 2015). Today, Indian mythology-inspired cartoon stories easily coexist with the world of anime and the world of Disney among others. Indian cartoon characters like Chhota Bheem and Motu Patlu are as popular as foreign ones like Doraemon and Tom and Jerry (FICCI-KPMG, 2015). The blend of Indian and foreign cartoon content has offered Indian children an opportunity to be exposed to a medley of cultures and values of different countries, in addition to their own.

Thus, given the exponential growth of the number of such animated cartoon channels and programmes in India and currently with more than 20 TV channels at the national and regional level operational in the country, it becomes imperative to examine the nature and narrative of this content through a gender lens. Particularly how the portrayal of cartoon characters influences the idealisation and internalisation of gendered behaviour among children during their early formative years becomes a critical question.

Research methodology

This study critically examines some of the animated cartoon shows of Indian origin and identifies the trends of gender representation in these shows. It is premised herein that Indian-origin children's content, including cartoon shows, would be sensitive to Indian culture and context and hence the characterisation and narrative would be akin to introducing children to endogenous social perspectives on gender. The study takes into account 15 such cartoon shows that are currently being aired on some of the most popular children's television channels in India. Only

cartoon shows featuring human characters in central roles have been considered for the study, leaving out shows featuring non-human animated central characters. The study employs quantitative content analysis to identify and systematically organise the various elements of these cartoon shows. Later, in-depth textual analysis is conducted to examine and analyse the plotlines, characters and representational trends in these cartoon shows.

Details of the cartoon shows chosen for the study are highlighted in Table 1.

Findings and analysis

Missing female protagonists and biased representation

Quantitative content analysis of all 15 shows of Indian origin presently running on Indian television reveals that all the shows centre on male protagonists. Not a single female protagonist or central character is to be found in any of the shows. In fact, female characters are either very few in number or present only as secondary/supporting characters.

For instance, the character of Chutki in Chhota Bheem is very intelligent, brave and popular, but she is constantly overshadowed by Bheem's character. Similarly, in Little Singham, one of the key characters that forms part of Little Singham's team is Babli, who is shown as a girl with extraordinary intelligence. Her role, however, only serves to complement and support Little Singham in his mission of protecting the people of Mirchi Nagar, the town where this story is set. Another important character in the same show is Inspector Kavya, who is the police inspector of the town. But the 'super cop' is undoubtedly Little Singham.

In Chacha Bhatija too, there is Inspector Bandoonki Singh who plays a fiercely determined female cop, but is again placed in a supporting role to assist the central characters—the uncle–nephew duo—in resolving the problems of the fictional town Fantoosh-nagar where they live.

Again, in the show Shiva, it is Shiva who is the superhero bestowed with supernatural powers. A key female character is his best friend Reva, a firm believer in his powers. While intelligent and courageous, she is shown to be often saved by Shiva from danger. The same best friend/companion's role is echoed by Pinky in the show Roll No. 21, where the central character Kris is portrayed as an incarnation of the Hindu God, Lord Krishna. Pinky in this case is the incarnation of Radha, the consort of Lord Krishna, someone indispensable to his identity, yet always in a position that cannot match the stature of Lord Krishna. Playing a similar character in Keymon Ache, there is Mini, who is a classmate of the central

Table 1: Cartoon shows chosen for the study

S. No.	Name of the Cartoon Show	Channel and Period	Main Character and Gender of Main Character	Writer/Director
1	Chhota Bheem	Pogo/ 2008–Present	Bheem/ Male	Nidhi Anand, Darshana Radhakrishnan, Teja Pratap, Rajiv Chilaka, Binayak Das
2	Roll No. 21	Cartoon Network/ 2010–Present	Kris/ Male	Avinash Aanand, Kaushik Chawla, Richa Deo, Alok Sharma, Swapnil Narendra, Ah Loong, Uttam Pal Singh
3	Keymon Ache	Nickelodeon/ Sonic/ 2011–Present	Rohan/ Male	Rohit Gahlowt, Jovita D’Souza, Praveen Fernandes, Gaurav Malani, Seema Malani, Nikhil Vyas
4	Motu aur Patlu	Nickelodeon/ 2012–Present	Motu/Patlu Male	Niraj Vikram Suhas D Kadav
5	Shiva	Nickelodeon/ 2015–Present	Shiva/ Male	Niraj Vikram
6	Bandbudh aur Budbak	Cartoon Network/ 2015–Present	Badrinath and Buddhadev/ Male	Aashish Mall, Mayank Patel and Avinash Walzade
7	Guru aur Bhole	Sony Yay/ 2017–Present	Guru and Bhole/ Male	Amit Senchoudhary. Timir Bakshi Sandeep Kadav
8	Selfie with Bajrangi	Disney Junior/ 2017–Present	Ankush/Bajrangi/ Male	Dheeraj Berry
9	Paap-o-meter	Sony Yay/ 2017–Present	Bhoot Boss/ Male	Ronojoy Chakraborty
10	Chacha Bhatija	Hungama TV/ 2017–Present	Chacha and Bhatija Male	Sukhwant Kalsi
11	Gattu Battu	Nickelodeon/ Sonic/ 2017–Present	Gattu and Battu/ Male	Darshan Prakash Parab
12	Rudra: Boom ChikChik Boom	Nickelodeon/ 2018–Present	Rudra/ Male	Sumit Das and Akshay Chavan
13	Little Singham	Discovery Kids/ 2018–Present	Singham/ Male	Vikram Veturi
14	Golmaal Junior	Nickelodeon/ 2019–Present	Gopal and Madhav/ Male	Vikram Veturi
15	Ting Tong	Nickelodeon/ 2020–Present	Ting Tong/ Male	Niraj Vikram Subhra Chakraborty and Vijay Raibole

character Rohan, and also a subject of romantic interest of Rohan and other boys of the school.

Other shows like *Selfie with Bajrangi* and *Guru aur Bhole* do not have any significant female characters. In the popular show *Motu Patlu*, there has never been any female character, even in a secondary role. It is strange to see that there is not a single woman in the entire fictional town of Furfuri Nagar, where the show is set. *Motu and Patlu* invariably deals only with men in their numerous adventures.

The symbolic annihilation of the female gender in children’s cartoon shows sends out the message that their stories do not matter (Merskin, 2008). This may lead to young boys wrongly developing an inflated sense of importance while girls start to feel like second-class citizens, seeing female characters in secondary roles only (Fitzpatrick & McPherson,

2010). There are no female role models for children amongst their most-watched and favourite Indian cartoon shows. However, there are several examples of strong, iconic and idealistic female cartoon characters in central roles in foreign cartoon shows like *The Power Puff Girls*, *Dora-the Explorer*, *Masha and the Bear*, *Wissper* and *Vampirina*, which are idolised by many young Indian girls. In a time and age when feminism is on the rise and ‘empowerment of women’ and ‘gender equality’ are topics that are not only the need of the hour, but also the most-discussed and debated concerns across the world—the case of missing female protagonists or heroes in Indian cartoon shows is testimonial enough of the fact that there is little or no understanding of the long-lasting consequences of early-age socialisation through television viewing on an individual’s

gendered beliefs and behaviour.

It is interesting to note here that the early emergence of Indian cartoon shows was based on mythological characters like Bheem and Krishna from Mahabharata. Many of the later shows developed drew inspiration from popular film characters, and some were drawn from imagination. While Indian epics and mythology are not bereft of female role models, Indian film industry leaves much to be desired when it comes to portrayal and participation of women. Hence, the absence of female protagonists in Indian-origin cartoon shows is probably nothing but another manifestation of the long-standing gendered marginalisation that has been omnipresent in mediated narratives.

One could even wonder if the reason behind the missing female protagonists in cartoon shows could be the fewer number of women involved in the production of these shows. Amongst the 15 cartoon shows in consideration, only 5 women are found to be engaged as either directors or writers of some of these shows. However, having said that, it can be noticed that even with the minor presence of women writers or producers in the creative process, there is a distinct biased representation of gender in these cartoon shows, placing more prominence on the male.

Stereotypical gender portrayal

Qualitative textual analysis identifies stereotypical gender roles assigned to characters and plot lines that reflect heavily on gender disparities and patriarchal social structure and norms. The male protagonists are assigned personality traits that are typically considered masculine as per popular culture and practice. Be it Rudra, Shiva, Chhota Bheem, Little Singham or Kris—these characters are portrayed as ‘heroes’ who are brave, physically strong, courageous, adventurous and always ready to risk their lives to ‘save’ others, while the secondary female characters depend on them for their protection. In the show Rudra, for instance, one of the key female characters, Maira, is shown as someone whose magic always fails at the crucial moment, landing herself and others in trouble. Then Rudra takes charge and redeems the situation.

These female characters are also mostly shown in stereotypically feminine roles which include domestic activities, staying indoors, playing with dolls, mothers cooking and taking care of household chores, etc. For instance, in Chhota Bheem, the character of Bheem is shown as the epitome of the macho male, while his friend Chutki represents every possible stereotypically feminine trait from two explicitly pink cheeks to being someone who loves to do household work. While Bheem trusts and relies on her, she is also shown to be smitten by Bheem

and blushes even while mentioning his name. In Keymon Ache, Rohan’s mother is the reflection of a typical Indian mother who is loving and concerned, yet leaving no stone unturned to discipline the child. A stark digression from this stereotypical depiction is the character of Little Singham’s mother Black Shadow who is a brave undercover agent, patriot to the core and having the strength of a lioness.

In Bandbudh aur Budbak, there are four female characters, one as a teacher and three as classmates of the central characters—Bandbudh and Budbak. The teacher Bindiya Madam is characterised as a Bengali lady who is caring and compassionate and teaches subjects like art, history and music. Of the three female classmates, Sabrina is the intelligent one and usually partners with another intelligent boy in the class named Gyan who is a Sikh. The other two girls, Saira and Maira are not as witty but are more pretty-looking. Here, it is important to note that the cartoon show is dispelling certain popular stereotypes while not attending to others. The Sikh boy is shown as the most studious and intelligent, dispelling the stereotypical media caricature of Sardars as dim-witted people. The brainy Sabrina wears spectacles and is portrayed as less glamorous than Saira and Maira. Bindiya Madam does not teach science or mathematics and is afraid of ghosts, thieves and cockroaches. The overall narrative downplays the female characters and mostly concentrates on the interplay of male teachers, students and school attendants.

It is also noteworthy to mention that while female characters are either sidelined or fit into stereotypical gender roles, male characters are not bereft of that treatment. In shows like Rudra, Shiva, Kris, Selfie with Bajrangi and Motu aur Patlu where the protagonists heroically fight crime, it is mostly men who are portrayed as villains or criminals.

In terms of social and cultural representation, it can also be seen that the characters represented in these Indian cartoon shows are largely reflective of North-Indian and West-Indian cultures and linguistic identities, as opposed the widely diverse presence of multiple cultures and ethnicities in Indian society. Stories are set in mainstream locations like Delhi or Mumbai only while other regional identities are not even acknowledged. The absence of transgender or non-binary characters in these shows also speaks to a large extent about the limited expansion of the scope of gender representation when it comes to these shows.

When children are exposed to such stereotypical gender representation, it has a very strong effect on their thoughts and behaviour. They start believing that there are certain fixed roles for males and females, and they should not behave differently

(Gauravam & Deb, 2020).

Conclusion

From assigning typically masculine traits to male characters and stereotypical gender roles to the limited female characters to narrating plotlines that reek of patriarchal and sexist ideologies, Indian animated texts for children have failed to appropriate the contextual realities through their narrative structure and have remained incognisant to their responsibility and potential for altering the majoritarian discourses around gender. To achieve a gender-equal world, the seeds of equality must be sown in the impressionable minds of young children right from childhood. Given that we are living in times that are technologically advanced and media consumption comprises a major portion of an individual's socialisation process, it becomes crucial to review and reflect on what our children are watching and learning from. Animated cartoon shows being an important agent of early socialisation for children, it becomes imperative that cartoon programming—much like revolutionary media content for adults—starts breaking stereotypes and creating alternative narratives for children in terms of gender.

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Trends in Print Media Coverage of Paralympics 2016 and Paralympics 2020: A Comparison of Reportage in Two Metro Dailies

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ABSTRACT

The Paralympic Games, while taking place along with Olympic Games every four years and considered to be the elite sports event for athletes with disability, has historically been considered inferior and has often got 20 times less media coverage compared to Olympics. Earlier studies point out reasons such as ableist lens of media, lack of interest and perception of the larger audience for the game as ‘not a serious sport’ or ‘feel-good sport’ among others. Thus, the coverage was often found with focus on human-interest angle instead of sporting prowess. The current study attempted to see India’s most successful Paralympics performance to date in Tokyo 2020 through media lens. Coverage of the Paralympic games in two major national dailies—The Times of India in English and Divya Bhaskar (part of Dainik Bhaskar Group) in Gujarati—was compared for 2016 Rio Paralympics and 2020 Tokyo Paralympics on parameters such as number of articles, word count, use of images, tone of story, coverage in sports section and so on. The findings indicated a marked difference with 1.5 to 3 times rise in number of articles, 20% rise in articles with more than 300 words, rise in front page articles, byline (special) articles, and positive stories. Medical model remained dominant even with rise in articles where the disabilities were not mentioned directly. Features or soft stories remained mainstay of the coverage with focus on individual achievements, even as breaking news increased in 2020 Paralympics coverage.

Keywords: Paralympics, Media portrayal, Media coverage, Para-athletes, Print media

Introduction

For India, the Tokyo Paralympics 2020, held in August–September 2021 due to delay by Covid-19 pandemic, was historic with its record medal haul. India has so far won 31 medals in the Paralympics since 1968 including 9 gold, 12 silver and 10 bronze medals. Out of total, 19 or more than double medals were won in Tokyo Paralympics alone (PTI, 2021). To put the feat in perspective, India had won 4 medals in the previous edition at Rio Paralympics 2016, and before the Tokyo Paralympics, India’s medal tally was 12 since India had first won a medal in 1972 edition at Heidelberg, Germany (Olympics, 2022).

On September 5, 2021, PM Narendra Modi tweeted, ‘In the history of Indian sports, the Tokyo #Paralympics will always have a special place. The games will remain etched in the memory of every Indian and will motivate generations of athletes to pursue sports. Every member of our contingent is a champion and source of inspiration.’ It got over

50,000 likes and over 7,800 retweets (Modi, 2021).

This paper is an attempt to look at the media coverage of the historic performance by Indian contingent through two leading dailies—The Times of India in English and Divya Bhaskar in Gujarati languages—and comparing it to the 2016 coverage of the same dailies to understand the changes in themes, coverage pattern and words used.

History of Paralympics

The roots of the Paralympics are found in the Stock Mandeville Games at a hospital in Buckinghamshire that coincided with 1948 Olympics held in London. Organised by neurosurgeon Sir Ludwig Guttmann, the games were compared with Olympics to instil the spirit of the Olympic games’ values (Lilley & Jennings, 2013). Coinage of the term provided a ‘hook’ for the media that connected the development with Olympic movement (Brittain, 2012). It offered a readily-understood frame that connected disability

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sport to principles of Olympism and resulted in newspaper headlines such as ‘Olympic Games of Disabled Men is Born at Stoke,’ ‘Stoke Mandeville Paralympics...,’ and ‘US to send 24 athletes to Rome for annual Paralympics event’ over the years (Brittain, 2012).

According to International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the first Paralympic games were held in Rome in 1960 that had 400 athletes from 23 countries. Over the decades, the participation has increased manifold—the Tokyo Paralympics saw participation of 4,403 athletes from 162 teams (Paralympics, 2021).

The modern summer Paralympics include games including Para archery, Para athletics, Para badminton, Blind football, Boccia, Para canoe, Para cycling, Para equestrian, Goalball, Para judo, Para powerlifting, Para rowing, Shooting Para sport, Sitting volleyball, Para swimming, Para table tennis, Para taekwondo, Para triathlon, Wheelchair basketball, Wheelchair fencing, Wheelchair rugby, and Wheelchair tennis (Paralympic Sports List - Summer & Winter Paralympic Sports, n.d.) The medals won by India in summer Paralympics have come from the games including Athletics, Shooting, Badminton, Swimming, Table Tennis, Archery, and Powerlifting (Olympics, 2022).

Olympics vs. Paralympics: Through media's eyes

A difference in the approach to Olympics and Paralympics is documented both in terms of mainstream media coverage and social media in Indian context. Majumdar (2021) termed the public response to Para-athletes' success in Rio 2016 ‘at best muted’ as the respective state governments also did not shower gifts on the medal-winning para-athletes compared to their counterparts in Olympics. But, he remarked that the scenario improved in Tokyo 2020 when the contingent got a grand send-off and also found sponsors even as the difference between ‘Olympian’ and ‘Paralympian’ persisted.

With success stories such as Devendra Jhajharia and Mriyappan Thangavelu at Rio Paralympics, the focus of Indian perspective for Paralympics remained rooted in rural lens and success against all odds along with evaluation of roles for organisations such as Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) and Special Olympic Bharat (SOB) (Mazumdar & Chaudhary, 2020).

In terms of representation, Olympics has long been positioned as having able-bodiedness as the foundational identity for athletic men and women (Goggin & Newell, 2000) prompting ableist media representation and Paralympics is termed inferior to it (Thomas & Smith, 2003; Hughes, 2009). Thus,

the media framing of para-athletes and Paralympics as a whole, especially in formative years, reinforced stereotypes with it being ‘less serious’ (Howe, 2008) or terming the winners or participants superhumans that fall in ‘super cripp’ category (Hardin & Hardin, 2004). The Paralympics coverage has remained minuscule in overall coverage of sporting events in both scope and scale (Goggin & Newell, 2000).

In disability discourse, various quantitative analyses of the athletes with disabilities in media coverage (Chung, 2011; Golden, 2003; Schantz & Gilbert, 2001; Thomas & Smith, 2008; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2013) have indicated major difference in coverage of disability sports compared to general sports extending to Olympics and Paralympics where Olympics gets more than 20 times higher coverage than Paralympics.

Role of media in shaping and reinforcing disability stereotypes from Paralympics perspective

The Paralympics and other related media coverage provides significant opportunity to influence public attitude towards disability and disability sport while challenging dominant stereotypes (Hodges *et al.*, 2014).

The coverage pattern of a major event such as Paralympics not only helps change people's perspective towards disability but also inspires para-athletes. But lack of (adequate) coverage reinforces existing understanding of the sport not worthy of attention (Brittain, 2004) and the issue of disability being ‘medicalised, individualised and stereotypical’ (Howe, 2008; Brittain, 2016) with focus on super-achievers, perceived superhumans who are often termed ‘super crips’ in disability studies (Haller, 2000).

Berger (2008) defines supercrips as, ‘individuals whose inspirational stories of courage, dedication and work prove that it can be done, that one can defy the odds and accomplish the impossible.’ Experts such as Shapiro (1993) and Thomas and Smith (2003) believed that the notion doesn't represent daily realities of the persons with disabilities.

Some other prominent themes in Paralympics coverage included Medical/patient, Charity/victim, Cyborg and Little Brother (Maika & Danylchuk, 2016). Media coverage of Paralympics echoes ‘restrictive medicalised conceptions’ of disability (Fitzgerald, 2012) and puts more emphasis on human interest and ‘aww’ factor than actual sporting achievement (Ellis, 2008).

Haller (2000) highlighted the media tendency to highlight and favour ‘visually-apparent’ disabilities due to unspoken visual and emotional cues. Those with apparent disability got most attention in the

coverage of the event (Schell & Duncan, 1999).

Review of literature

Researchers over decades have analysed various aspects of Paralympics such as impairment or disabilities covered (Howe, 2008; Berger, 2009), gender aspect of coverage (Hargreaves, 2013) or comparison with able-bodied sport (DePauw & Gavron, 2005). Here are some thematic studies.

Difference between Olympic and Paralympic coverage

In a study carried out by Sachan and Tyagi (2017) analysing Indian daily Dainik Jagran for 2016 Rio Olympics and Paralympics, the Hindi newspaper gave 217 column square (sq) centimetres (cm) to Olympic coverage, compared to which Paralympics only got 19 column sqcm. Compared to 21 mentions of Olympics on front page of the newspaper, Paralympics only got 2. While 258 column sqcm were dedicated to images of Olympics, Paralympics got 28 column sqcm. Overall, display of stories and images for Olympics was seven times higher than Paralympics.

Use of terminology and themes explored

Hodges *et al.* (2014) in their analysis of the 2012 London Paralympics' media coverage indicated that Paralympics can influence public attitude towards disability, can elicit emotional reactions from the spectators and can help people see sporting excellence. On the contrary, they also remarked that many respondents termed it 'second rate' to the 'real' or 'proper' Olympic games. But overall, the coverage helped displace sympathy, pity or fear with 'admiration.'

Frost (2012) in his analysis of the media coverage of 1964 Paralympics in Tokyo observed that its international nature, ceremonies and involvement of royal family got more attention than the athletes' achievements (p. 633). Moreover, the coverage was not seen in Sports section of the newspaper, but society pages as it was not considered 'real sport' but more of 'human interest or health-and-welfare' stories.

The study of Thomas and Smith (2003) focused on British media coverage of 2000 Paralympics indicated that nearly one-quarter of the articles in the national newspaper depicted athletes as 'victims or courageous people who suffer from personal tragedies.'

Golden (2003) in this study of 2002 Olympics and Paralympics covering leading US dailies including USA Today, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and The Washington Post indicated that the dailies had an average of 426 articles on Olympics,

compared to which Paralympics only had two.

The coverage of 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games in French and German newspapers analysed by Schantz and Gilbert (2001) indicated that there were only 0.9 articles per day in French and 1.7 articles in German print media on the games. The study findings claimed that the coverage misconstrued the ideal of the Paralympic games, and instead of sporting aspects, it was more to do with national success and medal tallies.

Even in television media, the coverage was much less as compared to Olympics. Compared to about 5,500 hours of Olympic coverage in Canada for London 2012, the Paralympic games' coverage was limited to daily one-hour highlight. Web coverage fared better with 580 hours of coverage (Silva & Howe, 2012).

Media texts contain frames, 'which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotypical images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments' (Entman, 1993). In context of Paralympic Games coverage, we find 'super crips' who overcame all odds (Silva & Howe, 2012; McGillivray *et al.*, 2021), athletic and cyborg who got enhanced performance with technology (Maika & Danylchuk, 2016), and victims or persons who suffered from personal tragedies (Thomas & Smith, 2003) among others as dominant 'frames.'

But over the passage of time, the tone has improved in reportage of the events in the same vein as Olympics. Thomas and Smith (2003) in their analysis of 2000 Paralympics coverage in British media noted examples such as 'Noel Thatcher had run the race of his life to win the 5,000 meters... smashing his world record by more than six second' in The Times to underline the tone of general sports journalism instead of disability frame. The study found 62 articles related to Paralympics in four major newspapers.

According to a study by Brittain (2016), the news media coverage of Paralympics is often termed 'demeaning,' 'patronising,' 'fleeting' and 'atrocious' by the Paralympians and disability experts.

Howe (2008) argued that while the headlines such as 'Golden Opportunities: Paralympics is about Empowering People through Sport' which was seen ahead of Athens Games is not seen as frequently, the tone has remained 'feel-good' with stories often focusing on the 'victim' or 'courageous' aspect of the para-athletes to 'overcome all odds to succeed.'

Research objectives

This research is carried out to give an Indian

perspective of the Paralympic coverage in context of the international works to look at the quantity and scope of coverage, the change seen in a matter of 5 years (2016 to 2021) in tone, disability perspective, gender perspective and factors affecting the coverage such as performance of athletes or human-interest stories associated with them. The present research, thus, aims to contribute to the media studies and media discourse along with disability discourse in mainstream media.

Research questions

The research questions for the present study include:

- What changes in terms of quantity and quality of articles related to Paralympics were seen in 2016 and 2020 Paralympics coverage?
- Whether the articles in 2021 (2020 Paralympics) were more progressive in its approach specifically in context of the language used and tone (sports coverage vis-à-vis human-interest story) to frame the disability narrative?

Research methodology

Quantitative media content analysis is employed as the primary method for the present study. According to Weber (1990), content analysis is a research method using ‘a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text.’ The content could be words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated (Neuman, 1997).

Quantitative content analysis

Quantitative data was obtained from the Ahmedabad edition of two daily newspapers—The Times of India and Divya Bhaskar. Ahmedabad edition is the main primary edition for Gujarat market for both the newspapers with their state headquarters based in the city.

While The Times of India was the largest selling and read English daily newspaper of India (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2019; MRUC India, 2020), Divya Bhaskar (part of Dainik Bhaskar group) was the largest selling (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2019) and second largest read (Indian Readership Survey, 2019) Gujarati-language newspaper in India.

Analysing the codes and presentation of data

The Rio Paralympic Games took place from September 7th to September 18th, 2016, whereas Tokyo Paralympic Games took place from August 24th to September 5th, 2021. To take the pre-event coverage in consideration, the editions of both the newspapers from three days prior to the event were taken into consideration, and 30 days’ newspapers

were analysed with ‘Paralympics’ or ‘Paralympic Games’ mentioned in the text. Thus, newspapers from September 4th to October 4th in 2016 and from August 22th to September 22nd were analysed. In both cases, one article each from TOI and DB, which fell outside the stipulated date range was included in the analysis due to its deep connection with the Paralympic Games.

A chart on parameters such as placement of article, word length of article, position of article, use of pictures, byline articles, quotes in article, nature of article filed, dominant model of disability, place of article, type of article, disability mentioned, pictures showing disabilities, nationality of athletes, and words used in the coverage was prepared. The details were quantified using one article or one picture as one unit of analysis. The data was keyed-in in Microsoft Excel 2019 version to carry out statistical analysis. The analysis was presented in the form of charts.

Findings and analysis

The analysis found a total of 19 articles mentioning Paralympics in The Times of India (referred as TOI henceforth) and 7 in Divya Bhaskar (referred to as DB henceforth) in 2016 (Rio Paralympics 2016) and 29 each in TOI and DB in 2021 (Tokyo Paralympics 2020).

Placement of articles

In absolute numbers, both TOI and DB showed a rise in Paralympics-related articles on front page of the publication. While there were no stories based in Ahmedabad in earlier edition of Games, but due to para table tennis player Bhavina Patel’s progress in the Paralympics 2020, TOI had 4 stories and DB had 5 stories written from the city.

In terms of percentage, sports pages had more than 50% article placements across both publications in both editions of the Paralympics. The share of editorials remained low with one or two articles appearing in both editions (Fig. 1).

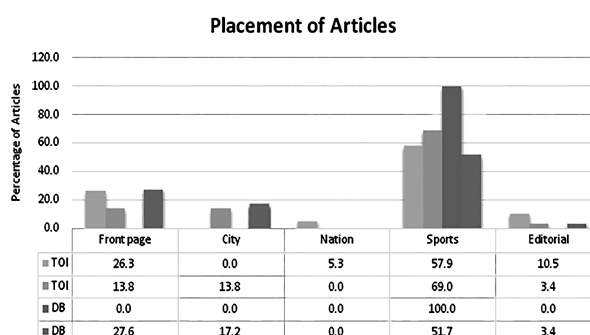


Fig.1: Placement of articles

Word length of articles

Compared to 2016 edition of Paralympics, where maximum articles had word length of 300 or more (the maximum went up to 900 words) in TOI, the volume in 2020 edition was seen in smaller stories which either appeared on front page to kick off the coverage inside, or as accompanying story along with the major feature. Out of 29 stories, 10 each were in 100–200 words and 300+ words, indicating rise in overall volume. For DB, the maximum frequency was seen in 200–300 words category in both editions at 5 and 4 articles in 2016 and 2020, respectively. But compared to only one article of above 300 words in 2016, the 2020 edition had 3. Both longer features and spot reports rose in 2020 in both newspapers (Fig. 2).

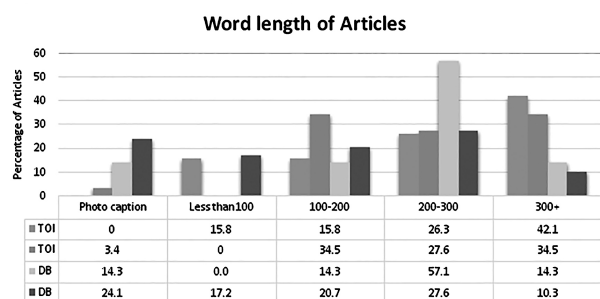


Fig.2: Word length of articles

Position of articles

In terms of the stories' placement on pages, out of 19 articles in 2016 coverage of Paralympics in TOI, 10 or 52.6% were on top of the page. Ten stories each or 34.5% of the total stories were in top or anchor position in the newspapers in 2020. There were more articles related to Paralympics in top section of the page in 2016 compared to 2020. For DB, in 2016 edition, maximum articles (4 or 57.1%) found place in anchor space, whereas maximum articles (28 or 96.6%) in 2020 edition found space in either top or middle place on page, showing increased importance.

In 2020 edition, both the publications took more than 1/3rd or 33% of the articles in top space,

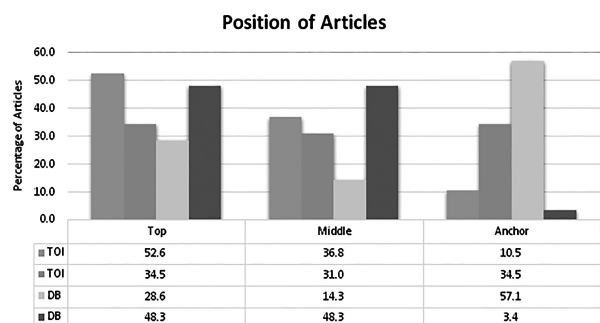


Fig.3: Position of articles

irrespective of the page – 10 in The Times of India and 14 in Divya Bhaskar (Fig. 3).

Use of pictures with articles

Compared to 2016 edition of Paralympics for both TOI and DB, the absolute number of articles with pictures increased significantly. While 18 articles had pictures in TOI in 2016, it increased to 23 in 2020. For DB, the numbers were 7 and 26, respectively. The articles that did not carry pictures were either related to profile of a player featured on the same page or scores of the games played (Fig. 4).

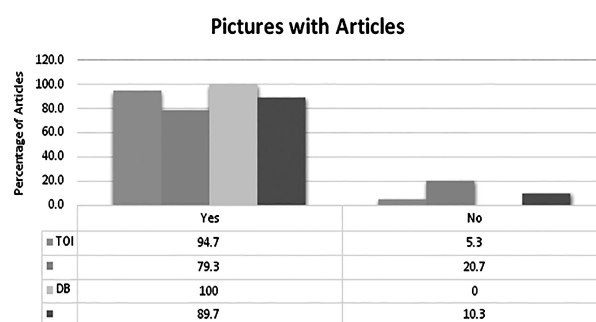


Fig.4: Pictures with articles

Byline articles

Byline in newspaper signifies special stories by reporters. Comparison of two editions of Paralympics for two newspapers indicated that there was rise in special stories. Compared to 8 in 2016 for TOI, the number rose to 17 in 2020. When there was no byline story in 2016 for DB, the newspaper had 6 in 2020 edition. In terms of percentage, more than 40% of the articles had no bylines; they were often taken from newswires or agencies. In the Times of India, articles with no bylines were 11 in 2016 and 12 in 2021, whereas the figures were 7 and 23, respectively, for Divya Bhaskar (Fig. 5).

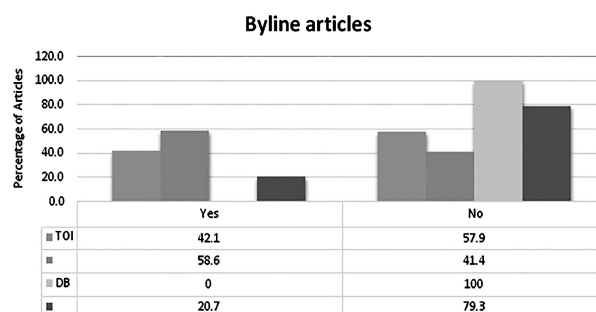


Fig.5: Byline articles

Quotes in the articles

In 2016, TOI featured 25 quotes in 19 articles, whereas DB featured 3 quotes in seven articles. In 2020 Paralympics, TOI quoted 34 persons in 29 articles, whereas DB quoted 11 persons in 29

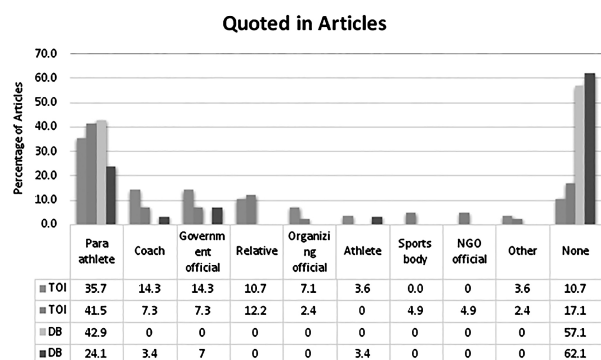


Fig.6: Quoted in articles

articles. Para athletes' direct quotes increased in both publications in 2021 – from 10 to 17 in TOI coverage, and from 3 to 7 in DB coverage. Others quoted in the articles included coach, government officials, relatives, event-organising officials, athletes, sports body officials, and others. In TOI coverage, in both editions, the percentage of articles with no direct quotes was over 10%, whereas the percentage was over 55% in case of DB. In 2020 Paralympics, out of 29 articles published in DB, only 37.9% had direct quotes (Fig. 6).

Tone of the articles

Analysis of the tone of the articles indicate that most of the stories were positive in nature. The tone was decided by the usage of words, headline of the article and central theme of the article. Across the two publications and two editions of Paralympics, more than 80% of the articles were positive. In both publications, 5 articles each out of 39 had neutral tone—primarily related to the start or end of the Paralympics Games. Negative coverage was about issues such as euthanasia, run-in of a Paralympian with an airline staff, and Covid in Indian camp among others (Fig. 7).

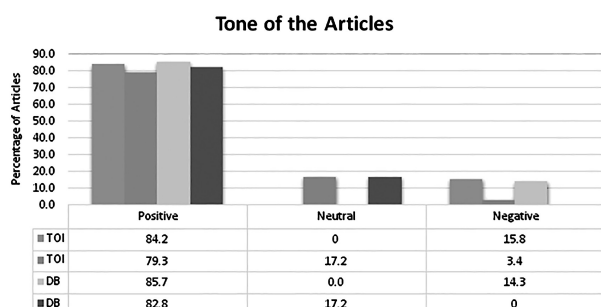


Fig.7: Tone of the articles

Dominant model of disability

Based on the literature review, two major models of disability were chosen for the analysis of the published articles related to Paralympics. While the medical model articles used words such as 'despite,

in spite of, against all odds' etc., the progressive model did not differentiate between athletes and para-athletes, and the coverage refrained from using any specific words identifying disabilities. The study took Burns and Haller (2015) classification for 'medical' and 'progressive' models for analysis.

While medical model remained dominant, the number and percentage of the progressive model articles increased in numbers—more significantly in DB coverage. Against 8 articles in TOI with progressive model in 2016 Paralympics coverage, the number increased to 12 in 2020 Paralympics. It was a major jump for DB from 2 in 2016 to 13 in 2020.

Articles where there were no distinct models increased from 5.3% in 2016 to 10.3% in 2021 for TOI and from 0% to 24.1% for DB. Medical model was found to be highest in DB in 2016 coverage at 71.4%, whereas it was found to be the least in DB's 2021 coverage with 31%. Nearly half of the coverage in both editions for TOI had medical model as dominant one (at 10 and 14 in 2016 and 2020, respectively) (Fig. 8).

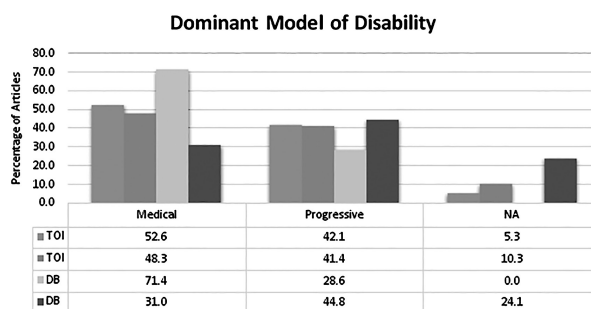


Fig.8: Dominant model of disability

Place of articles

Place of articles in context of this study is analysis of dateline of the article (the place from where the article is filed). In context of 2016 Paralympics, TOI had 9 articles filed from Rio De Janeiro either by news agencies or foreign publications. All seven articles published in DB were from Rio. With more

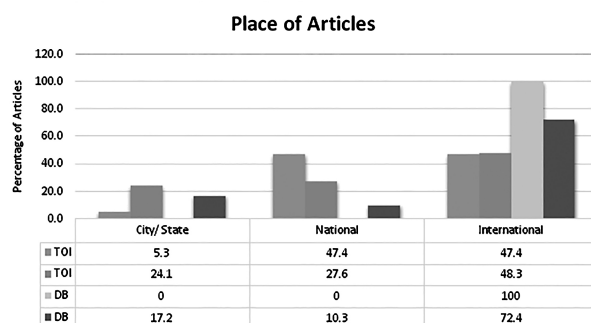


Fig.9: Place of articles

medals won by sportspersons from Gujarat and India, the profiles and special features increased local coverage significantly—out of 29 articles in TOI, 15 were from Gujarat or other national bureaux. For DB, the number was 8 from 29 articles (Fig. 9).

Type of articles

Types of articles signify nature of writing—whether it's breaking news, coverage of an event, feature, editorial comment, guest column or interview. Analysis of the articles indicated that breaking news, feature and event were the most prominent forms of articles. In 2016 coverage in TOI, maximum articles were breaking news, followed by feature and event. In 2021, the highest articles (12) were found to be features followed by breaking news and events.

In DB, 2016 coverage had only two categories of event and features, which expanded in 2021; breaking news accounted for nearly half the coverage (14 or 48.3%), followed by feature and event coverage (6 or 20.7%, 5 or 17.2%). In terms of percentage, features were the most common form of articles ranging from 36.8% to 42.9% of coverage across Paralympics and publications (Fig. 10).

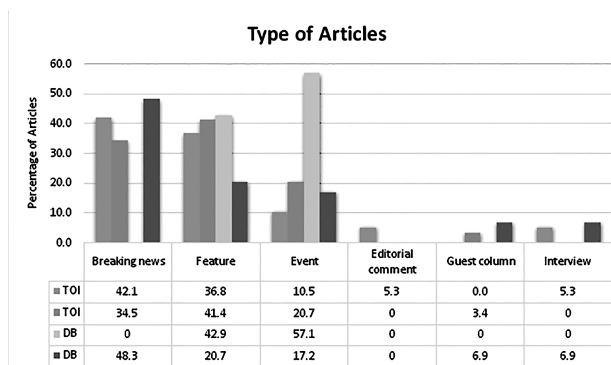


Fig.10: Type of articles

Disability mentioned

The news coverage focused primarily on locomotor disabilities (disability related to movement of limbs due to loss of/ lack of a limb, degenerative factors or muscular weakness). In TOI, 2016

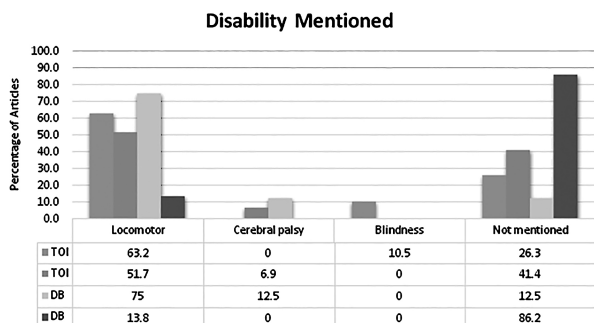


Fig.11: Disability mentioned

coverage saw 63.2% articles related to locomotor disabilities, which remained high at 51.7% in 2021. In DB, out of 8 mentions of disabilities in 2016, 6 were of locomotor, followed by cerebral palsy (1). The only other disability mentioned was blindness (Fig. 11).

Pictures with athletes' disabilities

The number of pictures increased in both the publications from 2016 edition of Paralympics to 2020 Paralympics. For TOI, the rise was nearly two-fold, whereas for DB, it was nearly five-fold.

In terms of percentage, all the images used in DB's 2016 coverage showed the athletes' disabilities, which got reduced to 37.5% or less than half. For TOI, the ratios remained nearly the same at 47–48% for both Games (Fig. 12).

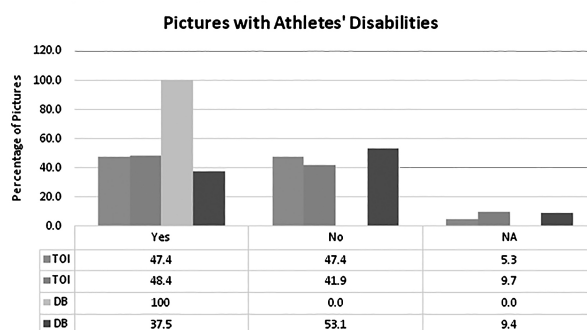


Fig.12: Pictures with athletes' disabilities

Nationality of athletes mentioned

In terms of percentage, except 2016 coverage of DB, all had more than 60% coverage of Indian athletes. In TOI, across both the Paralympics, more than 70% of the articles and images were related to Indian para-athletes. Overall coverage of international para-athletes was around 20%. Those that did not mention the nationality or were not about athletes per se were of opening or closing ceremonies (Fig. 13).

Gender of para-athletes in images

In terms of percentage, TOI's 2021 coverage saw

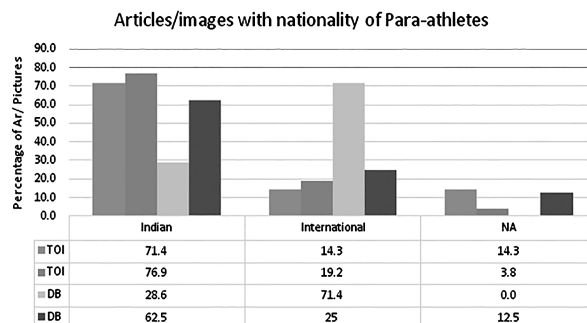
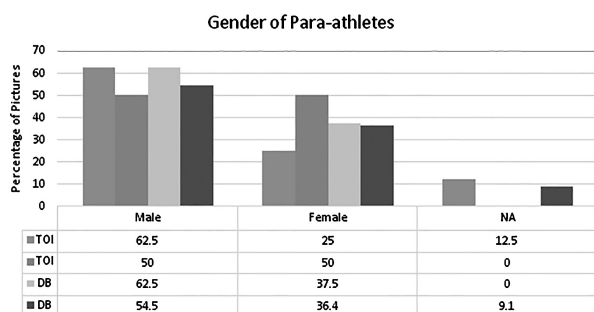


Fig.13: Articles/pictures with athletes' nationality



the maximum 50% images of female para-athletes. Those with not applicable (NA) labels were related to opening or closing ceremony. In DB, out of 8 pictures in 2016 coverage, all three with females were of international players. TOI's coverage of female athletes doubled in percentage from 2016 to 2021, whereas the share of images with female para-athletes almost remained the same in DB (Fig. 14).

Publication of articles

Analysis of the publication of articles indicated that DB ran two stories ahead of Rio Paralympics. Except September 9th, DB carried maximum one article per day with photographs. For TOI, 19 published articles were carried on 11 days, with maximum number of articles per day reaching 3 on September 14th, 15th and 18th, coinciding with Indian para-athletes winning medals or special features.

The coverage improved significantly in 2021 where both the publications carrying 29 articles each. For DB, the spread of the articles was over 16 days, whereas for TOI, it was 13 days. The maximum number of articles published in one day was 4 for DB on August 30, 2021. For TOI, the number was 5 on September 5, 2021.

Words used in articles

The terminology to describe Paralympics and its participants improved from 2016 to 2021 with more

focus on achievements and putting the para-athletes at par with Olympians.

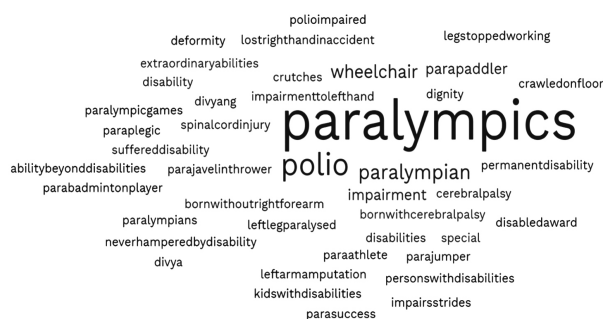
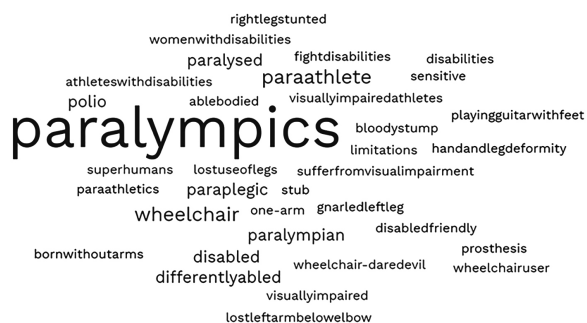
Analysis of the words used in TOI articles in 2016 indicate usages such as ‘right leg stunted,’ ‘bloody stump,’ ‘hand and leg deformity,’ ‘gnarled left leg,’ ‘lost left arm below elbow,’ ‘born without arms,’ ‘superhuman,’ ‘lost use of legs,’ ‘polio’ and ‘paraplegic’ among others. In 2021, the terminology improved even as dominant medical model continued to emphasise the achievement despite all odds.

Some of the words used included ‘deformity,’ ‘*divyang*,’ ‘born without right forearm,’ ‘suffered disability,’ ‘spinal cord injury,’ ‘legs stopped working,’ ‘lost right hand in accident,’ among others. The maximum negative words such as ‘crawled on floor’ and ‘disabled award for disabled person’ were used in a TOI article in 2021 on first woman para-athlete to win Arjuna Award—Shernaz Poonekar—to describe plight of the para-athletes decades ago.

In DB coverage of 2016, usages such as ‘*divyang*,’ ‘did not have legs,’ ‘not full hands and legs,’ and negative words such as ‘euthanasia’ and ‘dark life’ can be found while describing mental make-up of the para-athletes participating in 2016. Some other words were used to describe the conditions such as ‘cerebral palsy,’ ‘spinal cord disease,’ and ‘wheelchair user.’

Across both the Paralympics coverage, ‘Paraylmpics’ and ‘Paralympian’ remained prominent and most-used words with ‘para-athletes.’

The 2021 coverage saw improvement in the words used, with Paralympics and athletes (*kheladi* in Gujarati) used in majority of the articles instead of specific disabilities. Some of the words used included ‘lost legs during duty,’ ‘lost hand to machine,’ ‘wheelchair-bound,’ ‘lost hands,’ ‘lost legs in accident’ among others. The words ‘*divya*’ and ‘*divyang*’ were used in a headline and a couple of articles. Themes such as ‘accessibility,’ ‘strength’ and ‘motivation’ were also expressed in the articles (Figs. 15 to 18).



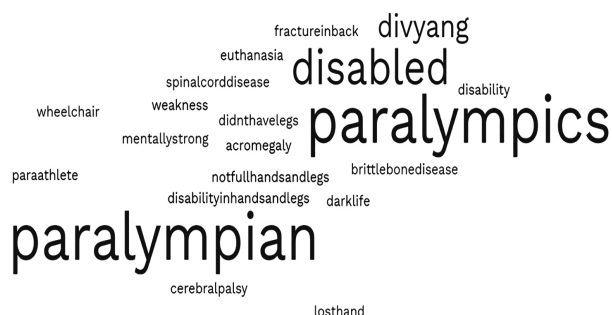


Fig. 17: Word Cloud for DB 2016

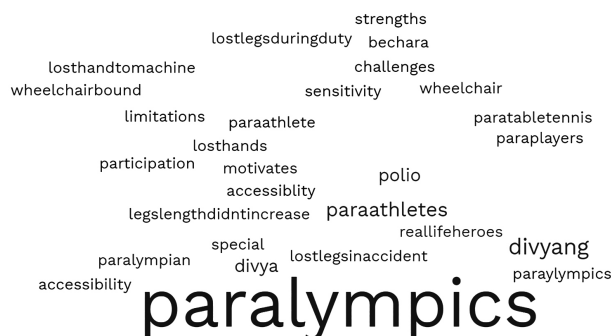


Fig. 18: Word Cloud for DB 2021

Discussion

With Olympics seen as the ultimate parameter for what a human body can achieve, Paralympics is often seen as the example of 'super-crip' model of disability.

In absolute numbers, the number of articles dedicated to Paralympics were increased in both the newspapers. One of the reasons could be India's all-time best performance at the games along with improved awareness about para-sports and institutional support.

In DB, more articles got published on page 1 (front page) of the newspaper, whereas the word count of stories increased significantly. TOI saw about 53% rise in words (from 4,250 to 6,500) between the two editions, whereas, for DB, it was 183% (from 1,450 to 4,100). DB emphasised more on big pictures/visuals with the coverage.

About 65.5% articles in TOI and 96.6% articles in DB were either on top or middle of the page. In absolute number of pictures used, both publications recorded a rise; TOI 28% and DB more than 300%. In both percentage and absolute number terms, byline articles (special stories by reporters) increased from 2016 to 2021; in 2021, 58.6% in TOI and 20.7% in DB were special stories.

More para-athletes were quoted in the stories in 2021, from 10 in 2016 to 17 in 2021 for TOI, and from 3 in 2016 to 7 in 2021 for DB. Nearly 80% of the articles across the publications in both Paralympics were found to be positive in tone.

While medical model of disability remained prominent in coverage, DB had 44.8% articles in 2021 which can be classified as following progressive model of disability where the coverage was not focused on disability but on sport. The words used for para-athletes underwent change in 2021 compared to 2016 with coverage doing away with graphic descriptions such as 'bloody stump' and 'gnarled left leg' to 'polio-impaired,' 'paraplegic' and 'born with cerebral palsy' with occasional use of 'divyang' in both newspapers.

A significant rise in local coverage was observed due to the win of Bhavina Patel in para-Table Tennis event.

Breaking news was the most common type of article in DB at 48.3%, whereas features (41.4%) were the most common type of articles in TOI. Due to nature of Paralympics, the only three disabilities found mentioned in the articles included locomotor (mentioned in more than 50% coverage across both Paralympics in TOI and 75% in 2016 and 13.8% in 2021 in DB), cerebral palsy (mentioned 3 times), and blindness (mentioned 2 times). More than 40% of the articles in TOI and more than 85% of the articles in DB in 2021 did not mention disabilities.

While the share of images showing disabilities remained the same in TOI, 47.4% in 2016 and 48.4% in 2021, there was a marked improvement in DB where the share got reduced from 100% in 2016 to 37.5% in 2021.

Visual focus remained on Indian athletes; share of Indian athletes in pictures increased from 71.4% to 76.9% in TOI for the two Paralympics, whereas the figures were 28.6% and 62.5% for DB.

The gender ratio of images from Paralympics indicated that compared to females accounting for 25% of the images in 2016 in TOI coverage, the percentage doubled in 2021 with success of Bhavina Patel and Avani Lekhara. The percentage remained almost the same from 37.5% to 36.4% in DB for the two Paralympics, even as in absolute numbers, it increased from 3 to 12.

Frequency of coverage also increased in 2021 compared to 2016 in both publications with more intense and sustained coverage for Tokyo Paralympics.

Contribution to existing literature

This study is one of the few papers from Indian context to analyse the media coverage of Paralympics and comparing two Paralympics taking English and a regional language coverage into consideration on parameters of space given, nature of articles, usage

of images, words to describe the games and para-athletes, image analysis and disability model analysis among others. It would help the future researchers to put further developments in context and compare Indian scenario with the international ones on the similar themes in the past and future.

Conclusion

The analysis of print media coverage for Rio Paralympics in 2016 and Tokyo Paralympics in 2021 indicated that the coverage improved significantly. The Times of India recorded a 53% rise in number of articles, whereas Divya Bhaskar—the Gujarati language daily of Dainik Bhaskar Group—recorded 314% or four-fold rise. The 2021 coverage in both prominent newspapers also saw increased word count, more stories on the front page especially in the case of Divya Bhaskar, better placement, and higher number of direct quotes from the para-athletes.

Even as medical model of disability with disability-first language remained dominant in coverage, a significant rise was recorded in stories following progressive model using person-first language. Words such as ‘divyang’ and ‘Paralympian’ or ‘para-athlete’ were used more in the coverage.

Some of the possible reasons for the improved coverage could be all-time high Paralympics medal tally by Indian contingent in 2021 and better awareness about para sports. As Bhavina Patel, a para-table tennis player from Gujarat, reached finals and won a silver medal, local coverage improved significantly.

The results indicate that the media reflects the ground realities and sentiments and responds to the factors including acceptable language for disability, gender equality, and nearly-equal status for Paralympics with Olympics. Along with individual success stories, the media coverage also celebrated the spirit of the game, indicating evolving media practices related to covering disability-related issues.

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Cyber Security: The Making of an International Society in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

With internet and the cyberspace percolating almost all facets of human life, bad actors and criminals are rising and gaining traction. The world is seeing a whole new digital aspect of crime which was not known a few decades earlier, like phishing, identity theft and financial frauds to name a few. Cybercrimes are increasing at an unprecedented rate and every day, new methods of compromising an individual's privacy, and organisational and national security and sovereignty are employed by the criminals operating in cyberspace. A resilient cybersecurity framework is necessary to deter the criminal minds operating in cyberspace and bring them to justice. This research focuses on the impending need for a global collaboration to build a more resilient cybersecurity framework by bringing both the nations and private actors on a common platform at the international level. For the purpose of the study, a questionnaire survey was designed to evaluate various facets of the problem at individual, national and international levels which were complemented and bolstered by personal views of experts, obtained through an interview.

Keywords: Cybersecurity, Cyberspace, Cybercrimes, International collaboration, Digital age

Introduction

The penetration of the internet and with this the shift in activities from almost every aspect of human life has resulted in a stark increase in the population of cybercitizens. Though the term “cybercitizen” is used, the digital world is governed by no sovereign authority making it more vulnerable to attacks from criminals around the world. The paper, hence, tries to put individual's views on cybersecurity based on their experiences in terms of their perceived and experienced threats and their prospect of country's cybersecurity measures and legislations.

The motive is to understand the importance of cybersecurity with respect to individual's privacy and security, which eventually make up this continually and constantly evolving digital environment. There's also a limit to what an average cyber citizen browsing and delving into the cyberspace can do in terms of cybersecurity. And it's not just the individuals but also the nations which are continuously involved in a web of treachery, intrigue, conspiracy and sabotage, between and among themselves making up for a plethora of cyberattacks and cybersecurity issues such

as election rigging threatening the democratic fabric, shut down of critical infrastructure and eventually threatening nation's sovereignty, integrity and security. Apart from individuals and governments, the biggest stakeholders are the organisations, businesses or otherwise, profitable or non-profitable, which hold a key to the safety and security of cyberspace.

Having identified the major stakeholders, which may reside and hence be governed by distinct legislations and regimes, the cybersecurity threats may arise from anywhere around the world where both the governments and organisations with their almost unilateral cybersecurity policies tend to give a free hand to the criminal minds across the globe to threaten the cyberspace with much impunity without the fear of any criminal liability. Moreover, if we consider the war history of the world, there has been a change in battleground as the wars proceed. The submarines then termed U-boats by the Germans were a major component during the First World War. During the Second World War, nations made extensive use of the airspace, and aircrafts were a major component of the war. With the advent of Internet

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of Things (IoT) and the linking of individual's and society's basic services to this digital space, there's an exponential and imminent threat over cyberspace. This is purported by experts to be a battleground for the next World War. It is essential to analyse the cybersecurity issues and develop a coordinated and prompt response to them.

The research tries to investigate and hence, establish the need for a global collaboration among these state and non-state actors holding major stakes to come together on a single platform, sharing their resources and expertise with an attempt to promptly respond and effectively address the cybersecurity issues.

Review of literature

Mbanaso and Dandura (2015) have noted in their study that cyberspace is reshaping a whole new world full of uncertainties traversing both negatively and positively across the realm of human enterprise. The increasing significance of cyberspace in maintaining the economic growth, improving the efficacy of governance, and bolstering national security and public prosperity is propelling innovations to such extents that almost all traditional activities now have their digital equivalent virtually. The most fundamental of the cyberspace activities focused are e-education, gaming, medicine, governance, OTT streaming platforms and other entertainment, journalism, advertising, cyber politics, etc. as suggested by Alnagrat and Sulyman (2014).

Cyberspace brings with itself not only the potential of great welfare to mankind but also a simultaneous threat of conflicts, intrigue, crime and conspiracy with nation's quest for dominance in information space as noted by Bamford (2013). Unforeseen and uncertain threats, vulnerabilities and risks are relentlessly emerging as a consequence of increasing interdependence between people, physical components (information and communications technology) and processes (Mbanaso & Dandura, 2015). Cyberspace has posed new security challenges to governments.

Niraja and Rao (2021) opined in their study that low-cost entry, anonymous nature, uncertainties in localising the threatening geography, death of transparency in cyberspace and the ensuing dramatic impacts have brought about strong and weak across and threats. Sarker (2021) therefore suggested that these attacks have challenged the traditional notions of national security as cyberattacks are distinct from traditional form of national security threats which are more transparent and the actors behind whom are largely government and nations which can be identified and located to a specific geographical

area. Cyber terrorism, cyber fraud, piracy, denial-of-service attacks, impersonation, spying, espionage, murder, harassment, blackmail are few of the threats that lurk in cyber threats (Alnagrat & Sulyman, 2014).

Benedikt (1991) states in his works that, the cyber world "is indifferent to physical constraints, a world without a place which is in constant state of change". The cyberspace and cybercrimes due to its wide scope creates overlapping regions of control for sovereign state actors which have distinct legal and cultural approaches and different strategic interests as observed by Iqbal and Anwar (2020).

Zhao *et al.* (2020) therefore views that cyberspace is constantly influencing the security concerns, tasks and functions of every nation. Cybercrimes and allied activities are increasing day-by-day and call for a more resilient cybersecurity structure. Moreover with cyberspace networks being used to carry out critical transactions and globe becoming highly interconnected, cybersecurity is becoming important and significant as observed by Gade and Reddy (2014). In the absence of resilient cybersecurity frameworks, cyberspace and the users are exposed to a variety of threats. These threats are intermittent, multifaceted and multidimensional and have a high level of damage because of their associations to sensitive networks and critical infrastructures. The traditional means of military and police force deployment only would not suffice to contain these threats and the nations alone are not sufficient enough to tackle these threats. Even the effective and multilateral cooperation between governments and private sector have also not bear much fruits. Furthermore, these cyber threats are not limited to government; even the corporation and individuals are not immune to these threats. Security over cyberspace is not the sole responsibility of governments in this information era.

Various theoretical approaches to the cybersecurity issues in the international arena are based on government and hence are confusing or easily overlooked (Li & Liu, 2021). These studies examine and evaluate the cyberspace and its allied threats with an emphasis on the need for cybersecurity, various measures adopted by users with respect to cybersecurity and the way forward.

Research objectives

The research objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To gauge into individual's perspective of India's cyber threat and cybersecurity policies and legislations.
2. To analyse the need for a global collaboration of state and non-state actors around the globe to

build a more resilient cybersecurity framework to effectively tackle the menace of cyber threats.

Research methodology

This study employs a mixed-method design utilising surveys (Questionnaires) and expert interviews. A survey was conducted and random sampling method was used. The survey involved sending a detailed questionnaire to respondents via Google Forms. The total sample size was 150 including both male and female. The respondents were asked questions related to cyberspace comprising of basic knowledge related to Internet and suggestions over few topics. The questionnaire was divided into two parts—Section A was primary to catalogue the demographic details of the respondents. Section B comprised multiple-choice questions organised in such a way that they could be ordered/scaled to enable for a quantitative assessment of responses.

Expert interviews were done with the purpose of analysing the experiences, beliefs and opinions of the individuals. The primary technique used was a one-to-one in-person Google Meet video call interview. The interview questions were designed based on the comprehensive study of the review of literature and other relevant sources and also on the basis of data gathered via quantitative survey done prior to the interview. The experts chosen for the interview were all related to the field of cyber space and cyber security with significant experience and recognition in the field working not only with government and organisations at national level but also at the global stage.

Following are the five experts for the interview:

- Dr Rajat Moona, Ex-CDAC Director and presently Director, IIT Bhilai.
- Dr Pawan Duggal, Supreme Court Advocate specialised in Cyberlaw, one of the top four cyber lawyers in the world and Chairman of the International Commission on Cyber Security Law.
- Mr. Nikhil Agarwal, First Asian to be elected as Co-Chair of World Internet Society Advisory Council (2008-10), CEO for Centre for Cyber Security and Cyber Defence of Critical Infrastructure Innovation Hub (C3-iHub), IIT Kanpur
- Mr. Satyendra Verma, Director, Indian Citizens Assistance for Mobile Privacy & Security (I-CAMPS), National Security Council Secretariat
- Dr Abhay Chawla, Guest Faculty, Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

Following are the demographic details of the respondents:

Profile of the respondents

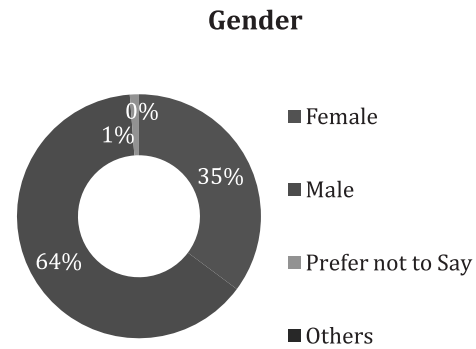


Figure 1: Gender of the respondents (n=150)

Figure 1 represents the gender profile. Out of a total of 150 respondents, 35% are female and 64% of the respondents are male. Additionally, 1% of the respondents preferred not to disclose their gender. Overall, the figure illustrates that the survey consisted of a diverse group of participants, with a significant representation of both male and female respondents.

Age of the respondents

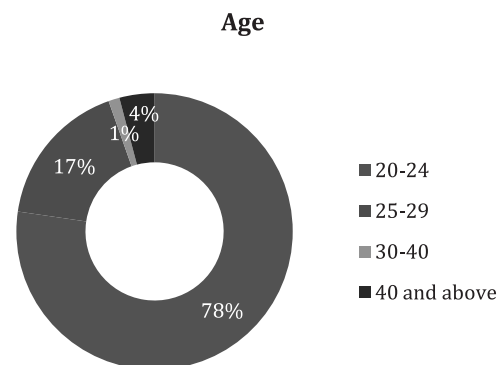


Figure 2: Age of the respondents (n=150)

It can be seen in Figure 2 that the majority of the respondents are among the 20–24 age group (78%). A total of 17% of the respondents belongs to the 25–29 age group. A small proportion of the respondents (4%) are from 40+ age group and the remaining 1% are between 30 and 40 age group.

Profession of the respondents

It is evident from Figure 3 that the majority of the respondents are Post Graduate (PG) students (53%), 17% of them are Under Graduate (UG) students, 16% are engaged in private jobs and the remaining 14% preferred not to share their profession details.

Profession

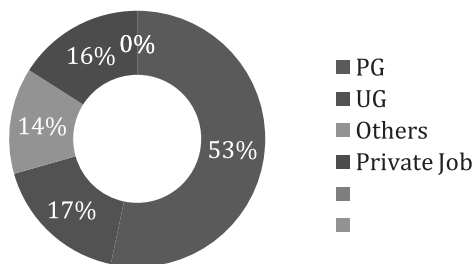


Figure 3: Profession of the respondents (n= 150)

Awareness about the phishing emails

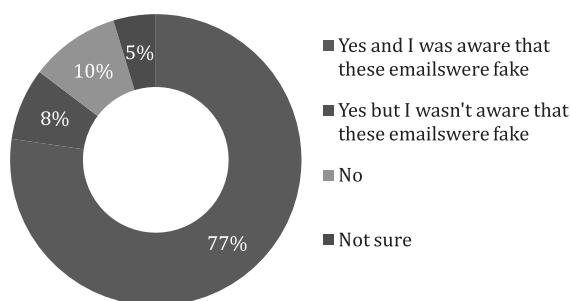


Figure 4: Awareness about phishing emails

Of the total, 80% respondents have received phishing mails and were aware that those were fake, 11% never received such mails and messages, 8% have received such mails but were not aware of the fact that they were fake and the remaining 1% are not sure about it (Fig. 4).

Frequency of spam emails

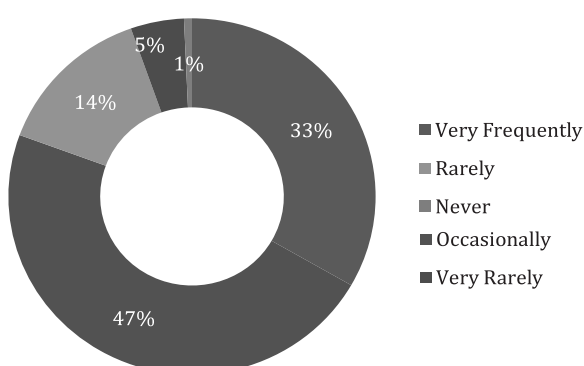


Figure 5: Frequency of phishing emails

Of the total respondents, 47% occasionally encountered spam emails while 33% of the respondents received spam mails very frequently. 14% of the respondents received such mails rarely and 5% very rarely. And only 1% of the respondents

have never received any kind of spam email (Fig. 5).

Awareness of Cyber Ethics while using the internet and its followers

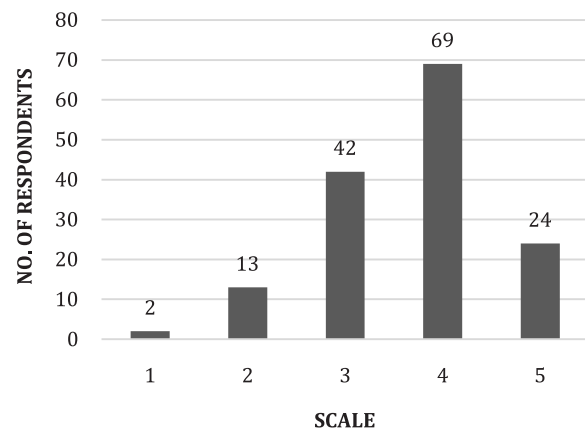


Figure 6: Awareness about cyber ethics and its followers

Another question (Fig. 6) tries to find out if the respondents have awareness about proper internet ethics and how strongly do they follow the same. Out of 150 respondents and on a scale of 15, 69 (46%) marked 4, while 24 (16%) of the respondents scaled to 5; 42 (28%) of the respondents marked 3, 13 (8.7%) selected 2 while a minority of 2 (1.3%) chose 1.

Awareness of the formal complaints and grievance redressal mechanism pertaining to cybercrimes

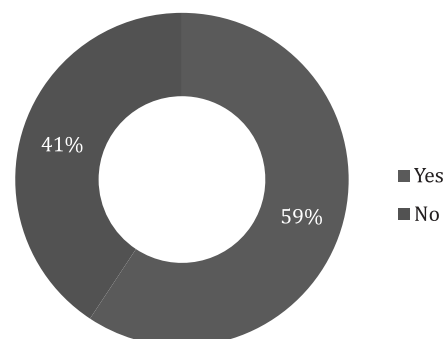


Figure 7: Awareness regarding complaint and grievance-redressal mechanisms

While a majority of 59% respondents said they are not cognizant of any redressal mechanisms, 41% of the respondent were aware of the formal process of complaint and grievance redressal in case of any cyber fraud or other cybercrimes thereof (Fig. 7).

Individual steps to ensure online protection

Figure 8 pertains to the steps taken by individual respondents to ensure protection online; 48% of

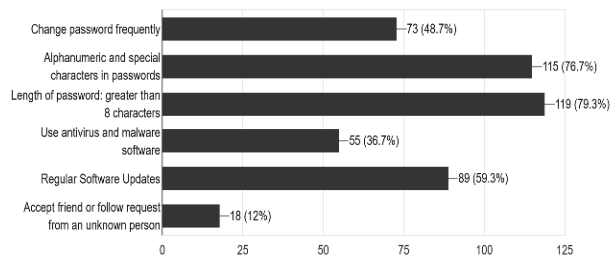


Figure 8: Individual steps to ensure online protection

the respondents change passwords frequently, 76.7% have alphanumeric and special characters in passwords. out of total 79.3% of the respondents have passwords greater than 8 characters whereas only 36.7% of the respondents subscribe to antivirus and antimalware softwares. While 59.3% update their software regularly. Only 12% accept a friend or follow request from an unknown person.

Security considerations while using online services/platforms

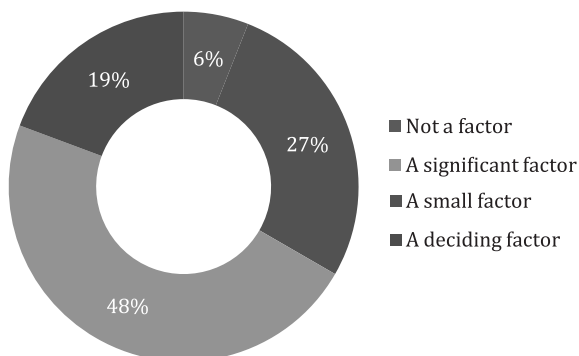


Figure 9: Security considerations

For a great majority of 48% of respondents, security of a platform or a service plays a significant role. 27% responded that security play a small factor. Security considerations played a decisive role for 19% of the respondents while it was not a factor taken into account for a minimal percentage of 6% of the respondents while using an online service/platform (Fig. 9).

Users control over their information over different sites

Out of total, 57% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 28% agreed somewhat while 11% of the respondents remain neutral. A minute percentage of 3% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while even lower percentage of 1% of the total respondents strongly disagreed with the statement (Fig. 10).

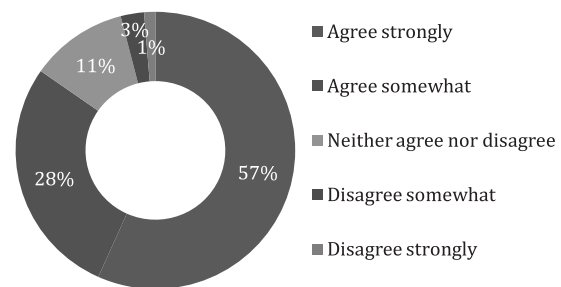


Figure 10: Users control over their information

Individual views on India's legislations/policies pertaining to cyberspace

Comments by respondents:

- Agree somewhat but still there are some loopholes like the current IT Act does not cover a majority of crimes committed through mobiles, which needs to be rectified.
- With smartphones becoming more accessible, there's a large part of the population, that is, unaware of potential security threats and fall victim to fraudulent emails/texts. We need strong policies to curb down malicious accounts.
- California cyber laws are far superior and something similar may be constituted in India as well.
- It is in spirit and precedents, but an amendment in terms of growing internet, laws need some amendments.
- Because of low media literacy and poor execution of awareness, people are often clueless so as to what could be an appropriate measure for cybercrimes.
- People should be more aware. Awareness is needed among common people, especially teenagers.
- Strong policies concerning data privacy and platform security are required. Preventive measures for cyber fraud are required and a standard operating procedure (SOP) for certain popular types of cyber frauds should be published and followed across departments concerned.
- India's policies are good enough to the risk posed by cyber threats but there should be some major changes in the IT Act to get a tighter grip for the same.

Need for India to have dedicated policies related to cyberspace

Out of total, 64% of the respondents strongly agreed with the given statement about the need of the hour to draft legislations and policies solely dedicated to the cyberspace, 21% somewhat agreed with the

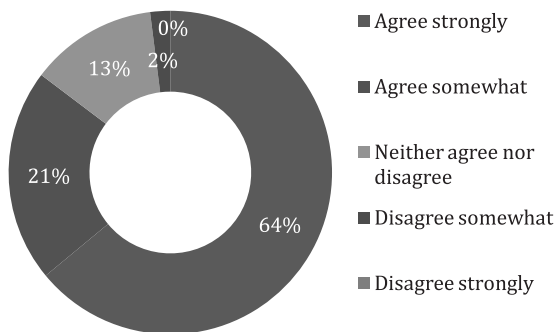


Figure 11: Need for dedicated national cybersecurity policies

statement while 13% held a neutral ground. While only 2% of the respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement, there are no respondents who disagreed strongly (Fig. 11).

A benchmark to measure 'How secure a specific site is?'

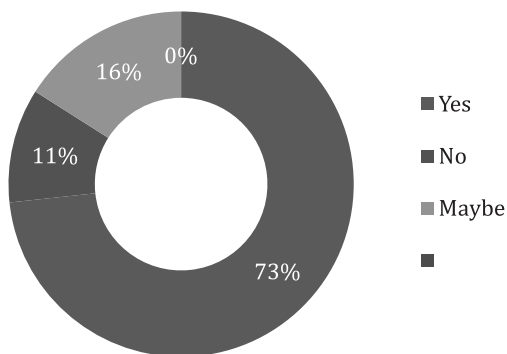


Figure 12: Benchmark to measure the security standards of a website

A great majority of 73% individuals responded in positive that such a thing could be beneficial while 11% didn't see any value to such benchmarks. Remainder of 16% of the respondents were not so sure as to its usefulness (Fig. 12).

A metrics to measure cybersecurity development at a national level relative to global standards

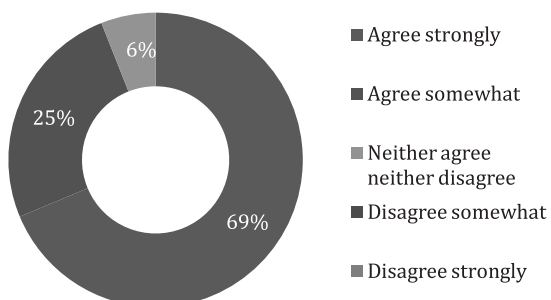


Figure 13: Cybersecurity development metrics

A huge majority of 69% of the respondents agreed strongly with the statements while 25% somewhat agreed to the statement. While 6% of the respondents remained neutral, there were no disagreements of any kind to the said statement (Fig. 13).

Importance of raising awareness on cybersecurity to achieve security in cyberspace

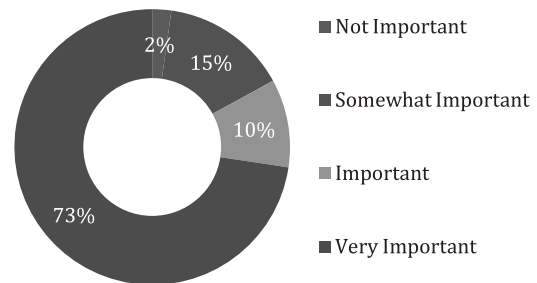


Figure 14: Importance of raising awareness on cybersecurity

Out of total, 73% of the respondents viewed raising awareness as very important while 15% were of the opinion that it is somewhat important. While 10% of the respondents opinionated it as important, only 2% of the respondents think it's not important and would be a futile exercise (Fig. 14).

Need for an International Organisation dedicated to cyberspace with collaboration of state and non-state actors

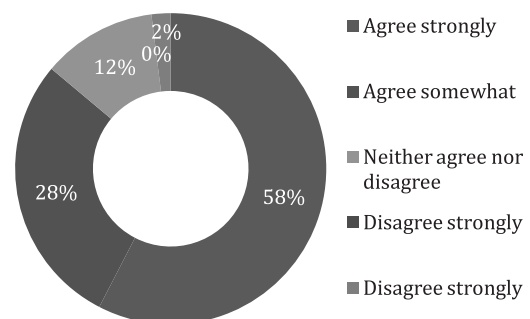


Figure 15: Need for global collaboration

A majority of 58% of the respondents strongly agreed while 28% of the respondents somewhat agree to the need for such collaborations. While 12% weren't swayed to either side and remained neutral, 2% disagreed strongly (Fig. 15).

Data analysis

The survey through its questions shows that the individuals are concerned about their online privacy and security. Phishing is one of the most prominent techniques used by cyber criminals. Majority of the respondents did receive phishing emails which

helps reflect the frequency of these attacks over cyberspace. Most of the respondents have a high level of digital literacy, as a result of which a majority of respondents follow proper ethics while using internet. A large majority of respondents are not aware of the formal process of complaint and grievance redressal in case of cyber fraud or cyber-attacks, which is a huge concern. Neither the victims are compensated nor the whole purpose of such institution and mechanism work, which instead of deterring the criminals motivates them to such course of actions prohibited by law. Security plays an important role to the respondents as majority of them consider security to be either a deciding or significant factor while deciding whether or not to use a particular service/platform. A majority of respondents have agreed that the users need to have complete control over what sites get what information about them. With the incidences of data leakages and privacy breach increasing, the views of the respondents show a positive attitude towards securing their information and privacy. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that India's cybersecurity policies should be dedicated to cyberspace. A majority of them going on similar lines hold the view that a metrics to measure cybersecurity development on a national level relative to global standards should be put in place. The importance of security is again highlighted with a majority of respondents feeling that a benchmark to measure the security status of a site could be of help to them. A huge majority of the respondents considered raising of awareness rudimentary to achieve security in cyberspace. Barring a minimal percentage of respondents, a majority of them believe that there is a need for an international organisation dedicated to cyberspace with collaboration of state and non-state actors.

Expert interviews

There are many experts in the field of cybersecurity with respective areas of expertise from technical to legal and from individual to national and international domain. The researcher interviewed five of them to answer a few questions about cybersecurity and the need for a global collaboration to build a more resilient cybersecurity framework and fight the menace of cybercrimes.

The interviewees were questioned about cyberspace, cybersecurity and the need for a global collaboration. First was Nikhil Agarwal who said that the individuals were geographically bound without the internet but the advent of internet and digital world has opened up a whole new set of possibilities for individuals with every aspect of human life going digital. This shifting and dependency has provided

criminals better gains both in financial terms and control with so much to gain with their criminal activities over cyberspace. Without geographical boundaries and no physical presence at the location of crime, it is hard to detect the attacks since it is routed through different countries. This global space is now a breeding ground for crimes and criminals around the world and the only way out is through global cooperation.

“In a way, a digital twin has been created with cyberspace that mimics the real world....These have become global space and the only way to control and prosecute these crimes is through global cooperation since one cannot have bilateral treaties with every other country of the world.” (Nikhil Agarwal, personal interview, May 5, 2022)

Rajat Moona, expressing his views said that with large number of activities shifting to and depending on internet, a huge amount of cyberspace is being built and transformed every day. More and more dependency on the cyberspace is leading to an increase in cyberattacks because this huge amount of data and information that is being sought and targeted by the attackers have some monetary values and some victory attached to. Moreover, as per the expert, the policy formation and efficient countering measures are a tough task because of temporal and spatial uncertainties in detection of these attacks. The law always lags behind the technological developments rendering; even the handful of laws present a moot point. One more thing is that there are fewer hands looking into protecting of cyberspace. There are more people using and providing services over cyberspace, so we require more people looking over the security of cyberspace to make it safe and secure.

Dr Moona further opinionated that global harmonisation among laws and regulations is not possible because of variations in concerns across the globe with one country more dependent on cyberspace than others. Either an international law mandating countries to act in a specific manner or a treatise can be effective. Whereas the latter is still narrower in its scope as there are some practical limitations to the number of countries with which one can have treatise with, the former is difficult to achieve because of different notions of cyberspace and cybersecurity for different countries. Global information and resource sharing is beneficial but is again limited by the sovereign state's hesitancy because of the increased vulnerabilities combined with their fear of losing the upper hand they possess

due to their more advanced cybersecurity framework. Apart from all these concerns, global collaboration is the key, according to Dr Moona, as cyberspace is borderless and transcends the geographical limits set by respective states. The loss of one is the loss of others and therefore to tackle the growing menace of cybercrimes, the regime needs to change and realise that cyberspace is devoid of boundaries, and hence they need to move beyond these geographical limits and join hands to create not only safe and secure cyberspace but the real world as well.

“Cybersecurity is a war against an unknown enemy and hence policy formation is a tough task. There’s no certainty on the time or the location of the attacks...The Law should be updated accordingly but the velocity of law is much slower compared to attack and hence the law is always behind....cybersecurity regime should also be borderless and the boundary should become irrelevant and collaboration is the key. Actors, state and non-state should come together so that the boundaries become irrelevant and security could be provided on a larger scale not to ‘your’ but ‘our’ global cyberspace and have better opportunities at providing cybersecurity.” (Rajat Moona, personal interview, May 6, 2022)

Next was Abhay Chawla who shares the same view as Nikhil Agarwal that the digital world mimics the real world in all sorts but the humans can’t themselves be dispensed with. With a large section of society into a sphere which they know very little about, the increasing rate of cybercrimes was inevitable. The internet or cyberspace is not owned by anybody and so the global collaboration is absolutely necessary. He further said if the world is collaborating almost every other sphere, so it should happen for cybersecurity as well. But the individual states, as they are bureaucracy-driven, are much slower than the pace at which the cybersecurity issues are evolving and the whole engagement of people, society and states needs to change.

“The cyberspace will keep mimicking the real world, and the human world through cyberspace is trying to make an extended version of them and it will keep evolving...Internet today has globalised local or localised global and the world is constantly collaborating with each other so why can’t it happen for the cybersecurity.” (Abhay Chawla, personal interview, May 14, 2022)

Next expert was Pawan Duggal who viewed that with the coming of COVID-19, there has been an increased emphasis on the internet implying that life’s never going to be the same again and will continue to revolve around the cyberspace. Simultaneously, cybercrimes have also witnessed a sharp spike over the past few years, with the effects so profound that even the scholars are accepting that the golden age for cybercrimes has begun.

According to Pawan Duggal, cybercrimes have rendered boundaries futile and a fight needs to be put at international arena which lacks a common and universal understanding of cybersecurity. The old tale of blind men and the elephant is getting replicated today with nation states who are going ahead and dealing with cyberspace their own way and so there’s a maximum diversity of thought processes, policies and approaches. There’s a complete lack of harmonisation in legal principle, laws and policies as they deal with uniform problems challenging cybersecurity. One of the reason being the state and non-state actors are involved in covert and overt activities and hence do not want mechanisms at international level. With the criminals becoming tech savvy each passing day and the boundary less character of cybercrimes, the countries have no other option except for sharing of information and resources globally if they want to collectively fight the menace of cybercrimes.

With reference to the European Union’s Convention on Cybersecurity and the UN’s Ad Hoc Committee recent deliberations on new international convention to regulate and minimise the misuse of information and communication technology (ICT) for criminal purposes, Mr Duggal said that though the countries hold the flag of sovereignty and national security but some works have been started. Internet has now become the global heritage of humanity as a whole. And so, the time has come for state and non-state actors to join hands at the international level so as to cumulatively deal in a collective manner the various challenges in the cyberspace.

“Today cyberspace is reversibly redefining the landscape vis-à-vis the real world life of humans...Countries though they agree that yes, it is a boundary-less medium but that doesn’t mortgage my sovereignty as a nation and the national interests are supreme and therefore, they have the power to determine what’s good for my nation....The world today requires more quicker and expeditious approaches to sharing of information among nation states when they are together fighting the cause against cybercrimes....we need far more catalytic

groups in place because internet has made geography history and brought forward this unique challenge of internet jurisdiction and this is the time that we need international approaches to deal with this boundary-less medium called cyberspace and it will be more effective in fighting against the constant misuses and abuses of cyberspace of criminal and terrorist purposes.” (Pawan Duggal, personal interview, May 27, 2022)

Satyendra Verma who viewed cyberspace is transforming the individual’s life and society’s way of working in a 180° turn in almost every field. Digitisation and globalisation using cyberspace is changing everything—education, health, and governance. With increasing users, cyberspace itself is expanding and bad actors have a bigger ground to play with resulting in increase in cybercrimes.

As per Verma, a global collaboration is the only efficient way to put a fight against a borderless crime that has percolated every corner of the world. Cybercrimes are changing the whole landscape and are now another dimension of security and defence for many countries, and so collaboration between various states is highly unlikely. As far as the collaboration among non-state actors, all countries want it, but not so much between and among nations is not possible after a certain limit since it’s similar to an ace and an added advantage and they don’t want to reveal it. But they definitely share data, information and incidences and the state actors would get together against the non-state actors but not so much against other states.

“Cyberspace is changing the offensive stance of a country and how one country pressurises the other... Yes, there’s a need for global harmonisation and collaboration. And, there are various collaborations already in place, especially in Europe. Moreover, same policies may work for one country and not for other, though some policies are already in place but it needs much deliberations.” (Satyendra Verma, personal interview, May 30, 2022)

All the interviewers agreed to the fact that the cyberspace is changing the way in a substantial manner. In addition, the huge dependence on cyberspace from individuals, corporations, businesses, governments to international institutions with massive amounts of data is an invitation to the criminal minds. The world has seen a spike in cybercrimes over the past few decades and these are increasing at an unprecedented rate, unabated

by policies and measures by government and other institutions and corporations. This may be due to some gaps and lacunae that lie therein.

All the interviewers had their reservations and were sceptical about the creation and success of such global collaborations. This is because most of the already established global collaboration and institutions have their limits in putting up a concerted effort. This is the result of various problems pervading the globe especially when it concerns the national security as none would mortgage their sovereignty as a nation and national interests are supreme. Nonetheless establishing an international order is the only effective way in building a more resilient cybersecurity framework.

The nations are constantly involved in overt and covert activities over the cyberspace and using their cyber technologies. Therefore, they are hesitant of any such mechanisms in the international arena. For some, it is the fear of losing the advantage they have over others for superior technologies while some have the fear of exposing their vulnerabilities to their adversaries and criminal organisations and mind all over the world. Despite all this, the interviewers believe that the world needs to join hands and global collaborations and institutions be put in place as this is only way to build a more resilient cybersecurity framework and to fight the menace of cybercrimes that beset almost all the nations of the world.

Conclusion

Cybersecurity is a concern not just for a single nation but for all the nations around the world. Cyberspace is a virtual borderless medium with authority and ownership of no single entity. However, the problems have to be dealt within the real world comprising of nations divided by boundaries with their respective governing authorities. These nations conduct themselves with primacy to their own needs, concerns, policies and perspective while dealing with problem of cybercrimes besetting the globe uniformly.

These boundaries have to be eliminated bringing stakeholders from over the world onto a single platform to effectively manage the cybersecurity issues. The same can also be gauged from the perspectives and moods of not only the experts but also of individual respondents. Cybersecurity experts talked in length about the impact of cybersecurity carrying an enormous cost which is not only pecuniary but also threatening the security and sovereignty of nations, and privacy and safety of individuals, institutions and corporations.

Internet today has globalised local or localised global and the world is constantly collaborating with

each other and the same needs to be done for building a more resilient cybersecurity framework. The very thing that led to the fame of the internet since its inception of being borderless, bringing people from every nook and corners of the world closer needs to be manoeuvred by the stakeholders everywhere and unite to fight against the menace. In the era of digitisation and globalisation, the time has now come to recognise cybersecurity as a global good. To further this global good, it is imperative for individuals, state actors, non-state actors and stakeholders to work in close ties and harmony with each other. This would secure not only the cyberspace but also the intricately intertwined real counterpart, i.e., the physical world as well.

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Systematic Literature Review on the Current Scenario of Digital Marketing in India

KIRTI SUNDRAM¹

ABSTRACT

Digital marketing aims to attract customers and allow them to interact with companies of interest through digital media. Various digital marketing tactics primarily aim to promote businesses, form preferences, and increase sales. By 2030, a billion Indians will have access to the Internet, 839 million will routinely use smartphones, and more than 500 million will have access to digital material in regional languages, predicts KPMG India's Media and Entertainment Report 2019, titled "India's Digital Future." This study explains the benefits and difficulties of digital marketing and suggests strategies for overcoming the obstacles encountered when implementing digital marketing practices. India's expanding digital marketing landscape is driven by the growing population's reliance on the Internet for various activities. Current advancements in digital marketing encourage businesses to exhibit their products and services on the Internet, making marketing strategies more practical and cost-effective. As a result, digital marketing is rapidly becoming an indispensable instrument in the contemporary business environment, fostering a more dynamic, adaptable, and customer-focused marketplace.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Trends, Benefits, Scope, Strategies

Introduction

Promoting a product or service to prospective consumers in an ever-evolving marketplace presents a perpetual challenge. The key to success and market sustainability lies in cultivating and preserving customer relationships and anticipating consumers' future needs even before they materialise. Undeniably, the core function of marketing remains the promotion of a product.

However, marketing terrain has undergone seismic changes over the last thirty years, catalysed by the rapid growth of the Internet and the progress in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Beginning with simple, text-based websites in the 1990s, technological evolution swiftly propelled the rise of interactive portals, eCommerce platforms, mobile technology, social media, analytical tools, and artificial intelligence. These advancements have profoundly revolutionised the traditional marketing landscape. In today's world, digital mediums such as the Internet, social media, and smartphone applications have embedded themselves deeply into the fabric of daily life for most people across the globe.

This transformation is further amplified by the

enormous amounts of data generated by various digital platforms. eCommerce sites, social media networks, customer surveys, sales statistics, demand trends, customer feedback, and reviews collectively contribute to this data deluge. This surge in data has fundamentally reshaped the marketing ecosystem, ushering in a contemporary era where traditional and digital marketing techniques coalesce. The ubiquitous nature of the Internet and mobile phones has multiplied the prospects for digital marketing, offering unprecedented opportunities for marketers to reach and engage with their audience.

In the combined study of CII and KPMG, India's digital advertising industry was expected to grow at 33.5 per cent (CAGR) (2015-2020) and by 2020; the value of Digital Advertising was expected to exceed by Rs 255 billion. Therefore, it was predicted that by 2020, the Indian digital industry would create more than 20 lakh jobs.

According to Chaffey (2011), social media marketing entails "encouraging customer communications on the company's website or through its social presence." Social media marketing is a critical strategy in digital marketing because it allows businesses to reach their target audiences

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without paying publishers or distributors, which is typical of traditional marketing. Defined, “marketing online, whether via websites, online ads, opt-in emails, interactive kiosks, interactive TV, or mobile” refers to digital marketing, electronic marketing, e-marketing, and Internet marketing (Chaffey & Smith, 2002).

Digital marketing techniques that are gaining popularity with fast-paced technological adoption include search engine optimisation (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), content marketing, influencer marketing, content automation, campaign marketing, data-driven marketing, social media marketing, social media optimisation, direct email marketing, display advertising, e-books, and games. Nowadays, digital marketing includes non-Internet platforms offering digital media, like mobile phones (SMS and MMS), call back services, and on-hold mobile ringtones.

Literature review

Many research papers and articles on digital marketing provide in-depth analysis. The following are some of the findings from some of the research papers:

According to Kumar (2021), integrating technology plays a significant role in India’s rise in digital consumption. Adopting digital technologies such as smartphones, social media, e-commerce platforms, and digital payments has transformed how people consume goods and services in India. These technologies have made it easier for consumers to access products and services and created new business opportunities to reach a wider audience. Despite these advancements, Kumar (2021) highlights technology’s potential societal impact, including the digital divide, privacy concerns, and the displacement of traditional businesses.

Chu (2016) explores the advantages and disadvantages of digital marketing. Chu notes that social media marketing has become an increasingly popular marketing strategy due to its many benefits, such as cost-effectiveness, increased brand awareness, and improved customer engagement. However, it also has some drawbacks, such as the potential for spreading negative feedback quickly and the challenge of measuring its effectiveness. Further, as social media continues to evolve, Chu (2016) suggests that businesses must carefully consider its benefits and drawbacks and develop strategies tailored to their specific marketing objectives.

Kaur and Kaur (2021) discuss the role of digital marketing practices and tools used by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in India. As per their findings, Indian SMEs are increasingly

adopting digital marketing tools like social media, search engine optimisation, and email marketing to reach their target audiences and compete with larger businesses (Kaur & Kaur, 2021). Despite the cost-effective brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales-driving opportunities that digital marketing offers SMEs, Kaur and Kaur (2021) highlight that these businesses need more digital skills, limited resources, and low awareness of digital marketing tools. They further suggest that it is crucial for SMEs to develop a clear digital marketing strategy aligned with their business goals and target audience and to regularly track and measure the effectiveness of their digital marketing efforts (Kaur & Kaur, 2021).

Karimi and Eslami (2016) outlined an organisation’s digital marketing goals in their research. According to them, the objective of digital marketing is to create and sustain an online presence that not only advertises a business’s products or services but also fosters meaningful engagement with the target audience, leading to increased brand awareness, customer loyalty, and sales (Karimi & Eslami, 2016).

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) define digital marketing as using digital channels such as search engines, social media, email, and websites to promote a product or service and engage with an organisation’s target audience. They also highlight various digital marketing strategies and tools, including search engine optimisation, content marketing, email marketing, and social media marketing, all aimed at crafting an online presence and boosting brand awareness (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Sharma and Agarwal (2022) highlight the approaches in digital marketing practices. According to them, there is a growing importance of continual testing and optimisation within digital marketing, as well as the requirement for a thorough awareness of the Indian market and cultural subtleties. They also claim that organisations that use these approaches well are more likely to prosper in India’s digital marketing ecosystem (Sharma & Agarwal, 2022).

Kumar and Raju (2020) investigate the substantial implications of digital marketing on customer behaviour. They mention that the shift to digital marketing is a fundamental shift in the way firms connect with customers, not just a technological one. The research also studies the reasons for the rise of digital marketing that presents firms with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage with customers on a more personal level, allowing for more precise targeting and personalised messages. Furthermore, they argue that digital marketing improves firm flexibility and adaptability, allowing them to respond swiftly to market upheavals and changes in consumer

behaviour (Kumar & Raju, 2020).

Narula and Rana (2017) chronicle the growth of digitisation in India, attributing its rapid acceleration to the government's Digital India initiative. The widespread availability and affordability of internet access and smartphones have led to a surge in digital adoption, particularly among younger generations. However, they also caution that challenges such as the digital divide and cybersecurity concerns must be tackled to fully exploit the potential of digitisation in India (Narula & Rana, 2017).

Kumar and Purani (2012) investigate how traditional and non-traditional media, including digital marketing channels, influence consumer attitudes and brand memory in India. They shed light on how digital marketing intersects with conventional media in India (Kumar & Purani, 2012). They also explain how this interaction can influence customer behaviour. This research also looks at the obstacles and opportunities that come with successfully blending traditional and digital marketing strategies (Kumar & Purani, 2012).

Puri and Yadav's (2019) analysis indicates that changing consumer behaviour in India, including the increasing use of mobile devices and social media, has spurred a transformation in digital marketing approaches. Consumers are now more likely to research and purchase products online and expect personalised and engaging experiences across all digital touchpoints. They conclude that businesses must stay abreast of these changing consumer behaviours and adapt their strategies accordingly.

Tiwari *et al.* (2006) investigate mobile services in the banking industry, emphasising how innovative, cost-effective digital marketing solutions can provide a competitive advantage. They also emphasise the importance of data analytics and personalization in improving the efficacy and efficiency of these digital tactics (Tiwari *et al.*, 2006).

A recent study by Saha and Ghosh (2021) reveals that many Indian organisations are turning to digital marketing tools for their numerous advantages, including cost-effectiveness, expanded reach, and precision targeting. These tools allow organisations to communicate with a broad audience, engage with consumers in real time, and monitor and analyse their marketing efforts more effectively. The COVID-19 pandemic has also expedited the transition to digital channels as organisations explore new ways to connect with consumers without physical contact (Saha & Ghosh, 2021). As a result, digital marketing has emerged as a vital component of the marketing mix for organisations across all sectors and sizes in India.

Agrawal and Yadav (2020) evaluate the role of

technology in digital marketing and underscore that it serves as the bedrock for digital marketing. From web analytics tools and content management systems to artificial intelligence and machine learning, technology plays a pivotal role in all aspects of digital marketing, including search engine optimisation, social media marketing, and content marketing (Agrawal & Yadav, 2020). They further discuss how technology enables businesses to collect and analyse data, automate processes, and personalise consumer experiences all of which are integral to succeeding in the digital marketing landscape. They anticipate that as technology continues to evolve, it will play an increasingly significant role in shaping the future of digital marketing (Agrawal & Yadav, 2020).

Singh and Gupta (2021) tried to discern the long-term impact of digital marketing on organisations. They argue that the role of digital marketing is multifaceted and can vary based on factors such as industry, target audience, and business goals. However, they identify increased brand awareness, wider reach and engagement, improved customer loyalty and retention, and a better return on investment as key long-term benefits of digital marketing (Singh & Gupta, 2021). They conclude that digital marketing enables organisations to gather and analyse data more effectively, informing business decisions and identifying new growth opportunities. However, they emphasise the need for organisations to strategically approach digital marketing and invest in the right tools, resources, and talent to maximise its long-term impact (Singh & Gupta, 2021).

Rationale of the study

- The scope of digital marketing in India is vast. It continues to expand rapidly, driven by increasing internet penetration, the rise of mobile devices, and changing consumer behaviour. As of 2021, India has over 700 million internet users, making it the second-largest online market after China. This presents a significant opportunity for businesses to reach and engage with consumers through digital channels such as social media, search engines, email, and mobile apps.
- Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards digital channels, as consumers increasingly turn to online platforms for shopping, entertainment, and communication channels.
- In India, there will be 900 million Internet users by 2025, according to a forecast by Nielsen and the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). This is a considerable increase compared to the 639 million internet users in the nation in 2020. The report also emphasises

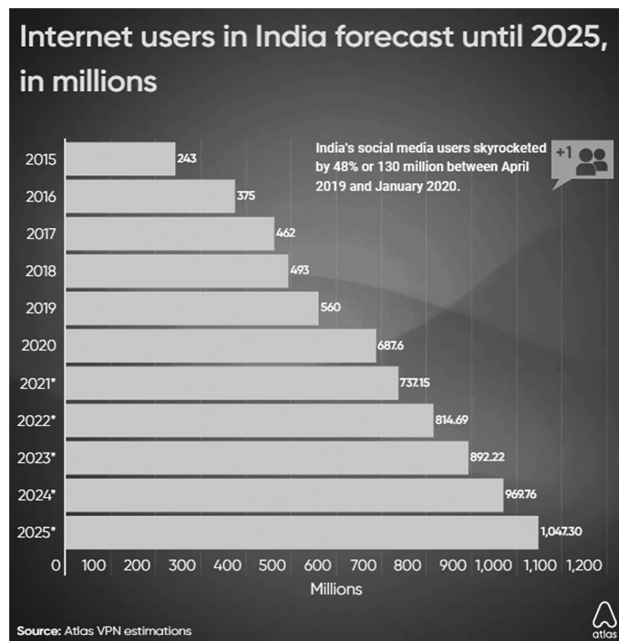


Fig. 1: Forecast of Internet Users in India until 2025
(Source: Analytics Insight)

companies' need to modify digital marketing plans to accommodate Indian consumers' varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Fig.1).

- The adoption of social media in India has been increasing rapidly in recent years, driven by factors such as the availability of affordable smartphones, cheaper data plans, and a growing awareness of the benefits of social media. As of 2021, India has over 448 million social media users, making it one of the largest social media markets in the world.
- Popular social media platforms in India include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter, with regional platform such as ShareChat is also gaining popularity. This presents a significant opportunity for businesses to reach and engage with consumers through social media marketing. However, it is important to note that social media penetration is not uniform across all regions and demographics in India, as depicted in Fig. 2.

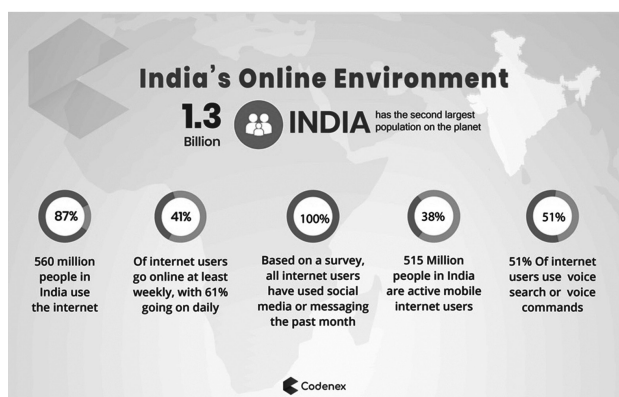


Fig. 2: Overview of India's Online Environment
(Source: Codenex Solutions)

- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the rise of digital marketing in India, as businesses across the country have had to adapt to the new realities of social distancing and remote work. With the closure of physical stores and the cancellation of events and conferences, many businesses have turned to digital channels to reach and engage with their customers. This has increased investment in digital marketing tools and strategies, including social media marketing, search engine optimisation, and email marketing. Additionally, the pandemic has accelerated the shift towards e-commerce and online shopping, as consumers increasingly turn to digital platforms for their shopping needs, as shown in Fig. 3.

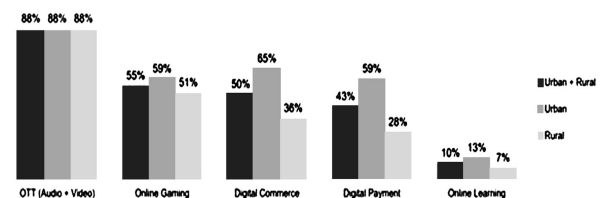


Fig. 3: Digital Penetration among Consumers in India
(Source: IAMAI report)

Objectives

- To understand the concept of digital marketing
- To discuss the benefits and drawbacks of digital marketing
- To find out strategies to overcome the challenges in digital marketing

Methodology

This is a descriptive study that combines both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Secondary data and information were thoroughly examined to construct this report for this study (literature review). Secondary data and information were obtained from a number of sources, such as published e-books, articles in various journals and periodicals, conference papers, working papers, company websites for annual reports, internal newsletters, and internet blogs.

Individuals and businesses increasingly spend time on digital platforms and social media in today's digital age. This is driven by various factors, including the accessibility of digital platforms, the ability to target specific audiences, the high degree of interactivity and engagement, detailed analytics, and the opportunity to build and promote a brand.

With the increasing popularity of digital platforms and social media in India, businesses realise the importance of incorporating digital marketing strategies into their marketing mix. By leveraging the power of digital platforms and social media, businesses can effectively reach and engage with

their target audience, build brand loyalty, and drive growth and success in today's competitive market.

Research questions

RQ 1: How has the concept of digital marketing evolved in the current Indian context, and what are its primary components?

RQ 2: What are the main benefits and drawbacks of digital marketing as reported in existing Indian literature?

RQ 3: What strategies have been proposed or utilised in overcoming the challenges associated with digital marketing in India?

RQ 4: How is the performance of digital marketing strategies evaluated within the Indian market?

RQ 5: How have societal, technological, or political shifts impacted the strategies and outcomes of digital marketing in India?

Recommendations

On the basis of the existing literature review, it is recommended that:

- Indian businesses should aim to fully understand the broad and evolving concept of digital marketing, ensuring that they are aware of its many components, such as SEO, content marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, and so forth.
- Regular audits should be conducted to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of their digital marketing strategies, making necessary adjustments to enhance their effectiveness.
- Given the challenges identified in the literature, businesses should prioritize proactive strategy development, investing in skill enhancement and digital tools to drive their digital marketing efforts.
- Performance evaluation of digital marketing strategies should not be overlooked. Using comprehensive, multifaceted metrics can help businesses gauge their success more accurately.
- Recognizing and adapting to external shifts (societal, technological, or political) can play a crucial role in the overall success of digital marketing efforts.

Future research scope

Future research could delve deeper into the dynamics of digital marketing in specific sectors of the Indian economy, looking at variations in digital marketing strategies and their outcomes. Studies could also explore the role of evolving technologies like AI and machine learning in shaping the future of digital marketing in India. India's cultural and demographic diversity provides a rich context for investigating

how digital marketing strategies are localized and customized for diverse target audiences. Additionally, future research could explore more direct, empirical links between specific digital marketing strategies and business performance, contributing to developing a more robust and evidence-based understanding of digital marketing success in the Indian context.

Findings and analysis

The digital marketing landscape is shaped by a number of factors, including technological advancements, market trends, and consumer behaviours. This section offers a solid, evidence-based understanding of the present state of digital marketing in India by analysing a variety of academic papers, reports, and studies. It will cover important topics such as the adoption and impact of digital marketing tools, the role of technology in influencing digital marketing strategies, the long-term effects of digital marketing on organisations, and the difficulties encountered in the digital marketing landscape. This exhaustive review and ensuing analysis shed light on the complexities, opportunities, and challenges of India's dynamic digital marketing landscape.

- **Changing Digital Marketing Landscape in India:** Digital marketing is becoming an integral part of the marketing equation for businesses in all industries in India (Saha & Ghosh, 2020). The increasing existence of digital technologies, such as smartphones and social media platforms, has facilitated increased digital consumption, altering how consumers access products and services (Kumar, 2021). COVID-19 has also accelerated the digital transition, with businesses utilising digital channels to maintain connections with consumers without physical interactions (Saha & Ghosh, 2021).
- **Advantages of Digital Marketing:** Digital Marketing offers a number of advantages, including cost-effectiveness, greater reach, precise targeting, real-time engagement, and enhanced monitoring and analytics capabilities (Chu, 2016; Saha & Ghosh, 2021). These tools enable organisations, particularly SMEs, to compete with larger businesses by reaching a larger audience, boosting brand awareness, and boosting sales (Kaur & Kaur, 2021). Long-term benefits include increased brand awareness, enhanced customer loyalty, and a higher return on investment (Singh & Gupta, 2021).

Numerous advantages of digital marketing for enterprises include the following:

1. **Targeted marketing:** Digital marketing allows organisations to target specific demographics, interests, and behaviours, ensuring that only the

appropriate individuals see their advertisements.

2. **Cost-effective:** Digital marketing is frequently more cost-effective than traditional marketing channels, allowing businesses to reach a larger audience on a smaller budget.
 3. **Measurable RoI:** Digital marketing offers detailed analytics and metrics that enable businesses to monitor the success of their campaigns in real-time, allowing them to make data-driven decisions and adjust their strategies accordingly.
 4. **Improved engagement:** Digital marketing offers high interactivity and engagement, allowing businesses to develop relationships with their target audience and boost consumer satisfaction.
 5. **Brand development:** Through digital marketing, businesses can effectively promote and develop their brand, increasing brand recognition and customer loyalty among their target demographic.
 6. **Enhanced conversion rates:** Digital marketing campaigns can be highly targeted, enhancing the likelihood of conversion and generating revenue growth for businesses.
 7. **Global audience:** Digital marketing enables businesses to reach a global audience, expanding their market reach and consumer base.
 8. **Personalisation:** Digital marketing initiatives utilise personalization. The benefits of finding the target audience, interacting with prospects, and understanding what they want are essential in digital marketing. Building brand loyalty and reputation requires audience comprehension and participation.
- Technology is the fulcrum of digital marketing (Agrawal & Yadav, 2020). Technology underpins all aspects of digital marketing, from web analytics tools to AI and machine learning. It permits organisations to acquire and analyse data, automate processes, and personalise consumer experiences (Agrawal & Yadav, 2020). Agrawal and Yadav (2020) predict that as technology continues to evolve, it will play an increasingly crucial role in influencing the future of digital marketing.
 - Challenges in Digital Marketing Despite its benefits, digital marketing in India faces obstacles such as the digital divide, privacy concerns, and displacement of traditional businesses (Kumar, 2021). Particularly, SMEs struggle with a lack of digital skills, limited resources, and awareness of digital marketing tools (Kaur & Kaur, 2021). Social media marketing also has concerns regarding measuring effectiveness and moderating negative feedback (Chu, 2016).

Some of the difficulties include:

1. **Consumption of Time:** The greatest disadvantage

of digital marketing is that it requires much effort. One discovers over time what works and does not work for their brand. Once businesses have organised their strategies, they can employ time-saving techniques. Before beginning online marketing, companies should have a suitable plan with effective techniques.

2. **Data Security:** Security and privacy concerns are paramount in digital marketing. Customer data security is essential for businesses. Customers will not engage with a brand or business if they doubt its commitment to data security.
 3. **Technological issues:** Businesses typically lose online traffic due to technological issues such as poor website design, sluggish page loading speed, website downtime, poor site navigation, and poor search engine optimisation, among others. When such issues arise, customers turn to your competitors, who are technically competent and offer a seamless online experience.
 4. **Global competition:** Online marketing enables all businesses to reach a global audience, allowing them to compete globally. In addition, they would have to compete with others from all over the world. Numerous competitors vying for the same audience necessitate creating and implementing countermeasures. Because to attract consumers, they must stand out from the competition.
 5. **Maintenance Cost:** Online marketing may increase organisational costs, even though it frequently reduces expenses. Companies must employ developers and technical specialists to administer their online marketing channels because they must pay for the upkeep and purchase of technological equipment.
 6. **Facing negative feedback and reviews:** Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing is susceptible to rapidly disseminating a negative reputation. Because any negative feedback, review, comment, or complaint about your brand can rapidly spread and damage your reputation, the customer support team must act swiftly to resolve consumer issues.
 7. **The probability that your promotional strategies will be duplicated:** When an online business is successful due to its innovative strategies, its competitors tend to adopt them. Another disadvantage of online marketing is the theft of a brand's promotional techniques and strategies.
- **Future Trends and Opportunities:** Future trends in digital marketing in India will emphasise mobile optimisation, personalised content, and data-driven decision-making (Dutta & Bose, 2020). Continuous testing, optimisation, and a profound understanding of the local market and cultural

nuances are essential for success in the rapidly changing Indian digital marketing landscape (Dutta & Bose, 2020). Digital marketing in India is poised for significant development, fuelled by technological advancements, shifting consumer behaviours, and the growing importance of data in decision-making. To completely realise the benefits of digital marketing, organisations must address the associated challenges and continuously adapt to emerging trends.

Conclusion

India is now the country with the second-highest number of Internet users in the world due to the country's rapidly expanding Internet penetration. This necessitates the development of comprehensive digital marketing strategies to improve marketing effectiveness and guarantee a positive return on investment for both consumers and merchants (Hoffman & Novak, 2018). In recent years, consumer marketing has undergone a paradigm shift, with preferences and trends undertaking frequent shifts and customers becoming more aware of brands and lifestyles based on occasion and need (Duffett, 2015). Digital marketing allows for the individualised targeting of each consumer, recognising that modern consumers are savvy Internet users who possess extensive knowledge about the desired products or services, including their advantages and disadvantages, price, trend, etc (Tiago & Verssimo, 2014).

Consumers are undertaking more exploratory and comparative searches on the Internet than traditional methods to find the best deal from vendors across India (Cha, 2009). In addition, Cha's (2009) research demonstrates that as consumers find shopping services on social networking sites to be more beneficial and user-friendly, they are more likely to conduct transactions on these platforms. Due to social media's vast user base, most target audiences can be effectively reached (Cha, 2009). Shankar *et al.* (2011) highlight that an increasing number of consumers rely on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn to make purchase decisions, highlighting the significance of promotional activities.

Numerous digital marketing strategies, such as search engine optimisation (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), content marketing, influencer marketing, content automation, e-commerce marketing, campaign marketing, social media marketing, social media optimisation, direct email marketing, display advertising, e-books, optical discs, and games, can provide significant benefits to businesses (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

According to Vogus (2011), large corporations view social media platforms as strategic tools, with some even employing dedicated personnel to administer social media websites. Further, Mangold and Faulds (2009) suggest that social media should be regarded as an integral part of a company's integrated marketing strategy, deserving significant attention and resources.

The global spread of COVID-19 has compelled consumers to remain confined to their residences for extended periods, resulting in a substantial change in consumer behaviour. The pandemic has accelerated the integration of digital technology into daily life, a trend that is likely to endure beyond the pandemic (Statista, 2020). To keep up with fast-paced technologies and shifting consumer preferences, digital marketing is also evolving, allowing organisations of all sizes to consider digital marketing a crucial component of their survival and growth strategies (Agrawal & Yadav, 2020).

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Revisiting Folklores in Digital Media: A Study of Select Indian Web Series

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ABSTRACT

Folklores, myths, legends, epics, fables and stories unify people, though there are varied languages, religions and customs and maintain national identity. Folklores imbibe cosmological system, social arrangements, economic habits, and value symbols. The emotional experience and socio-cultural attitudes are reflected through varied folklores. This paper explores the representation of folklores with special focus on selected Indian Web Series. With the increase of OTT (Over the Top) content players and start ups targeted towards online video, the consumption of content has undergone a metamorphic change across all platforms. The advent of Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney Hotstar, Chaupal, JioCinema, MX Player, Voot and other digital streaming services has shaped the audience's reception towards reconstructing historical values and traits from oral traditions. These platforms are comparatively free from censorship and budget shackles, which give them ample freedom in terms of content, genre, forms and narratives. The study seeks to analyse the portrayal of the social and cultural milieu in the selected Indian web series. The study investigates the fantasy of folklores among the new age audiences. It will discover the treatment of story-telling notions in terms of narratives, representation of human values and changing ideals put forth through folklores in comparison with television series formats. The paper will assess the contribution and effect of the web series in the context of Indian society.

Keywords: Folklore, Web series, Digital technology, Creative expression, Marginalised dialects, Knowledge traditions

Introduction

Folklores concerning folk and their performing and non-performing art, folk practices and folk literature have been examined lately to seek their impact and modifications in the modern day technological advancements. Human beings have their distinct and traditional ways of celebrating various occasions like the beginning of a season, the birth of a child, a marriage and festivals, or social activities. Folklore is a mirror of specific cultures to give a reflection of the inside and the outside. It is determined by universal or quasi-universal human experiences and a collective understanding of some notions or aspects of life. It helps preserve national heritage and reconstruct history to cherish national treasures of the past. This reconstruction of oral tales continues today in web series and the children's literature fields, where rewritten and re-presented narratives are recorded. The idea of folklore as creation glorifies human beings' intrinsic qualities. These web series show the beliefs and religions of people through a communicative play of humour

and perspectives. Folklore is a response to various issues of life and reflects "some very deep chord" in the nature of human thought. Benedict (1935, p. 21) in her significant Introduction to *Zuni Mythology* referred to the propensity to idealize and compensate in folklore. Myths are speculative and philosophical and they relate to religion, anthropology and cultural history. They are "the symbolic projections of a people's hopes, values, fears and aspirations" (Guerin *et. al.*, 2005, p. 159). Schorer (1946) opines, "Myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life, of a primary awareness of man in the universe, capable of many configurations, upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend" (Schorer, 1946, p. 29).

The idea of 'folk' is no longer only related to peasants or rural people, but it is now constantly adapted into the urban lifestyle through music, art, narratives in web series and so on. Researchers like Dundes (1965) suggest that folklore is "constantly being created and recreated to suit new situations." Dundes (1965, p. 2) defines 'folk' as "any group of

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people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is – it could be a common occupation, language, or religion – but what is important is that a group has some traditions that it calls its own” (Dundes, 1965, p. 2). Dundes opines, “Folklore is one way for both adults and children to deal with the crucial problems in their lives.” We know that folklore in all cultures tends to cluster around the critical points in the life cycle of the individual (e.g., birth, initiation, marriage, death) and the calendrical cycle of the community (e.g., sowing, harvesting, etc.) (Dundes & Bronner, 2007, p. 64) The genres of folklores are folk art, vernacular architecture, textiles, modified mass produced objects, traditional folk and world music, legends, urban legends, fairy tales, folk tales, personal experience narratives, jokes, proverbs, games, folk religion, ritual and mythology, traditional cooking and customs and relationships between food and culture. Scholars from varied disciplines like literature, sociology, anthropology, philology, religion, psychology, history, archaeology, linguistics, came forth to analyze folklores from different perspectives. William John Thoms (1803-1885) first coined the term ‘folklore’ to describe the ways, rituals, stories, traditions, observances, superstitions, ballads and proverbs of earlier British societies and cultures.

Studies have been made to explore human creativity through folklores keeping in view their social and cultural contexts and their relationships with political, religious, ethnic, regional and other forms of group identity. Literature and social studies can be approached and taught through folklore for the students to relate to and learn from their own lives and experiences. Poetry can be taught with a comparative perspective of folk poetry. There are the formal features of metres, rhyme, and alliteration along with the content features of characterisation, motivation and themes. Dundes states, “With folklore, the classroom becomes a laboratory or forum for a consideration of 'real life' as it is experienced and perceived by those being educated” (Dundes & Bronner, 2007, p.57). Oral tradition and communication are the base of a culture through which many tales, legends, pieces of advice, discourses of moral, social and cultural values are passed on to the coming generations. Folklores are the testimony of the oral tradition. In oral tradition of folklores there are repetitions, expletives, consequential pauses, the stutters, the gestures which are very significant components. Folklores echo the folk values and paradoxically offer an authorized kind of escape from the same values. We have always encountered a character in fairy tales doing something which he/she

is forbidden to do or explore. Such tales also teach the lessons of teamwork, cooperation and justice. It is also very pertinent to see how in certain folk dances, there is a sanction of collective dance of men and women when the society was strict enough to allow their open interaction. Folk dances have their own way of creativity and expression giving vent to repressed feelings.

In the Indian context, 'folk' suggests tribal, or non-tribal, peasants and rural people and 'lore' reflects the collective knowledge or wisdom on a particular topic or subject. In modern technologically advanced Indian society, folklores have been reconstructed and revisited by modern and urban people too. They are no longer confined to rural areas or people. Oral literature of India has included *puranas*, and epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (initially written in Sanskrit) through various dialects and musical forms to convey the content and message to a larger section of society. Folk performing arts in India encompass music, dance, drama, rhyming, theatre artistically depict the myths and oral traditions of India. *Chau* dance of Odisha is a performance with masks and costumes and the theme focuses on mythological stories like *Mahishasurmardan*, which is, killing of a demon by the goddess Durga. The gestures of the performer suit the lyrics and the beats of drums. *Gotipua* is a dance variant of Odisha in which young boys dressed as girls perform dance, a style based on *Gitagovinda*. Puppetry is performed with the artistically painted wooden handicraft puppets. Indian folk theatre is of natural and extempore nature, where local dialects are used according to different provinces and accompanied with musical instruments like dhol, kartal, manjira, khanjira, etc. forms like Bengal's Jatra, Kirtania & Natak; Bihar's Bidesia; Rajasthan's Raas, Jhumar, Dhola & Maru; Uttar Pradesh's Raas, Nautanki, Svaang & Bhaand; Gujarat's Bhawaii; Maharashtra's Larite & Tamasha; and Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka's Kathakali, Yakshagana (Sahu *et. al.*, 2018, p.42); Tamil Nadu's Therukuttu; Karnataka's Bayalata; Andhra Pradesh's Kalapam; Kerala's Teyyam & Kakkarissi Natakam; Gujarat's and Rajasthan's Bhavai; Manipur's Nupipaalaa; and Sikkim's Chhau. Folk theatre touches upon issues of environment, child psychology, education, population, and women's voices. Folklore includes customs, knowledge systems, games, faith, practices, literature, performing and non-performing arts like dance, music, theatre, drama, painting, sculpture, craft making, festivals and so on. Folklores have transmitted knowledge universally since time immemorial through sustenance, reshaping, renewal, and the creation of ways of life, folk tales and beliefs.

Myths and rituals are significant components of folklore, which justify social beliefs and have functional value. These are important markers of sociological aspects of cultures and societies like kinship, customs, practices and so on. Myths chalk out a set of norms for the people of a community by which the social functions of their culture flourish. Myths are the most significant media to demand justification through a rite, ceremony or a social rule. Malinowski (1926) describes three types of myths: ancient myths, culture myths and ordinary myths. Ancient myths are about the origins of the earth, first human beings, clans and villages as well as the relationship between the present and future worlds. Culture myths are about the customs and ceremonies of ogres, cannibals and human beings. Ordinary myths are about common human beings who lack any supernatural power and these stories tell about the origins of witchcraft, flying snakes, love potions and so on. Kluckhohn (1942) points out the difficulty in differentiating among myths, legends and fairy tales. But it is important to see the patterns of similarity between myths and rituals because this comparison observes the social behaviour of a culture. Levi Strauss (1958) used structuralism in the study and analysis of myths. In his 1958 article, he observes that myths are a kind of communication like verbal and non-verbal communications dominant in primitive and modern societies. As language is embedded in myths and a clear connection is established between the two.

Review of Literature

Ben-Amos (1976) defined folklore as 'artistic communication in small groups' pointing towards the aesthetic quality of folklore performances. The understanding of folklores is indeed crucial in making the coming generation aware of their traditions historically, culturally and behaviourally. The book *Folklore: An Encyclopaedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music and Art* traces the genesis and influence of folklores in varied aspects of human life (Jackson, 1915). The dynamism and creativity of incorporative acculturation reiterate the fact that "cultures borrowing traits often reinterpret them in form and/or meaning so that a culture may be always changing and yet always retain its integrity" (Jackson, 1915, p. 12). Jackson (1915) documents the various forms of folklore and beliefs of Hindus like Nature powers, heroic godlings, worship of deities, ancestors and saints, tree and serpent worship, totemism, fetishism, animal worship and witchcraft.

There are various theories related to the origin of folklore and its varied aspects like National Folklore Theory, Anthropological Theory, Psychoanalytic

Theory & Structural Theory, Semantic Theory, Formalist Theory, Moral & Social Theories, Expression Theory, Theory of Cognitive Emotion, Aesthetic Literary Theory, Comparative Theory of Folklore, Theory of Polygenesis and Theory of Diffusionism (Islam, 1985, p. 35-74). The diffusionist historical geographical method was developed in the 19th century by Finnish scholars. Scholars used to study all recorded versions of a ballad or a riddle to determine the location of the earliest characteristics. Psychoanalytic Theory with the influential inputs of Freud (1963), Jung (1998), and Rank (1914) considered folklore as a powerful media of a person's or collective human unconscious mind. For them, folklore got a 'socially sanctioned' fantasy, which allowed freedom for some actions that society did not otherwise approve of. Malinowski (1926) analyzed story telling traditions among aboriginals to demonstrate the societal functions of folklore in moulding the identity and the course of action for the sustenance and development of indigenous social cultures, practices and traditions.

In the Indian context, there are many names to recall on a patriotic level also as folklores represent folk culture. Folklores express cultural community spirit and become a depiction for political symbols. Kamenetsky (1984) opines that "folklore is the merger of social and political spheres." Great personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, and Mahatma Gandhi contributed in reviving Indian folklore thereby awakening and empowering the ideas of nationalism. Known as the 'true native folk revolutionist', Brisa Munda, a freedom fighter from the Munda tribe of the Chhotanagpur Plateau in the 19th century gave an important message to the tribals of Bihar and Jharkhand to take pride in their own roots of culture and religion. Freedom fighters like Rani Lakshmi Bai are symbols of courage, patriotism, respect for women, perseverance, kindness and strong resistance to colonial rule.

Rationale of the study

Folklores need to be explored so that overlooked knowledge can be imbibed internally and wholesomely. Folklores manifest acculturation, human values and cooperation with stories, rituals, metaphoric language and customs. Jung (1998) proposed that the primordial images (archetypes) exist in the collective unconsciousness of the social community. Folklores have been revisited in the Indian web series with the modern setting and landscape. OTT implies any streaming service that delivers content over the internet. There are various OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Voot and so on that are getting popular among

youngsters. The charisma of web series has made the audience reconstruct their understanding of life against the background of folklores, mythology and rural ambience. The present paper explores web series like *Asur* (Voot), *Leila* (Netflix), *Bandish Bandits* (Amazon Prime Video), *Ajaan: Rural Myths* (Netflix), and *Panchayat* (Amazon Prime Video) to investigate the use of music, mythology and rural landscape and perspectives.

Research questions

The present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the prevalent forms of folklores portrayed in the Indian Web Series?
2. What are the different patterns and themes depicted in the Indian Web Series?
3. How does the representation of folklores influence and (de)reconstruct viewers' individual ideology?

Research methodology

This study aims to apply Dundes' Folklorist Method, and Social Representation Theory to investigate the way folklores are represented in Indian web series. Folklorists study folklores to know tradition and emphasize the study of 'text within context', past and present. Dundes laments folklorists' literary inclination to collect texts as a goal of research and he was against anthropological studies that did not acknowledge textual proof or were restricted to only one culture. Dundes advocated contextual and textual (or performance) information along with recording texts and 'field-collected texts' to know the circumstances and communication of a component in folklore but he acknowledged the inclusion of historical and literary sources as a justifiable part of the identification stage. Dundes' collective essays on folklores have been taken as the theoretical framework of this study to suggest that Indian web series have an underpinning element of quest of discovery for subtle nuances of life and attitude to living. In this study, researchers has tried to extend the analysis of folklores represented in Indian web series through a Folklorist Method that identifies and interprets folklores to discover buried or disguised meaning that is not evident from a cursory view. Dundes' essays on folklores support meanings through the interpretation and are buried under the text with always a reference to the context, which can be viewed as questions connecting cognitive patterning but are an important source for expressive culture. Dundes describes two steps in the study of folklore in literature and in culture: objective and empirical leading to identification; subjective and speculative contributing to interpretation. In the web

series, various kinds of folklore, including stories, rhymes, tongue twisters, folk songs, music are represented, which can be identified and interpreted as a mirror of Indian culture.

Social Representation Theory, elucidated by Moscovici (1984), emphasised the mode in which people and groups elaborate, change and convey their social reality. A culture is a 'system of opinions, knowledge and beliefs' shared among, collectively produced and socially used by people in an organised way. Moscovici (1984) opines that representations are determined by the social groups who build the society and are not the products of society as a whole. The communication process is significant which elucidates the origin and transmission of social representations. There is a social mentality shaped by societal structures and also by the inclusion of individuals in such structures that several social representations of the same object are present within a particular society (Rateau *et. al.*, 2012). The researcher has applied this theory in the present study to suggest that the representation of folklores in Indian web series contributes to the development of our identification and interpretation of life values which is much needed in this contemporary technological era.

Analysis and findings

Behind the love story of Indian classical singer Radhe Mohan and a pop star Tamanna Chaudhary, the web series, *Bandish Bandits*, is about the need to revive interest in classical music and the essentialness of classical and popular music. The grandfather of the male protagonist, Sangeet Samrat Rathod, is the crusty custodian of the 'gharana' and teacher of Hindustani classical music who is full of discipline and dedication. Tamanna is a creator and performer of studio music who is all into fusion music. She wants Radhe to do a collaboration with her singing, which he agrees to rescue his family from financial catastrophe. And here the audience witnesses the clash between the old and the new, modern and traditional music that is handed over as a heritage (dharohar) to a pupil by his teacher with the cherishing of 'ragas' in *baithaks* and *sabhas* whereas modern music is market driven where the voice of the singers is amplified and modified over a million gadgets. Radhe Mohan's grandfather gives him diktats as a guru not to be violated at any cost whereas Tamanna is driven by corporate demands. She has an estranged mother and an overwhelming father and is pinning a hope to sing with a global pop icon called Queen Eli. The series also focuses on an old pupil of Sangeet Samrat Rathod who has learnt the ways to modify his talent of classical music according to the contemporary

needs of the music and paces rapid ‘taans.’ There is a reference to the dark secrets of the guru having a deep impact on the family like his daughter-in-law to underscore the fact that the old is not always the best or right. He did not let her continue with her talent of music after her marriage to his son, which made her repress her desires and inclination towards music but later she is the one who trains and guides Radhe Mohan (Gupta, 2022).

Asur: Welcome to Your Dark Side is based on the investigation of a series of cruel murders whose serial killer’s attitude and perspective are highly influenced by Hindu mythology. This series is about bloodshed and murder, psychological thrills, and Indian mythology. The serial killer is an exceptional person from a Brahman family in Varansai who can learn the complete Bhagavad Gita by heart just by turning pages, but his distressed childhood compels him to choose his inner evil. This series relies on the questioning spirits implied in folklores and myth, in the combat of the good and the evil, where every murder is a question posed by the killer, “are we born evil or do we bring our inner evil out when forced into a tough situation? Does the mind control the body, or is it the other way a round?” (Iyer, 2020). This series definitely teaches the lesson of self choice of listening to the shades of the inner shelf: the evil and the good. This thematic concern of the series certainly related to many Indian myths which are from the tradition of philosophical dualism where evil is associated with the body, while God is related to the spiritual component. Dundes and Bronner (2007) opine, “All folklore, not just myth, consists of forming and attempting to resolve oppositions. The oppositions may concern life/death, good/evil, truth/falsehood, love/hate, innocence/guilt, male/female, man/god, large/small, child/adult, etc.” (Dundes and Bronner, 2007, p.135). The significance of the mythological name *Asur* lies in the nominal and the symbolic aspects of Indian tradition.

Leila portrays a dystopian world based on Prayaag Akbar’s novel of the same name. It is the story of a woman searching for her lost daughter Leila. The female protagonist Shalini (Huma Qureshi) goes into flashbacks to counter the bruises of her present life and these flashbacks suggest the radical transformation of her life circumstances. The portrayal of her present state of circumstances is juxtaposed with flashbacks of her relationship with her husband and daughter and her rich lifestyle provides motivation to her. The society portrayed here is that of a purity camp where women are given punishments for their sins like marrying outside the community, demanding a share in their father’s property or bearing a ‘mishrit’ child.

Anjaan: Rural Myths is based on myths from

folklore, legends, etc from rural India. It underscores the fact that there is a meaningful prospective in discovering and revisiting the mythical tales of India. Each episode of this series is set in different parts of India like Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Assam, Kashmir, Jharkhand, etc. This series is also indicative of the fact that folklores endorse the presence of evil in darkness and light. The intrinsic art of storytelling in folklore is highlighted in this series.

Panchayat (Amazon Prime Video) is a web series highlighting the essence of rural India. The life of a village called *Phulera* is depicted with a tinge of simplicity, humour and a rustic attitude towards living. Abhishek Tripathi agrees to join his job as panchayat secretary in this village reluctantly to prepare for his CAT and aims to get his admission in one of the IIMs. The panchayat pradhan is Manju Devi but the real panchayat pradhan turns out to be her husband Brij Bushan. This web series emerges like a cheerful 'ode to rural India.' The life and circumstances of rural India with their common beliefs and underpinning of myths are so convincingly portrayed in the web series with the essence of Indian villages and small towns which gives a very pertinent message to one and all—the sense of togetherness during the testing times.

Conclusion

From the above in-depth analysis, it can be concluded that web series are seminal means to revisit folklores thereby identifying and interpreting crucial components of India’s tradition and cultural beliefs. The social representations are reinforced to underscore folklores through the use of social media platforms, that is, web series with the recurrent existence of dialogical communication in society and among Indian viewers of web series. The task of representing folklores through web series suggests the necessity for continued and repeated attempts to portray tradition through technological means with apt adaptations and reconstructions of Indian tradition in the modern social milieu. It is an accepted fact that each generation revisits and reinterprets folklore in a new way and with a changed perspective.

The present study was conducted on the select digital web series to explore the human creativity embedded in the folklores. For knowledge and insight in the cultural sphere of Indian society, folklores need to be explored and examined in the changing forms of media. In the Indian context, various heterogeneous traditions, regional cultures and different religious and ethnic groups have multiple folklores with the common humane threads of association which are now revisited in the digital age to offer solutions to the problems and issues of techno savvy world.

Folklores in the present study emerge as redemption for the troubling issues of the rapidly developing world and a representation of the cultural identity of a changing India. The discourse of folklore unravels the complexities of the modern knowledge systems underlying the promotion of human values and ethics thereby addressing the human interest in nostalgia in which mass communication and rapid technological advancement restore cultural distinctiveness. The web series under study emphasized the ways in which the need for such distinctiveness was contented, empowered and awakened.

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Filming Journalism: A Study on Depiction of Journalism in Hindi Cinema

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ABSTRACT

Several Bollywood films feature journalists. Over the years, the character of a journalist has fascinated filmmakers and the news media has been depicted in different ways in the Indian cinema of India. With the practice and profession of journalism, the portrayal of journalism on screen is evolving too. Films play an important role in chronicling and communicating the State of society. It cannot be denied that the representation of journalistic practices in films, to some extent, mirrors the realities of real-life journalism. This study examines Bollywood films that portray journalism and journalists in order to comprehend the social context in which such representations exist. Amid abundance of scholarship on Bollywood cinema studies, there is little research on films reflecting the trends of journalism. This article examines how the news media has been depicted in Bollywood journalism films between 2000 and 2020. It investigates whether these films criticise or celebrate journalism. The study also suggests that designative portrayals of journalism in Hindi films reflect a reciprocal relationship between the news media and society.

Keywords: Cinema studies, Bollywood, Journalism, Film communication, Realism

Introduction: Understanding journalism films

Do journalism films qualify as a genre? According to McNair (2010), journalism is not a genre; rather, journalists feature in a wide range of genre films such as action, adventure, drama, comedy, satire, thriller, biopic, romance and mystery. He explained that there are two kinds of films with journalistic characters. In the first category, the journalist is the protagonist or a primary character. These films are about how journalists and journalism are depicted as important and key story elements in the film's plot. Journalists (as professionals) are frequently presented as significant characters in the second category, even though journalism is simply a secondary aspect of such films. One example is the movie *Lakshya* in which actress Preity Zinta is portrayed as a journalist, but journalism itself is only a secondary element in the plot of the movie.

Scholars such as Ehrlich and Stalzman (2015) have done substantial research in the domain of media portrayals of journalists and have argued in favour of research on popular culture portrayals.

Most audience will never be a part of, or even see, a working newsroom, so 'notions of what a journalist is and does are more likely to come from reading about journalists in novels, short stories,

and comic books, and from seeing them in movies, TV programs, plays, and cartoons.' Popular culture, therefore, is a powerful tool for thinking about what journalism is and should be (Ehrlich & Stalzman, 2015).

Research into depictions of journalists in popular culture is important because the depictions influence public opinion about real-world journalists. Indeed, the influence may be greater than the actual work performed by real-world journalists. Popular culture cultivates legends and myths, and this cultivation is especially true for a field such as journalism because most of the public will never see the inside of an actual newsroom. Popular culture's myths about journalism focus on its normative role. Journalist heroes are the foreign correspondents and investigative reporters who stand for the community and progress. Journalist villains are the lovable rogues, remorseful sinners, and unrepentant scoundrels who break journalistic norms and roles (Painter, 2019).

Painter (2019) further argues that films based on journalism have a basic structure. Firstly, the key elements are the reporter and the story. Journalists portrayed as protagonists in many Bollywood films. They play the role of news reporters, editors of newspapers, camerapersons, cub reporters,

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producers, war reporters, investigative reporters, foreign correspondents, Page 3 journalists, media owners and publishers, crime reporters and broadcast journalists, to mention a few.

Secondly the plot of the film typically develops around the obstacles that a journalist faces in chasing the story and its repercussions. This representation is seen in *Kabul Express* (2006), when the two war correspondents come across many obstacles in chasing an exclusive interview of a Taliban man in Afghanistan (Khan, 2006). Sometimes, the two journalists even came close to death but somehow, they managed to save their lives. In *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (2000), the journalist comes across many obstacles and the owner of his news organisation warns him about the ill consequences he may face (Mirza, 2000).

Thirdly, the tension between work life and personal life is depicted in films, which is clearly highlighted in the film *New Delhi Times* (1987) wherein the editor of the newspaper finds it difficult to strike a balance between his personal and professional life (Sharma, 1986).

Fourthly, an important aspect of journalism films is the conflict between public interest and personal interest.

Fifthly, there are also institutional, public and political pressures on journalists. It is a well-acknowledged fact that a journalist is inevitably constrained by various factors that limits his autonomy in newswriting and reporting.

Lastly, the tussles and tensions that journalists face between subjectivity and objectivity that arises when they try to be neutral in newswriting. Such tensions are depicted in the central plot of films like *New Delhi Times* (1987) and *Main Azaad Hoon* (1989).

Literature review

Media and social responsibility

Renowned media scholar Denis McQuail (2013) in his book 'Journalism and Society' mentions that a significant component of journalism is that, according to the broad idea of 'freedom of the press', journalism in a democratic society has no special responsibilities to the government or others. Journalists are obligated to do no damage and to respect the law, but they cannot be bound by any government to do anything specific good. They have the freedom to pick or ignore several goals and assignments that occur in the course of their job. The news media, in general, resents and resists attempts to assign them any position in the society other than that which they have chosen for themselves. But having said this, there are certain expectations of society from journalism and

media (McQuail, 2013).

No One Killed Jessica (2011) is a powerful film that emphasises the need of 'media advocacy' for social causes (Gupta, 2011). The film depicts the news media's role in speaking truth to power. Meera (Rani Mukherjee), a television reporter, is the crusader who creates a media advocacy campaign to demand 'Justice for Jessica.' It is important to note that the bulk of journalism films convey the message that news organisations are supposed to have a social responsibility. Hence, intersections between journalism and social responsibility are critical.

History of journalism in India suggests that the constitution and practise of the press acknowledge some unwritten social duties and obligations to the society. There are several external influences and potential motivations for social duty that cannot be overlooked (McQuail, 2013).

The notion of social responsibility is well documented in *Peepli Live*'s depiction of a sting reporter (Nawazuddin Siddiqui), and the characters of Ajay and Ria in *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* justify journalism's contribution to the country's social fabric. Similarly, the characters of journalist Noor in the film *Noor* and Madhavi in the film *Page 3* highlight the passion and determination of cub reporters to undertake serious journalism. Yasmin's role in *Satyagraha* indicates the importance of 'constructive journalism' in creating a social movement in national interest. In the light of such portrayals, it is not an exaggeration to argue that the public often views media as a 'last resort' for coping with social crises or matters of overriding public interest.

Early portrayals of journalism in Bollywood cinema

A 1987-film titled *New Delhi Times* (directed by Ramesh Sharma) featured an editor who gets entangled in the nexus of media and politics. The film depicts the professional and personal life of an honest and fearless editor of a newspaper. The role of Vikas Pande as the executive editor of the *New Delhi Times* newspaper is played by Shashi Kapoor. The film deals with issues of editorial freedom, news ethics and the nexus between politics and the media. As he struggles to maintain editorial autonomy, his intentions to act with integrity are questioned.

Gulzar rewrote the screenplay of the film as a book, also called *New Delhi Times* (2012). He mentions in the book that even though the film was produced almost three decades ago, the story remains relevant in the present-day newspaper industry. The film was much ahead of its time. The film also poses some serious questions about the impact of investigative

journalism and editorial writing. A scene in the film shows a photographer of *New Delhi Times* telling the Editor that the problem with editorial writing is that the editors think ‘they will sneeze in their editorials and the government will catch cold’. The next scene shows the Editor pondering and expressing his doubts over the effectiveness and impact of editorial writings. *New Delhi Times* is a realistic representation of the problem of diminishing editorial freedom in print journalism in India.

Main Azaad Hoon is a political drama released in 1989. The film’s protagonist is a common man who engages in active social leadership and gains popularity through the print media. The film’s narrative connects the dots between fake news, state propaganda and media business. While making a critical comment on unethical practices in print media, the film also highlights the role of journalism in spreading awareness on social issues and building a people’s movement.

Theoretical framework and methodology

Cinematic depictions of journalism and journalist focus on the normative roles of the press. Whether it is the social responsibility of the media or the developmental role of the press, such normative functions are well documented in cinema. As mass media have a certain objective effect on society, they also serve a social purpose. The effects of mass media are planned and are valued positively. The effects of mass media include various effects such as the dissemination of news and information, expression of contrasting views and voices and facilitating public opinion/debate on various issues. Entertainment and cultural communication are also important functions as well as responsibilities of mass media.

When we speak of normative theory, we refer to the ideas of rights and responsibilities that underlie these expectations of benefit from the media to individuals and society (McQuail, 2010).

According to the theory of social responsibility, a free press without censorship is crucial for democracies to function and evolve. It professes that the media should act in the ‘public interest’ while exercising significant ‘self-regulation’. The principle of social responsibility imposes much-needed checks and balances on the press. By requiring a commitment to accuracy, objectivity, truth, and fairness, the notion of social responsibility helps elevate the professionalism of the media.

Another theory that is relevant in the domain of film studies is that of ‘realism’. In simple words, realism refers to the portrayal of real world in cinema. To achieve realism, the filmmaker tries to ‘recreate human life’ on screen as objectively as possible. In

other words, the focus remains on ‘constructing real-life situations’ that are real and believable in a given set of social norms and ideas.

Cinema is often referred as an effective medium for construction of social reality. Films cannot be separated from reality, a world that man has created and into which he infuses his own meanings (Valicha, 1980).

Renowned French filmmaker and film theorist André Bazin (2004) argued that the goal of cinema is to represent the real world with the greatest commitment to realism. He championed the cause of realism and advocated the use of long shots, wide shots, eye-level camera angle, deep focus and minimal editing to achieve a realistic effect in his cinema.

The inspiration for realism in Indian films can be traced to the development of neo-realism in Italy. Neo-realism came as a part of social upheaval as a result of Italian fascism. It was a post-war phenomenon. The term neo-realism first appeared in the early 1940s. Italian critics describe this genre of filmmaking that breaks free from glamorous treatment of films and stories that typify the idea of cinema as a beautiful world of escapism. On the contrary, neo-realist cinema reclaims the territory of ‘reality in cinema’. It may be noted that the word ‘reality’ is synonymously used for contemporary socio-economic conditions.

While early Indian cinema was heavily influenced by devotional and mythological themes, filmmakers like Bimal Roy, Satyajit Ray, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Basu Bhattacharya, and Basu Chatterjee made an attempt to infuse the idea of social awareness and reality in cinema. In later years, directors like Shyam Benegal experimented with realism.

Realism is an important aspect in cinema. To study the degree of reality in cinema, one way is to read films and relate them to various social and cultural developments in a society. As cinematic expressions take inspiration from the real life, journalism films help us understand the changes that take place through the passage of time and study the paradigm shifts.

Film analysis in media research

This study utilises the theory of analysis of film to study the portrayal of journalism in films.

Analysing films is becoming increasingly important in a mediatized society. As media of communication, films are embedded in the circumstances under which society communicates and interacts. Movies are a part of discursive and social practices. They reflect the conditions and structures of society and of individual life (Mikos, 2014).

Analysing content and representation in films has a particular status. It is important for understanding the processes governing the meaningful construction of the social world, because subjects position themselves in society that way. It cannot be denied that popular culture content like films creates myths, legends and popular beliefs. Thus, Indian audiences idealise and derive inspiration from cinema.

People have a crucial role to play in films, in the most literal meaning of the word. Actors and characters play an important role in progressing the plot in feature films. Analysing the people, characters and figures in audio-visual media production is important for two reasons. On the one hand, the actors who appear are important for advancing the plot and they function in the dramaturgy as well as in the narrative structure of film texts, because the narrative is often told from the perspective of one of the characters. On the other hand, how audiences perceive the story of the film depends on their own meanings, societal realities and practical contexts.

To understand the cognitive purpose of film analysis, we can assume that analysis generally concerns how the structural function of film texts is significant for reception, then the concrete cognitive purpose can be said to focus on the following five levels (Mikos, 2014):

- Content and representation
- Narration and dramaturgy
- Characters and actors
- Aesthetics and configuration
- Contexts.

Each film can be investigated on these levels. In doing so, the analysis can limit itself to a single level, but it can also consider multiple levels. Each level is related to the others. For example, context influences the level of narration and dramaturgy; the level of aesthetics and configuration influences the level of content and representation; and the level of characters and actors is closely related to the level of narration and dramaturgy. Considering this, it is apt to say that 'textual analysis' method is relevant for the study. Textual analysis is the systematic activity of breaking a film down into its constituent formal element, especially those of narrative and style (Westwell, 2020).

Textual analysis is applied to read and understand various elements of film(s) such as form, style and narratives across a wide range of film genres. It refers to detailed and in-depth analysis of a movie. In the broadest sense, textual analysis claims to being the preferred method of film analysis.

Over the years, textual analysis has become a significant component of research in the academic disciplines of cultural studies and

media studies. Media and cultural products, such as films, videos, social media posts, and commercial, etc are treated as texts by researchers in these fields. While working within specific theoretical framework(s) (for example, the theory of 'social responsibility' and film theory of 'realism'), the researcher will attempt to connect the elements of film texts with concerns and issues in the contemporary society and politics at large. In this context, textual analysis will take a qualitative approach that seeks to highlight the social context of journalism films as cultural objects.

This study will analyse journalism films released in the time span of two decades (2000–2020) on the level of content and representation by addressing a series of open-ended research questions based on the concept of films. These questions are:

1. What kind of media is depicted in the film? (Is it print, electronic, or digital media?)
2. What is the theme that the film's major plot revolves around?
3. What are the challenges and pressures that journalists face in their profession?
4. Are there any new or contemporary journalism trends depicted on screen?
5. Do journalists subscribe to the theory of social responsibility of media?
6. Do journalists distinguish between ethical and unethical journalism practises?
7. Is there a conflict between old and new trends in the profession of journalism?

The films shortlisted for the study are: *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (2000), *Lakshya* (2004), *Page 3* (2005), *Kabul Express* (2006), *Rann* (2010), *Peepli Live* (2010), *No One Killed Jessica* (2011), *Madras Café* (2013), *Satyagraha* (2013) and *Noor* (2017).

Observations

Each film was studied frame by frame and research questions for each film were answered. Notes for each film were compiled by the researcher. Each film was examined in terms of plot, themes, contents, representations, actors, characters, patterns and narratives. Along with hints from previous research and studies by Ehrlich and Stalzman (2015), the study's findings show that journalism films are based on broad themes; such as, ethical concerns in journalism, current and new trends in journalism and media, and social responsibility.

Findings and analysis

Ethical concerns in media: Contestations and consolidations

Most of the films have a narrative that addresses

issues and concerns related to media ethics, which is not surprising considering that much of the existing research on journalism in cinema covers ethical problems onscreen.

Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani (2000) is a satirical take on ethical concerns in the electronic media such as ‘fake news’ and ‘TRP (television rating point) battle’, whereas *Peepli Live* (2010) is a hard-hitting and serious commentary on unethical media practices (Rezvi, 2010).

The first half of *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* focuses on satire before shifting to suspense and drama in the second half. The film starts off light-heartedly and ends with an impressive message that explains that media is the watchdog of democracy. While the first half of the movie exposes media issues such as fake news, TRP mongering and the eroding sanctity of news, the second half of the film offers solutions by depicting how media can bring about change by pursuing the idea of the ‘power of press’ in favour of the common man. The plot of the movie revolves around the lives of two professional television journalists Ajay Bakshi (Shahrukh Khan) and Ria Banerjee (Juhi Chawla) who work in rival news channels and later reconcile for the good cause of ‘speaking truth to power’.

The concern of disinformation raises an important issue. Can journalists effectively prevent the spread of disinformation? The relevance of the term ‘journalistic independence’ is key to comprehending the response to this issue. On the basis of the movie *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (2000), it seems like reporters have some say in how they cover and convey the news. Journalistic independence, however, must take a second place to the practical concerns of media business. Put another way, if fake news becomes profitable, journalists are not welcome to get in the way.

Further analysis of journalism movies reveals that journalists have been represented as both ethical and unethical. It is effectively portrayed in the movie *Rann* (2010) that an upright and honest journalist like Purab Shastri (Riteish Deshmukh) is constantly challenged by his counterpart Amrish Kakkar (Mohnish Behl), whose cinematic portrayal is that of an unethical journalist who also misuses his press credentials to serve as a media agent for politicians (Varma, 2010). For every uncompromising editor and TV news station owner Vijay Harshvardhan Malik (Amitabh Bachchan) in *Rann* (2010), filmmaker Aziz Mirza has depicted the contrasting character of a TV news channel owner named Chinoy (Dalip Tahlil) in *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (2000). He (Chinoy) is represented as a corrupt media owner who not only suppresses reporter Ajay Bakshi’s investigative report but also threatens to sack him. In the film *Noor*

(2017), Purab Kohli plays an unscrupulous conman journalist who plagiarises the news report created by Noor, who is an amateur reporter hoping for her big break in journalism.

Another finding of the study is that female journalists are stereotyped. It is worth noting that the entertainment journalist is always a woman, whether it is a Page 3 journalist Madhvi Sharma (Konkona Sen Sharma) in the film *Page 3* (2005) or the character of Noor in the film *Noor* (2017). The marginalisation of female journalists occurs when females are not represented as independent agents. Both female journalists fight to break the mould and leave Page 3 journalism. Noor and Madhvi both are passionate to do meaningful journalism. Their respective editors, however, do not believe in their abilities to do the mainstream journalism.

The films *Kabul Express* (2006) and *Lakshya* (2004), which focus on war reporting, are the study’s two exceptions. Dramas involving war correspondents provide a first-hand point of view on the subject of war—the correspondents serve not as combatants but as observers, translating viewed combat into the language and visuals of news (McNair, 2010). For instance, the film *Kabul Express* depicts the challenges and risks of war reporting from the perspective of a war correspondent by portraying the professional work of two Indian war correspondents stationed in Kabul during the Taliban crisis. Similarly, *Lakshya* fictionalises the journalism of well-known Indian journalist Barkha Dutt (in the movie, Romila Dutta) during the Kargil War. A recurring theme in films about war correspondents is the appropriate role of journalists in conflict situations: Should they be objective and detached, or subjective and committed (Painter, 2019).

In *Lakshya* (2004) and *Madras Café* (2013), there is a cursory representation of war reporting, but journalism (as a profession and practice) is just an incidental feature in both films as the plot develops in a different direction (Sircar, 2013).

The cinematic representation of contemporary trends in journalism

It is imperative to note that all films reflect on contemporary developments in journalism. To begin in the chronological order, *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (2000) is a parody film that serves as a critical reflection on the aftermath of broadcast media privatisation in India. The film shows that broadcast journalists would go to any extent to capture the story on camera, even if it means putting lives at risk. Overall analysis of the film reveals that it is a farce about the commercialisation of television news and its sinister ties to the establishment.

Nalin Mehta in his book '*India on Television*' mentions that "Real change was to follow, as India went from having just one television channel in 1992 to more than 300 by 2006. In 1998, India's first private 24-hour news channel came into existence, and by 2007, more than 300 satellite channels had started broadcasting news. Of these, 106 channels were in 14 regional languages and 54 of these were 24-hour news channels in 11 languages. At the same time, foreign as well as local cable networks started broadcasting news" (Mehta, 2008).

With the advent of satellite television and global capitalism in India, media businesses registered a robust growth. During the early 21st century, the forces of globalisation were instrumental in creating new business and employment opportunities in the domain of electronic media. As the number of news channels increased, there was a fierce competition among TV news channels to attract maximum audience. By 2005, India's television landscape was slabbered with the 24-hour news syndrome. The competition between rival news channels reached a point where capturing maximum eyeballs and churning out the highest TRP became the sole objective behind running the media business.

Supporting this argument, the film *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* (2000) aptly portrays the image of two owners (Chinoy and Kaka) of rival news channels and two TV reporters (Ajay and Ria) as TRP mongers who also double up as political agents. A similar depiction can be seen in two films *Rann* (2010) and *Peepli Live* (2010), in which journalists and media barons go to extreme length to maximise the TRPs of their TV news channels.

The emergence and popularity of online journalism is brilliantly shown in the film *Noor* (2017), in which journalist Noor (Sonakshi Sinha) publishes her investigative story about the whereabouts of an organ harvesting scam on an internet site using the hashtag #iamnoor. Her news report goes viral on the internet as it receives a massive amount of likes and shares, and she becomes an overnight star on social media. The film's plot emphasises on the relevance of social media and hashtag journalism.

The contemporary trend of commercialisation of the media business in the aftermath of globalisation as well as how the media is selective in amplifying certain issues, is effectively depicted in films such as *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani*, *Peepli Live*, and *Rann*.

Conclusion

Analysing filmic texts on journalism through the prism of 'ethical dimensions', and 'social responsibility of media' offers scope for strengthening the academic discourse surrounding

film studies. Journalistic portrayals in movies reveal that journalism has been filmed in several ways. All films, according to the analysis, portray journalism in the light of two categories: 'ethical journalism' versus 'unethical journalism'.

In Bollywood films, ethical journalists are portrayed as heroes, whereas unethical journalists are portrayed as scoundrels (villains). Journalists who are 'social crusaders' are investigative reporters or war reporters who risk their lives in warzone.

On the big screen, a diverse mix of journalist heroes and scoundrels (villains) have been depicted. In '*Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani*', for every Ajay Bakshi and Ria Banerjee working relentlessly to expose a corrupt politician, there is Amrish Kakkar in '*Rann*' who is a cog in the wheel of political corruption in the country. In '*Rann*', there is Jai Vijay Malik who is involved in the death of a 'news source' for every seasoned and honest journalist like Vijay Harshvardhan.

The study suggests that certain personalities and ideas emerge regularly in popular culture stories about journalism. Whether it is the reporter, the editor, or the photojournalist, there are heroes and villains that represent certain journalistic roles. The representation of these characters may change with time and place, but they remain. The relationships that exist between them reflect bigger hopes and concerns about the news media.

Further, it is revealed that journalism films follow the '*formula film*' style of cinematic narration with a predictable storyline as most films diagnose journalistic issues in the first part of the movie, and then offer solutions in the second half.

Journalism and media are often considered the watchdogs of society, and the on-screen construction of journalistic characters reaffirms that society holds journalism in high regard as the 'fourth pillar of democracy'. Journalism films cultivate popular perceptions, tales, and myths about journalism, and hence have cultural relevance as text(s).

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A Study of the Opinion of Media Persons on ‘Mann Ki Baat’

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ABSTRACT

Mann Ki Baat, the monthly radio programme by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, has, since its inception in October 2014, emerged as the most popular radio programme in India. It is such an engaging and effective tool of behavioural change that the social or national issues discussed in the programme become a mass movement within a few days. The heart-to-heart dialogue by the head of the government makes the people feel that they are partners in the democratic process of the country. Although different studies have been conducted by different institutions on various aspects of this programme, the present study is significant because it attempts to measure and quantify the opinions of media persons in four categories—working journalists, media faculty, media researchers and media students. The responses in this national level study have been recorded from all parts of the country including metropolitan cities, tier one and tier two cities, and even some villages. A total of 890 responses from 116 institutions were analysed in the study conducted through Google Forms between April 12 and 25, 2023. The findings show that 76% of the respondents feel that *Mann Ki Baat* has initiated a trend where they are more aware of the things in other parts of India and have started appreciating them. Whereas 75% opine that *Mann Ki Baat* has emerged as a platform where they are introduced with the trendsetters who are working selflessly to ensure a meaningful change in the lives of people.

Keywords: *Mann Ki Baat, Centenary of Mann Ki Baat, Narendra Modi, 100 episodes of Mann Ki Baat, Media persons*

Introduction

It is an undisputed fact that the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, is an exceptionally gifted communicator, who develops an instant heart-to-heart connect with his audience. His radio programme, *Mann Ki Baat*, has also proved his matchless communication skills. Started on October 3, 2014, *Mann Ki Baat*, is today a matchless radio programme across the world in terms of popularity. Global communication scholars have termed it as a turning point in the field of mass communication. This programme has not only revitalised the significance of radio communication in the internet era, but also proved to be an effective tool to engage people in the development process. The prime objective of this programme is to strengthen the direct connection between the PM and the citizens. This two-way communication has significantly strengthened people's beliefs in democracy and governance. The programme is translated and broadcast in 52 languages and dialects, including 11 foreign languages, catering to the remotest regions in the country, while also reaching the Indian diaspora. It is India's first virtually enriched

radio programme that is simultaneously broadcast by TV channels—34 channels of Doordarshan network and over 100 private satellite TV channels broadcast it across the length and breadth of the country.

Mann Ki Baat is also a classic example of behavioural change communication, which initiated scores of mass movements in India to address different issues confronting India, including cleanliness, saving girl child, environment protection, etc. The programme has also introduced the countrymen to the success stories of various unsung social transformers and their work in remote areas of the country. Another significant aspect of *Mann Ki Baat* is that it has united the whole country on a single platform with a constructive agenda and specific goals to achieve. That is why the programme has emerged as a hot topic for researchers, who are now studying different aspects of it individually as well as collectively. The Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur says that *Mann Ki Baat* shows that there are two Modis—the strong, powerful, purposeful PM Modi; and the soft, kind, gentle paterfamilias Modi” (Thakur, 2023).

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Review of literature

Garg (2019) did a sentiment analysis of the written episodes of *Mann Ki Baat* in 2019. When the researcher did sentiment analysis of written episodes. Then the tweets of public opinions and views regarding the topics discussed in various episodes of this show on Twitter were analysed. The results of the study show that the programme has positively impacted the people of India. Garhwal (2023) analysed the effectiveness of *Mann Ki Baat* and confirmed that the programme has leveraged the re-invigorated interest in radio. Deora (2017) studied *Mann Ki Baat* on the parameters of development communication and found that it is a popular form of development communication, which involves both the diffusion of innovations and the participatory model. The study argues that if the mainstream broadcast media also takes up some responsibility and starts holding debates, discussions on those issues and problems that don't cater to a large section of their viewership audience, then this might just help in sensitising the urban audience about the harsh ground realities that exist in the country. On completion of 100 episodes of the programme in April 2023, many other studies were also conducted to understand its reach and impact. One such study was conducted by IIM Rohtak with 10,003 sample size—60% males and 40% females (PIB, 2023). The study finds that the programme reached 100 crore people who were aware and listened to the programme at least once. The study finds that 23 crore people tune in to the programme regularly, while another 41 crores constitute an occasional audience that has the scope of being converted into a regular audience. The IIM study states that a majority of listeners have become aware of the government's work, and 73% are optimistic and feel the country is going to progress. 58% of the listeners have responded saying their living conditions have improved while a similar number (59%) have reported increased trust in government (PIB, 2023). The Indian Institute of Management, Ranchi, has also announced a plan to study all episodes of *Mann Ki Baat* (Angad, 2023). Abhishek Mishra, CEO BlueKraft Digital Foundation, and former Director, MyGov, summarises five broad imprints of Prime Minister Modi through *Mann ki Baat*. In his opinion, the programme became the broadcaster of collective goodness. The Prime Minister, through the topics he picked up—like water conservation or promoting the beauty of the myriad foods and cultures of our nation—established that the essence of a healthy society is how healthy its day-to-day conversations are. A constant running theme across episodes has been to reignite the spirit of volunteerism. The PM

demonstrated over these 99 episodes that it is possible for a social conversation to take place for decades without ever indulging in a 'limited topic' that had an appeal limited only to a particular region, creed, religion or group. The PM has established that the quality of the message is supreme and not the method through which it is disseminated (Mishra, 2023).

The centenary of *Mann Ki Baat*, has witnessed many studies that have been conducted across the country in different languages to gauge the public's mood about the programme. But no study was conducted to understand the opinion of media persons on this programme. It is the only study conducted on such a large sample size at the national level particularly engaging four categories of media persons—working journalists, media faculty, media researchers and media students.

Research methodology

The study is based on primary data gathered through a national level survey conducted through Google Forms between April 12 and 25, 2023. A total of 907 responses from 116 institutions were received. After deleting repetition and incomplete responses, a total of 890 responses were considered for analysis. The responses were received from across the country, even from some villages. The responses were received not only from the media persons working with leading media houses but also from the media faculty, media researchers and media students from leading central universities, state universities and private institutions. All the respondents are associated with the media in four categories—Media Persons, Media Faculty, Media Researchers and Media students. Secondary data were also gathered from different studies already done on the topic under research.

Demographic information of the respondents

The first eight questions in the survey gathered demographic information about the respondents. It included name, email, gender, age, education, profession, name of the media house, and place of residence. However, the names and email ids have not been disclosed in the report. A total of 18 questions were directly related to the main theme. Out of 890 respondents, a total of 326 (37%) were females and 564 (63%) males. Educationally, 94 (11%) were doctorates, 468 (53%) were Postgraduates, 315 (35%) were Undergraduates and 13 (1%) have other educational levels including intermediates. Age wise, 583 (66%) are in the age group of 18-25 years, 127 (14%) are 26-35 years, 84 (9%) are 36-45 years, 65 (7%) are 46-55 years and 31 (4%) are in the age group of 56 years and above. Professionally, 193

(22%) are media persons, 85 (9%) are media faculty, 55 (6%) are Media Researchers and 557 (63%) are media students.

The responses have been recorded from all parts of the country. Just to name a few places: New Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida, Faridabad, Dhenkanal, Kendrapara, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Srinagar, Jammu, Dhanbad, Chhindwara, Nainital, Kamptee (Maharashtra), Bengaluru, Raipur, Dharamshala, Motihari, Patna, Wardha, Jaipur, Agartala, Varanasi, Kannur, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Dehradun, Gurugram, Amaravati, Bhilai, Jajpur (Odisha), Nanded, Bellary, Balasore (Odisha), Ayodhya, Chandigarh, Pune, Kanpur, Lucknow, Umapur village under Surajpur district of Chhattisgarh, Prayagraj, Jaunpur, Basti, Pratapgarh, Para Hathigo village under Arsath (Ayodhya), Balrampur, Badaun, Kolkata, Barabanki, Mahendragarh, Amethi, Muzaffarpur, Jalgaon, Mumbai, Sitapur, Jamshedpur, Badaun Rayagada (Odisha), Trivandrum, Ranchi, Calicut, Rohtak, Idukki, Indore, Bijnor, Bhadohi, Rewa, Amarkantak, Mhow, Jhunjhunu, Khargone, Siliguri, Jodhpur, Dewas, Meerut, Guwahati, Bokaro, Katihar, Durg, Bilaspur, Ujjain, Puri, Kota, Jhajjar, Port Blair, Haridwar, Muradnagar, Hapur, Hardoi, Itanagar, Shimla, Gwalior, Unnao, Sonapat, Ballia, Gorakhpur, Hajipur, Rajnandgaon, Bhavnagar, Siwan, Vadodara, Jagdalpur, Jamui (Bihar), Azamgarh, Bulandshahar, Moradabad, Kurukshetra, Puttur, Ballabgarh, Sohna (Haryana), Palwal, Rewari, Gonda, Katihar, Nagpur, Azamgarh, Kurukshetra, Jodhpur, Azamgarh, Dausa, Chennai, Roorkee, Fatehpur, Damoh, Raebareli, Samastipur, Giridih, Harda, Hamirpur, Deoghar, etc.

The major media houses/institutions, which were represented in the survey, are: Jawaharlal Nehru University, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jamia Millia Islamia, Kumaun University, WION, Pix Story, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, APZ Media Venture, Mahatma Gandhi Central University (Motihari), Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi University (Wardha), Vivekananda Global University, Sharda University, Tripura University, MERI, MANUU, MCU (Bhopal), Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism and Mass Communication (Raipur), Central University of Jammu, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Bhimrao Ambedkar College (University of Delhi), SIMC (Pune), Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies, Ram Manohar Lohia Awadh University (Ayodhya), George College, George Group of Colleges, Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, Yugwarta, Punjab Kesari, Rising Ayodhya, Jaighosh, The Indian Express, India TV, Republic TV, Times Now Navbharat, ETV Bharat, Republic Bharat,

Jagran News Media, TECNIA Institute of Advanced Studies, Amity University, JIMS, AajTak, Hindustan Times, MRIIRS (Faridabad), India Today Group, Zee News, The Print, Newz Era, Inshorts, Dainik Jagran, Organiser, Subah Savere, Rural Connect, Devi Ahilya University (Indore), Bharti Vishwavidyalaya (Durg), Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government Arts and Commerce College (Indore), IMS Ghaziabad, Lokmat Media, Discovery, Dainik Bhaskar, Disney Star India, ANI, PricewaterhouseCoopers, TIAS, The Pioneer, newschuski.com, Galgotias University, VMOU (Kota), Press Trust of India, IIHS Ghaziabad, EY, BRAUSS, BBA University Lucknow, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Rajiv Gandhi University, Jagran Institute of Management and Mass Communication, Rajasthan Patrika, Daily Insider, Swadesh (Bhopal), Dainik Utkal Mail, Inqalabi Nazar, Open Media, Dainik Aagaz India, Khabar Hulchal News, Hindusthan Samachar, Doon University Dehradun, Dr. C.V. Raman University (Bilaspur), Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University Lucknow, MMM Hindi Patrakarita Sansthan, Gurugram University, Gulshan Kumar Film and Television Institute of India, Bengaluru City University, TV18 Network, Naidunia, Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj University Kanpur, NIFT, UNIVarta, Central University of Rajasthan, etc.

Data analysis and interpretation

The first question in the study was to understand whether the respondents listen to *Mann Ki Baat* or not? In response, out of 890 respondents, 760 (85%) said 'yes', while 130 (15%) said 'no' (Figure 01). This shows a good number of people associated with the media listen to *Mann Ki Baat* or keep a close watch on the programme.

The second question in the study tried to find out from those who responded 'yes' in the previous question, how frequently they listen to the radio programme? This question was optional. That is why out of 760 respondents, who previously shared that they listen to the radio programme, 182 (24%) listen

Do you listen to the Radio Programme 'Mann Ki Baat'?

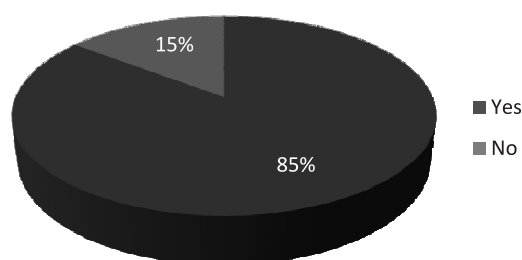


Figure 01

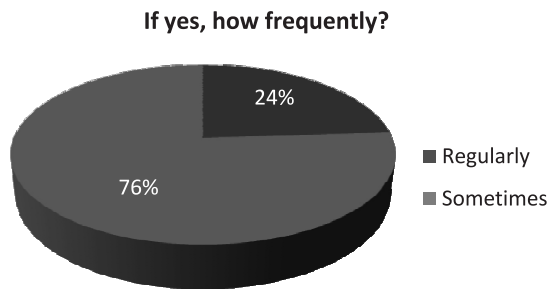


Figure 02

to it regularly and 578 (76%) listen to it sometimes (Figure 02). Since the majority of the respondents listen to the programme sometimes, it may be because the daily routine of the media persons or media faculty, students and researchers is generally decided by their newsroom or institutions and not by them individually.

The third question was to know why do they listen to *Mann Ki Baat* or what motivates them to listen to the programme? This question too was optional and was posed to only the respondents who said 'yes' that they listen to *Mann Ki Baat*. Out of those 760 respondents who previously shared that they listen to the *Mann ki Baat* regularly or sometimes, 104 (14%) listen to it for the information about grassroots innovators, 261 (34%) listen to it for knowing about the country, 171 (23%) listen to it for PM's style of communication and 224 (29%) listen to it for the PM's vision about the country, as a motivation. This shows that the majority of respondents feel that *Mann Ki Baat* is a good platform to know about the country (Figure 03).

The fourth question was in the form of a statement and the opinion of the respondents was sought on a 5-point Likert Scale. The statement was: "*Mann Ki Baat* has initiated a trend where we are now more aware of the things in other parts of India and we have started appreciating them". Out of total 890 respondents, 398 (45%) agreed, 279 (31%) strongly agreed, 176 (20%) couldn't say, 19 (2%) disagreed and 18 (2%) strongly disagreed. It shows that 76%

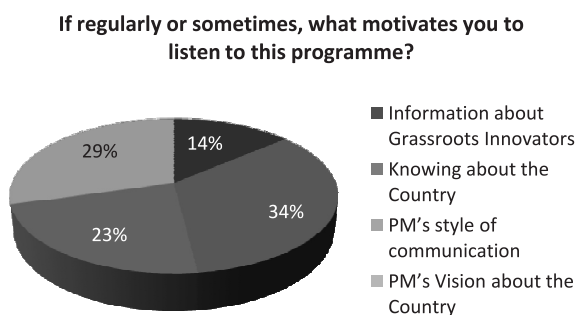


Figure 03

'Mann Ki Baat' has initiated a trend where we are now more aware of the things in other parts of India and we have started appreciating them.

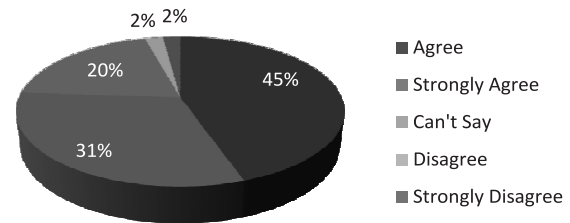


Figure 04

respondents agree that *Mann Ki Baat* has initiated a trend where they are now more aware of the things in other parts of India and have started appreciating them. Only four per cent disagreed (Figure 04).

The fifth question was to know the medium, which is preferred by the respondents to listen to *Mann Ki Baat*. This question was answered by all the participants. Out of total 890 respondents, 109 (12%) prefer radio, 135 (15%) prefer television, 108 (12%) prefer both radio and television, 324 (37%) prefer internet-based platforms and 214 (24%) prefer all of the above to listen to the programme. It shows that the majority, that is, 37% prefer internet-based platforms (Figure 05).

Which medium do you prefer to listen to the programme?

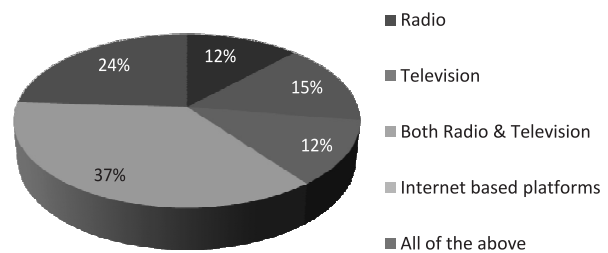


Figure 05

The sixth question was to understand what the respondents do if they miss any episode of *Mann Ki Baat*. This question was optional. Out of the total 890 respondents, 94 (11%) opted for the AIR website, 48 (5%) opted for MyGov website, 18 (2%) opted for Narendra Modi website, 28 (3%) opted for PM India website, 558 (63%) opted for YouTube and 144 (16%) didn't respond to the choice of alternative medium on missing an episode of *Mann ki Baat*. The majority of respondents (63%) say that they prefer YouTube to listen to the programme if they miss any episode (Figure 06).

The seventh question was again in the form of a statement. The statement was: "*Mann Ki Baat* has emerged as a platform where the people are introduced with the trendsetters who are working selflessly for ensuring a meaningful change in the

If you miss any episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', how do you listen to that?

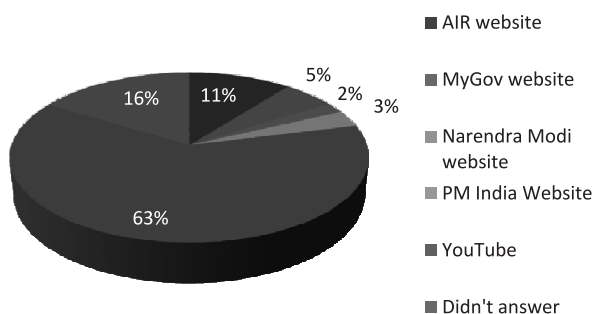


Figure 06

'Mann Ki Baat' has emerged as a platform where the people are introduced with the trendsetters who are working selflessly for ensuring a meaningful change in the lives of people.

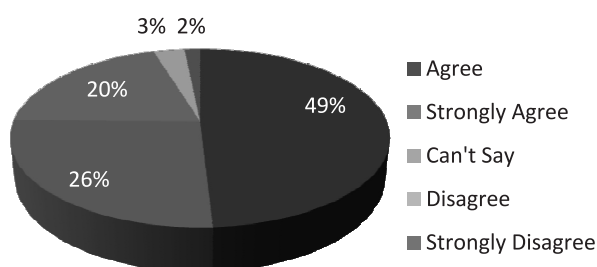


Figure 07

lives of people". Out of a total of 890 respondents, 437 (49%) agreed, 233 (26%) strongly agreed, 178 (20%) couldn't say, 28 (3%) disagreed and 14 (2%) strongly disagreed that *Mann ki Baat* has emerged as a platform where the people are introduced with the trendsetters, who are working selflessly for ensuring a meaningful change in the lives of people. It means the majority (75%) of respondents agree to the statement (Figure 07).

The eighth question was to know the issues of national importance, which are discussed in the *Mann Ki Baat* and how they have influenced individual lives. Out of the total of 890 respondents, 73 (8%) opined defence, 51 (6%) foreign policy, 352 (40%) opined education, 79 (9%) opined health, 235 (26%)

Which among the following issues of national importance discussed in 'Mann Ki Baat' by PM influenced your life?

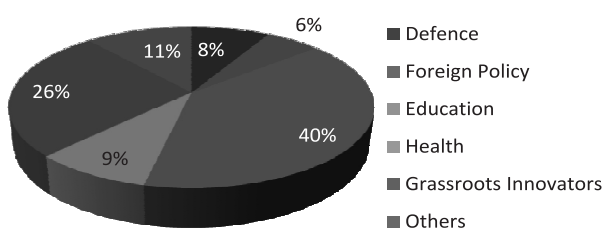


Figure 08

grassroots innovators and 100 (11%) other issues discussed in *Mann Ki Baat* by the PM influenced their lives. It means the majority (40%) of respondents feel that discussion about education influenced them the most (Figure 08).

However, in a supplementary question, some other topics were also mentioned by the respondents. Some of them included discussions about the people. These think positive about society, health and hygiene, heritage, foreign policy, employment, agriculture and social enterprises, progress of the country, direct communication by the PM with the nation, Jan Dhan Yojana, 1965 war, amazing work that Indian scientists are doing, Swachh Bharat, economic policy, youth, information, language, literature, etc.

In the tenth question, the respondents were asked to recall any particular story/incident discussed by the PM in *Mann Ki Baat* that motivated them in their everyday lives. They mentioned many issues, which included promoting sportsmanship, board examinations, local toys from Odisha, Vocal for Local, story of Himachal Pradesh's health centre spreading awareness about muscular dystrophy, Telangana's example of making electricity through vegetable mandi's waste, organ donation, story of tiger, water conservation, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, farming in Dal Lake, Kabaad Se Jugaad Initiative, story of musician Joydeep Mukharjee, Chhattisgarh women SHG, praise of CRPF women battalion, which participated in the Republic Day Parade, labourers who built Kartavya Path, e-waste recycling, story of Kartik from Haryana, tea gardener of Assam, tribal upliftment, work by health workers during Covid pandemic, innovative ideas for farmers, recognising artists from rural areas, solar light by Noorjahan from Kanpur, pond man story, millets and Lahari Bai, use of Bamboo products, strawberry farmer from Khargon, Sai ki Rasoi, a lamp for the martyrs, Har Ghar Tiranga, Sange Sherpa from Thegu village of Sikkim who is engaged in environment conservation, Divyang Pooran Rathor from Uttarakhand, incident of a village in Unnao, where a youth runs library to educate people of his village, a mason who builds toilets free of cost, bird house project, one district-one product, an SHG making sleepers, etc.

The eleventh question was asked to understand whether the respondents discuss the issues addressed in *Mann Ki Baat* with their peers, family members or community. Out of 890 respondents, 261 (29%) discuss it with their peers, 284 (32%) discuss it with their family, 102 (12%) discuss it within their community, 128 (14%) discuss it on their social media and 115 (13%) with others. It means the majority of people discuss the issues raised in *Mann Ki Baat* with their family members (Figure 09).

Do you discuss the issues addressed in 'Mann Ki Baat' with your peers, family members or community after listening? If yes, with whom?

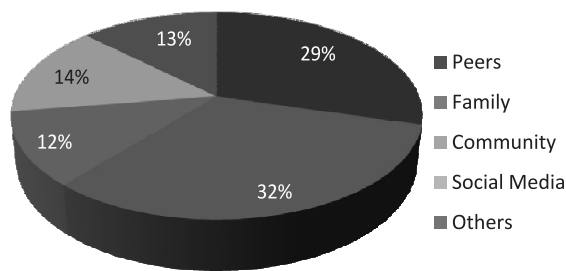


Figure 09

The twelfth question was to know whether the respondents shared the radio clips of *Mann ki Baat* on their social media platforms? Out of 890 respondents, 285 (32%) said yes that they share the radio clips and 605 (68%) do not share the radio clips of *Mann ki Baat* on their social media platforms. One of the prime reasons for the majority of people not sharing the radio clips could be lack of audio editing software competency amongst masses (Figure 10).

Do you share the Radio clips of 'Mann Ki Baat' on your social media platforms?

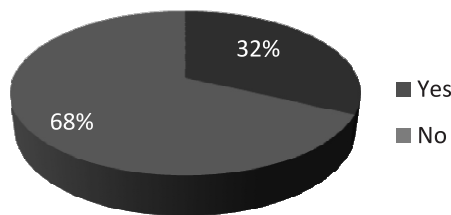


Figure 10

The thirteenth question was to know how many clips of *Mann Ki Baat* have been shared in the last eight years? This question was optional. It was responded by 463 respondents only. Out of them, 303 (66%) said less than 5 clips, 85 (18%) said 5 to 10 clips and 75 (16%) said more than 10 clips (Figure 11).

If yes, how many have you shared in the last eight years?

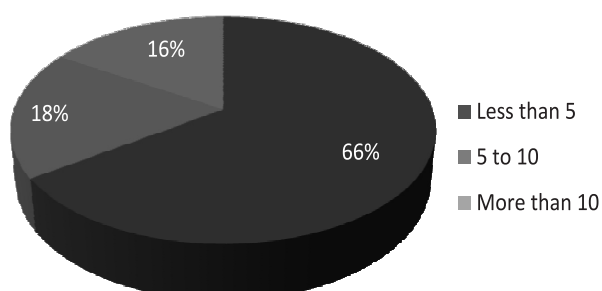


Figure 11

A subjective question was posed to understand whether any particular advice given by the PM in *Mann Ki Baat* is followed by the respondents in their professional lives. In response, the respondents mentioned: Promoting local talent, check the sources of news, focus on grassroots innovators, organ donation, cleanliness, India is mother of democracy, covering the stories that make a positive impact on society, started concentrating more on fact check before posting news, coverage of Indian historical temples, vocal for local, to have optimistic approach in coverage of news, Har Ghar Tiranga, Rashtrahit Sarvopari, be your own trendsetter, save girl child, gender equality, think innovatively, sanitation and cleanliness, use of Khadi, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, advise to put tricolour in social media profile, save water, calling the disabled people 'divyang' and not 'viklang', spending time with family, 'Do Gaj Doori, Mask Hai Jaroori', time management, etc.

The next question was to know whether *Mann ki Baat* created an impact on people's lives? Out of the total 890 respondents, 665 (75%) believe that *Mann ki Baat* has created an impact in people's lives, while 225 (25%) feel it has not (Figure 12).

Has 'Mann Ki Baat', in your opinion, created an impact in people's lives?

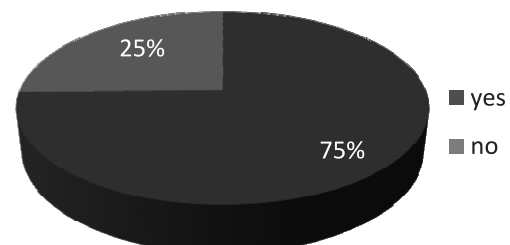


Figure 12

The next question was to know whether the respondents felt like participants in the democratic process by listening to PM Modi on different issues. Out of a total of 890 respondents, 672 (76%) said yes, 217 (24%) said no and 1 (less than 1%) didn't answer. It means the majority (76%) of respondents

Do you feel you are a participant in democratic process by listening to PM Modi on different issues?

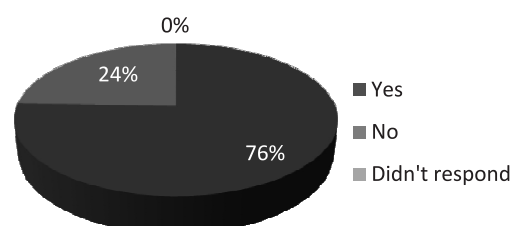


Figure 13

feel like participants in the democratic process by listening to *Mann Ki Baat* (Figure 13).

The next question was optional and subjective wherein the respondents were asked for any suggestions that they felt the PM should discuss in the forthcoming episodes of *Mann Ki Baat*. The major suggestions given by the respondents included economic equality, climate change, family values, quality of research in social sciences, river rejuvenation, adoption of green habits, issues of beggars and rag pickers, road cleaning competition, violent and obscene content on OTT platforms, rainwater harvesting, issues of housewives, problems faced by students in choosing career after 12th standard, availability of doctors in rural areas, mental health, contribution of private guards in national security, different price for same medicine, urge to husbands and in-laws to support working mothers, noise pollution, Aadhar-based digital voting, issues of unauthorised colonies in urban areas, dowry, etc.

The last question was also optional, which offered the respondents an opportunity to share any additional information they wished to share about *Mann Ki Baat*. The responses included: Improve the feedback system, great initiative and policy framing in public perception, it is highly motivational for students, an important platform which motivates to think out of the box, follow up actions on what the PM advises, programme should be done weekly, it can be more interactive, it could be shared on Spotify, Hubhopper in podcast format so that more people can listen, impetus to the idea of participatory democracy, it should be two way communication, it curbs the communication gap between people and the government, etc.

Conclusion

The study finds that the majority of media professionals, including working journalists, media faculty, media researchers and media students, listen to *Mann Ki Baat* and the topics discussed in the programme have influenced their psyche. Most of the respondents (66%) listen to the programme. 'Knowing about the Country' and 'PM's Vision about the Country' have emerged as the two prominent reasons, which encourage the audience to listen to the programme. A total of 76% respondents say that the PM's radio programme has initiated a trend where they are more aware of the motivating happenings in other parts of the country. A total of 63% of media professionals prefer YouTube over other mediums, in case they miss an episode of the programme. A total of 75% of respondents accept that the PM's programme introduces people with the trendsetters working for

the betterment of the people in remote areas. A total of 76% of respondents are of the opinion that they feel that they are participants in the democratic process by listening to *Mann Ki Baat*. Most respondents share their thoughts with either their family members (32%) or their peers (29%) regarding the topics discussed in the radio programme. Direct conversation with the countrymen is another aspect of the programme. The PM motivates the people to think out of the box and instill in them a positive spirit. Different aspects of *Mann Ki Baat* including ideas, issues, success stories, evolution of collective goals for the country have been discussed in different studies. Some more studies are required on various aspects of the programme associated with communication. Content analysis of every programme, its reach among the audiences of different Indian and foreign languages, coverage of the programme in the media, basic premise of the criticism of the programme by some individuals or organisations are some other aspects for future studies.

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Portrayal of Gender in Sunday Magazine Supplements: A Content Analysis of Select Indian Dailies

AMAN DUBEY¹ & SARVESH DUTT TRIPATHI²

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the nature of gender portrayal in the Sunday Magazine supplements, The Hindu magazine and the Rasrang magazine. The study was conducted through content analysis of magazine supplements published over 31 days, i.e. the month of May 2022. The unit of analysis is text and photographs from the Sunday magazines. A code sheet has been used as an instrument for data collection. Both qualitative and quantitative content analyses have been done. The study assesses the three objectives: coverage of gender-related content, the tone of representation of gender, and the portrayal of gender in Hindi vs English daily. Textual and visual analysis units have been conducted using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The findings show that there is a considerable difference in the representation of gender in these supplements. While women are underestimated and misrepresented in media content, men are primarily shown as positive, heroic and strong. These findings suggest that the representation of gender in magazine supplements reinforces traditional gender roles and perpetuates gender inequality. The paper concludes with recommendations for media organisations to consider the impact of their gender portrayals and strive for greater gender equality in their content.

Keywords: Gender portrayal, Women representation, Sunday magazine, The Hindu, Dainik Bhaskar, Newspaper

Introduction

The term 'media' encompasses various means of communication used to reach individuals within a society. Media plays an integral role in modern culture, from textbooks, songs, stories and visual art to technology-mediated mass media like television, radio, newspapers, films, and the internet. With the power to educate, influence opinions, and introduce new ideas, media is a central institution for knowledge transfer and socialisation. It provides valuable information, contributes to primary prevention against femicide, and pushes citizens to work towards a society without gender discrimination (Pröll & Magin, 2022).

Gender is an integral part of any society; without giving them equal opportunities, a society cannot evolve in the right direction. It is crucial to study the portrayal of gender in the media. Portrayal means 'the way of showing' or 'the way of representing' (Iosr *et al.*, 2015; Pröll & Magin, 2022).

Studies have found that on the one hand the tone of representation of women is generally negative; on the other hand, men's representation is positive. We

should stop such stereotypical ways of portraying men and women in media content. Media hits the general public's minds, affecting humankind's perception of how an ideal woman or man should be ("Portrayal of Gender in Select Nigerian Mainstream Newspapers," 2022). Research on media content has found that men are featured more in political, economic, educational, health and sports news than women in entertainment and domestic news ("Portrayal of Gender in Select Nigerian Mainstream Newspapers," 2022). Furthermore, men were featured more in photographs, articles and advertisements than women; they were usually soldiers, athletes or high-rank businessmen, whereas the portrayal of women was found if the subjects of the articles were models or winners of beauty contests.

Even the reporters writing the articles are more likely to be men than women. Men are also more likely to be cited as sources than women (Matud *et al.*, 2011).

It is prevalent in newspapers that the placement of photographs of males is on the upper part of the page (the most valuable location). Indeed, men are given

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more space in newspaper content and advertisements, but women appear in fewer advertisements. However, newspapers devote more space to women-based advertisements. Female-based advertisements occupy more columns and sometimes entire page. Women occupy fewer columns within the newspaper even though there are differences in the placement of the articles on the page (Matud *et al.*, 2011). It means that women are used as stimuli to draw readers' attention to the newspaper.

Review of literature

Media objectified and commodified gender in its content. Bare bodies of women and men have become a part of media content. For instance, women continue to be shown in advertising to add glamour value even though men have become a part of it. In most Hindi films, a heroine is in trouble due to her clothes and is abused by goons whom a Hero always saves (Iosr *et al.*, 2015b).

Media portrayed women as marginalised across a wide range of contexts. Media content has provocation through their facial expressions or body positions in the photographs, their roles as nonprofessionals, homemakers, wives, or parents, and sexual gatekeepers. The increased representation of women in media is valuable, but there is a need to avoid stereotypical depictions (Collins, 2011). The harmful effect of this is not only limited to women but also can harm viewers.

In today's modern societies, newspapers still publish insensitive news articles incorporating biased dictions and excessive attributes (Yusuf, 2022).

Media and social transformation

Media can play a vital role in bringing social transformation and change by promoting and disseminating information. The media content reflect the values present in society. Every society has its prevailing attitude towards women that the media can positively transform. The way media portray women is an exaggerated form of real-life circumstances and assumptions; it has very little to do with the actual life circumstances, as there is a difference between reel and real life. Media significantly impacts the behaviour and lifestyle of today's youth, as they imitate and identify themselves with the characters they see in the content of printed or electronic media programmes (Iosr *et al.*, 2015).

It is important to have regulations on media content, as studies show that gender representation in media content is stereotypical. In some ways, it supports traditional patriarchal notions of gender. It has become crucial that the media take responsibility for acting as a powerful instrument to bring more

favourable social change. Media institutions can exchange the traditional passive image imprinted on the mind of society for a more positive image of a woman. A positive attitude towards media can change the status of women from passive onlookers and recipients to positive doers and achievers (Iosr *et al.*, 2015).

In sports events like the Tokyo Olympics Games 2020, feminism and women's sports coverage during the mega event have been maintained but not increased. These findings tell us what the media considers essential and what it does not. There is a need for the media to focus more on such events as they encourages young girls in society and can push gender equality campaigns (Ahmed, 2022).

Due to its potential as a mass medium, the media is considered an agent of social change. It is so powerful that it can mesmerise us all. If we talk about the participation of women in the media, they act as fashion models. They are in advertisements in sexually appealing dresses just for the sake of alluring customers. It is also a fact that there are advertisements in which the product has nothing to do with women and is used to tempt and attract clients and sponsors (Huda & Ali, 2015).

Newspapers should act unbiased and neutral as they can easily alter the stereotypical image of women. Women's participation and contribution are necessary to create a positive image of women nationally and internationally. We should provide more platforms and opportunities so that women can prove themselves and alter the stereotypical image portrayed by the media (Huda & Ali, 2015).

Research objectives

This research has three objectives:

1. To find out the coverage of gender-related content.
2. To evaluate the tone of representation of gender.
3. To observe the portrayal of gender in Hindi vs English daily.

Significance of the study

One of the challenges in gender studies is the representation of men and women in the media content. The image of women in media is often shown as weak, helpless, homemakers, dependent, and women's stories are given less space in the print media. The researcher found sensationalisation of women in media content from the literature review.

Studies have shown that news consumption through print media is still very high in this digital age. According to the 65th Annual Report of the RNI, 22,58,56,735 crore copies of newspapers were published daily in India in 2020–2021. Of this, Hindi dailies remain on top by publishing 18,93,96,236

crore copies daily. Furthermore, the copies of English dailies were 3,49,27,239 crores.

Many scholars have examined print media representations of gender, but studies from Indian scholars examining the content of the Sunday Magazine Supplements are limited. That is why examining gender portrayal in the print media is essential. It will give a fresh perspective on how print media depicts gender. This study can provide insight into newer debates on gender issues.

Research methodology

Content analysis is used in this study to find men's and women's portrayals in news articles. Bryman states, "Content analysis is an analysis of documents and texts that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and a systematic and reliable manner" (Clark *et al.*, 2021). Researchers widely use this method to analyse print media coverage, whether politics, entertainment, sports, or any other beat. It also ensures a certain amount of transparency as the collected data can be re-analysed by another researcher (Clark *et al.*, 2021; Wimmer & Dominick, 2010). The unit of analysis is the text and photographs of the Sunday Magazine Supplements.

The study's time frame is one month, from 1st May to 31st May 2022. The researcher selected five Sunday editions from May and studied each article and photograph published in the Sunday Magazine Supplements. In the mapping exercise, the researcher treated each article and photograph as separate unit.

Theoretical framework

In this study, the researcher has taken the framework of "The Theory of Planned Behaviour". This theory intends to explain all behaviours over which people can exert self-control. It is a psychological theory that links beliefs to behaviour. The critical component of this model is behavioural intent (The Theory of Planned Behavior, n.d.). Media influences the behaviour and intentions of audiences. Print media content also influences the readers' behaviour; this theory fits the best in this study.

Sampling

The population of the study is composed of English and Hindi language dailies published in India. The sample for the study is the Sunday Magazine Supplements of the newspapers The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar. The Hindu newspaper was selected because the national weekly edition was the country's highest-circulated English language newspaper, with 11,05,560 copies circulated weekly (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2019). It is also the country's second-largest English-circulated national

daily, with 14,15,792 copies circulated daily (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2019). The Hindu is well known for its comprehensive coverage of national and international political news, emphasising accuracy and balanced coverage. It was started in 1878 as a weekly and became a daily in 1889. The Hindu ranked eighth among the most trusted news sources among all Indian media outlets, as per the Reuters Survey 2021. Among print media with weekly reach, The Hindu newspaper ranked third in the Reuters Survey 2021.

The researcher selected Dainik Bhaskar newspaper because it is the country's highest-circulated Hindi language national daily, with 45,79,051 copies circulated daily (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2019). According to the Indian Readership Survey (2019) Q4 data, Dainik Bhaskar is India's second-most-read Hindi newspaper. It is in the top position in states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana.

Data analysis

For content analysis, an elaborate coding sheet is prepared based on a pilot study conducted on the same newspapers before going into data collection. The idea of the pilot study is to get as many categories of elements as possible. Many new categories are added based on the issues/topics covered in the news items about gender.

The researcher has done data analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 25. The analysed data is presented in the form of charts.

The researcher has evaluated news items on the following parameters:

1. Type of articles that talk about gender.
2. The tone of representation of gender in both articles and photographs.
3. The portrayal of gender in the text and photographs.

Type of articles that talks about gender:

Political: Articles about political affairs like elections, government, and governance.

Social issues: Articles related to a problem that affects many people within a society.

Literature: Articles related to books and writings published on particular subjects.

Travelogue: Articles related to the experiences of the travellers.

Inspirational: Articles related to inspiration, inspirational stories, and poems.

Food: Articles based on food items and cooking.

Education: Articles that paid attention to examination, skill-building, and educational institutions.

Entertainment: Articles that focus on entertainment, like music and films.

Environment: Articles based on animals, plants, and ecosystem.

Art: Articles related to painting and sculpture

Health: Articles related to health

Other: It includes articles that are not a part of the categories mentioned above.

The tone of representation of gender in both articles and photographs:

Positive tone:

When it comes to how genders are depicted in newspapers, a positive tone of representation of gender means showcasing individuals in a way that emphasises their strengths, accomplishments, and positive qualities. This involves treating individuals with respect, empowering them, and avoiding stereotypes by highlighting their expertise, leadership abilities, contributions to society, and achievements.

Negative tone:

When portraying individuals based on gender, a negative tone of representation arises when they are depicted in a derogatory, stereotypical, or demeaning manner. This perpetuates harmful stereotypes, reinforces gender biases, and undermines the value, experiences, and abilities of individuals. Negative representation can take the form of belittlement, objectification, trivialisation, or focusing solely on outward appearances rather than on skills or accomplishments.

The portrayal of gender in the text and photographs:

Newspapers often categorise the portrayal of men and women into different archetypes or roles when it comes to gender representation. The following terms are used to describe these roles.

1. **Active or Strong:** Being active or strong involves depicting both men and women as capable, assertive, and resilient members of society who are active participants. They are highlighted as having the ability to make decisions and take control of their lives, emphasising their strengths, abilities, and skills.
2. **Weak or Suppressed:** Individuals who are portrayed as lacking the ability to make decisions and do not have control over their lives. They are often depicted as vulnerable, dependent, or submissive, relying on others for support or guidance. This portrayal contributes to stereotypes and marginalises individuals.
3. **Leader:** The term pertains to persons who are portrayed as possessing notable leadership qualities and occupying significant positions

of authority or influence. These individuals are depicted as being capable of inspiring and guiding others while exercising sound judgment and making critical decisions.

4. **Hero:** The hero archetype commonly depicts individuals as exceptional, courageous, and able to accomplish extraordinary feats. They are often shown saving others or surpassing significant obstacles.
5. **Sexual:** The sexual archetype depicts individuals in a sexualised manner, regardless of their gender. It typically highlights their physical appearance and attractiveness, emphasising their sexual desirability over other qualities or accomplishments.

None: If the portrayal of gender is in a different way other than the above-mentioned categories.

Findings

The result of the study showed that in May 2022, Sunday magazine supplements had a total of 132 articles published in The Hindu and Danik Bhaskar newspapers. Out of this, The Hindu published 82 articles, and Dainik Bhaskar published 50.

The study focused on the coverage of gender-related content; it was found that men's representation in both newspapers is 29.55%, whereas women's have less representation at 17.42%.

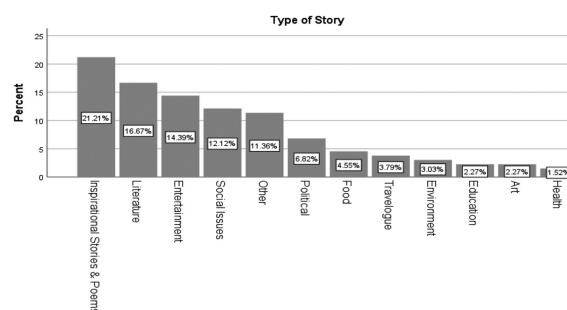


Fig. 1: Coverage of gender related content in The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar Sunday magazine supplements

Regarding the type of story, both newspapers have maximum coverage of inspirational stories and poems, literature, entertainment, and social issues with 21.21%, 16.67%, 14.39%, and 12.12%, respectively. In contrast, articles on health, art, education, and environment got least space with 1.52%, 2.27%, 2.27%, and 3.03%, respectively (Fig. 1).

The study's second objective is to find the tone of representation of gender. Male representation was found to be more positive compared to female (Fig. 2). If we talk about the overall representation of gender, then the negative representation of both genders is significantly less in the text.

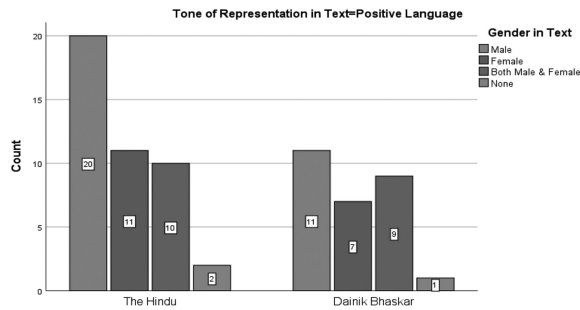


Fig. 2: Tone of representation of gender in the text of The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar Sunday Magazine

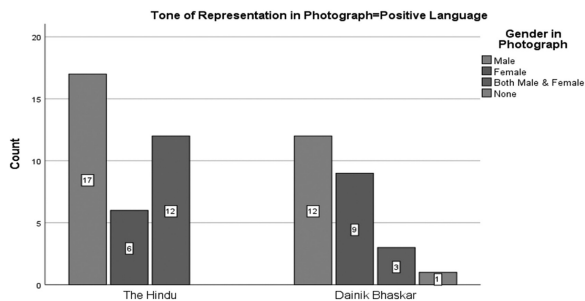


Fig. 3: Tone of representation of gender in the photographs of The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar Sunday magazine supplements

Next comes the tone of representation in the photographs; here again, male representation is more positive than women's (Fig. 3). The Hindu has some photographs where the male is shown in a negative tone, whereas in the case of Dainik Bhaskar, there is no photograph where the male is shown in a negative tone.

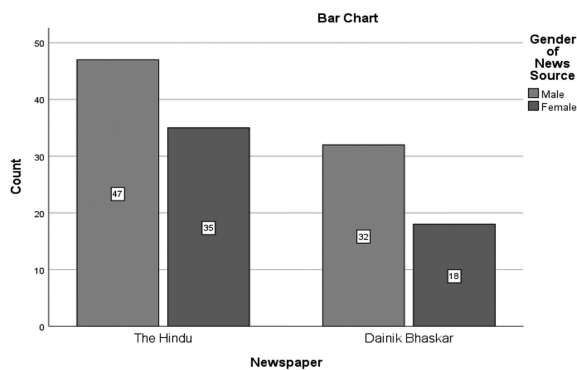


Fig. 4: Author's perspective towards gender in the photographs of The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar Sunday magazine supplements

Now comes the author's perspective on gender. Here we can see male dominance, as most of the articles are written by a male author, and the number of female authors is significantly lower.

Of the 82 articles published in The Hindu, 47 were written by male authors, whereas female authors wrote 35 articles. In Dainik Bhaskar's Sunday magazine supplement, there were 50 articles;

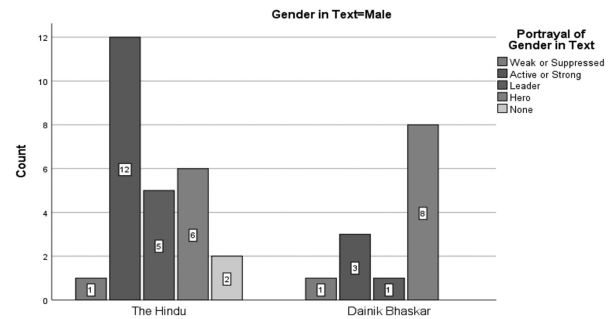


Fig. 5: Portrayal of male in the text of The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar Sunday magazine supplements

out of these, 32 were written by male authors and 18 by female authors (Fig. 4).

This study also focuses on the portrayal of gender in the text; how are they represented? Whether their portrayal is weak or strong, as a leader or as a hero. This is the third objective of the study. It is found that The Hindu newspaper has shown most males as strong, whereas Dainik Bhaskar has shown males as heroes (Fig. 5).

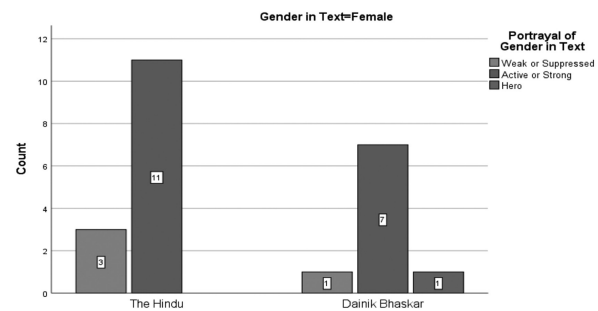


Fig. 6: Portrayal of female in the text of The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar Sunday magazine supplements

It is good to know that both newspapers show females as active and strong. If we talk about the number of articles in The Hindu newspaper, there was only one article where the male was shown as weak or suppressed. There were 12 articles where males were shown as active and strong. Similarly, Dainik Bhaskar had only 1 article where it showed males as weak or suppressed, and there were 8 articles where the male was shown as a hero.

In the case of female, The Hindu has a total of 3 articles where the female is shown as weak, while in the case of Dainik Bhaskar, there was only 1 article where women were portrayed as weak or suppressed. On the aspect of strong or active, The Hindu has 11 articles, whereas Dainik Bhaskar has 7 (Fig. 6).

There were a total of 29 articles which talked about both genders. The Hindu had 15 articles, and Dainik Bhaskar had 14 articles (Fig. 7).

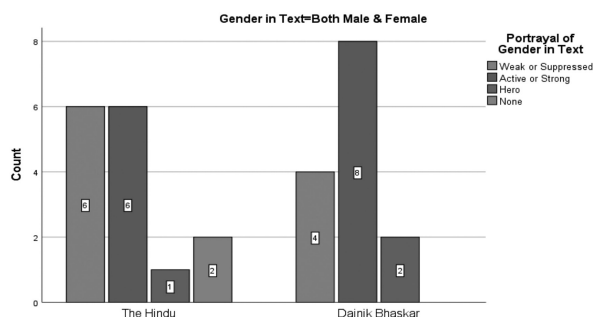


Fig. 7: Portrayal of both gender in the text of The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar Sunday magazine supplements

Conclusion

This study was conducted on the content of Sunday magazine supplements published by The Hindu and Dainik Bhaskar newspapers in the month of May 2022. It was found that the newspapers contained a total of 132 articles. The Hindu published 82 articles, while Dainik Bhaskar published 50. Firstly, the study was conducted to analyse the representation of gender-related content in these articles, and the results revealed that men's representation was higher at 29.55% in both newspapers, while women's representation was only 17.42%.

The study's second objective was to determine the tone of gender representation. Upon analysis, it was found that male representation was portrayed in a more favourable light when compared to female representation. When assessing the overall gender representation, it was noted that the negative portrayal of both genders was significantly less. Moving on to the tone of representation in photographs, it was observed that male representation was once again depicted more positively than women's representation. However, it is worth noting that in some photographs featured in The Hindu, a negative tone was associated with male representation. In contrast, when examining Dainik Bhaskar, there were no photographs seen where the male gender was portrayed in a negative light.

In addition to analysing the content, this study closely examines how gender is depicted in the text. Are male and female characters portrayed as strong leaders or heroes? Or are they shown as weak and suppressed? Interestingly, The Hindu newspaper often shows males in a strong light, while Dainik Bhaskar tends to depict them as heroes. Both newspapers, however, do a great job of portraying women as active and strong. Out of all the articles in The Hindu, only one portrayed a male character as weak or suppressed. Similarly, Dainik Bhaskar only had one article where men were shown in a negative light. For the female characters, The Hindu had three articles where women were portrayed as weak, while

Dainik Bhaskar only had one.

These results suggest that media organisations need to promote gender equality and ensure that both men and women are represented equally in their content. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the representation of gender in the text and underscores the need for more balanced and equitable portrayals of both male and female characters.

Journalists hold a critical responsibility to ensure that both genders are represented fairly and accurately in their articles and photographs. They must acknowledge this issue and take steps towards achieving gender parity in their reporting. Through their efforts, they can effectively contribute towards promoting social justice and equality.

The portrayal of both men and women must be unbiased and positive. Media owners must review their policies and take steps to eliminate any stereotypical depictions of men and women in their publications. This is because the characterisation of their newspaper can significantly impact how people perceive gender roles in society. It is essential to recognise that each gender plays a unique role in society, but this should not perpetuate gender inequality. We can create a more inclusive and just society for all by taking these steps.

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Coverage of India-related Scientific News in Western Media: An Analysis of the News Portals of The New York Times and The Guardian

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ABSTRACT

The backwardness of the developing countries has always been the main focus of the Western media. It was found that the developing countries were mostly depicted with negative frames. Disasters, deaths, diseases, accidents, illiteracy, etc. got more attention in comparison to news related to developmental affairs. India in the last 75 years has made notable advances in the field of science and technology. The aim of this paper is to understand the coverage of Indian advancements in science and technology between 2009 and 2019 in two Western news portals (*nytimes.com* and *theguardian.com*). Content analysis method has been used in the study to analyse the data. The results showed that the scientific news coverage in Western media between 2009 and 2019 had increased in comparison to the past but the coverage was mostly negative and unfavourable in its tone.

Keywords: Research, Innovation, Science, Technology, Western media, News portals

Introduction

The media based in Western countries has been controlling, shaping and dominating the global narrative for a long time (Poornananda, 1998; MacBride Commission, 1980). This is primarily because most of the world's media resources and media-related capital had been concentrated in the West (Thussu, 2000). In the absence of their own powerful media houses with global reach and clout, the portrayal of the Third World nations was highly negative in the Western media. The countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa were projected as spaces with illiteracy, famine, diseases, despotism and poverty. Saxena and Mehra (2021) observed that even in the 21st century, the Western nations were still used to speaking down at people from a pejorative lens when it came to their former colonies and this saviour complex was internalised so deep that many weren't even self-aware of its existence.

In 1947, India started its journey to overcome the colonial legacy of economic underdevelopment, gross poverty, near-total illiteracy, wide prevalence of disease and stark social inequality and injustice (Chandra *et al.*, 2008). In 1951, the literacy levels

in India were very low (only 25% of the males and 7.9% of females were literate). India was considered a poor, backward, and weak Third World nation with not much scientific development (Menon, 2021). Since then, the literacy level in India has seen a quantum jump in the last few decades. As per the 2011 census, literacy rate in India had increased up to 74.04%. The number of schools, colleges and universities had grown multifold in this period (Firstpost.com, 2022)(Table 1).

Table 1: Growth in the number of educational institutions in India

Institutions	1950-51	2022
Colleges	578	42343
Universities	27	1043
Medical Colleges	28	612

Source: *firstpost.com* (11 August, 2022)

In pre-independent India, there were few scientific institutions and not much efforts were made by the colonial rulers to promote science and technology (Rao, 2008). In the post-independence era, several important institutions such as National Physical

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Laboratory (1947), Atomic Energy Commission (1948), IIT Kharagpur (1952), Defence Research and Development Organisation (1958), etc. were set up. University Grants Commission, All India Council of Technical Education, Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, etc. were also established to improve the education and research in India. With each passing decade, the expenditure on science, technology, research and innovation has increased. India's National Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) in science and technology has recently increased from Rs 73,892.79 crore in 2012–13 to Rs 1,04,864 crore in 2016–17 (Das, 2019).

In the last 75 years, India has made tremendous scientific advancements from building satellites, sending probes to the Moon and Mars, establishing nuclear power stations, acquiring nuclear weapons capability to possessing a range of missiles (Berry, 2021).

In the current times, India has made a mark for itself in the field of drugs and pharmaceuticals. It is the biggest exporter of generic and affordable medicines and is seen as the pharmacy of the world. In the Covid-19 pandemic period, it was one of the few countries which led in global vaccine production and distribution. Indigenously produced vaccines Covishield (manufactured by Serum Institute of India) and Covaxin (Bharat Biotech) not only saved lives of Indians but of people located in different parts of the world. Under its *Vaccine Maitri* initiative, India supplied millions of doses to the countries in dire need. It also supplied hydroxychloroquine, paracetamol, personal protective equipment kits and diagnostic kits. In 2016, it became one of the first countries to introduce an indigenously manufactured rotavirus vaccine.

In 2014, India achieved the rare feat of becoming the first Asian nation to send a mission to Mars. It achieved this in its maiden attempt at the lowest cost (₹450 crore only). Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) founded by Dr. Vikram Sarabhai on 15th August, 1969, is today one of the largest space agencies in the world with an annual budget of about \$1.4 billion (Bagla, 2018). It has helped India become self-dependent in the field of satellite development, telecommunications, weather forecasting, defence production, missile programme, etc. Currently, India has a constellation of 44 satellites and it can now on its own launch up to four tons of communication satellites into orbit (Bagla, 2018). Interplanetary space missions to the Moon and Mars have already been achieved and many more of them are waiting in the pipeline.

Another area related to science and technology where India has been making continuous progress is the field of clean and renewable energy. At the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP26), Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that by the year 2070, India will achieve the target of net zero emissions. He said that India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 gigawatt (GW), thus meeting 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030. In 2015, PM Modi along with the then French President Francois Hollande launched the International Solar Alliance to promote solar energy in 121 tropical countries (Krishnakutty, 2021). UJALA LED bulb campaign, adoption of Bharat Stage VI norms, and increase in the use of biofuels and ethanol-blended petrol, among others are some of the steps taken by the Government of India to reduce carbon emissions. Today, India has the fourth largest wind power capacity in the world. In 2021, the National Hydrogen Mission was launched with an aim to make India a global hub for green hydrogen production and export.

In the field of defence production, India is not just becoming self-reliant but also emerging as an exporter now. In January 2022, Philippines approved a \$374.96 million contract with India to supply Brahmos supersonic cruise missile (Peri, 2022). India exported defence equipment worth ₹8,434.84 crore in 2020–21 compared to ₹1,940.64 crore in 2014–15 (Roche, 2021). India has been trying to reduce the import bill and subsequently end its dependence on foreign suppliers. Defence sector has been identified as one of the core areas under the *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* campaign and this is the reason why in the year 2021–22, the Union Defence Ministry dedicated 64% of its modernisation funds (over Rs. 70,000 crore) for purchases from the domestic sector. Military equipment such as Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, transport aircraft C-295, and AK-203 rifles are all being produced in India now (Dutta, 2021).

Chaulia (2019) observes that despite so many positive developments taking place in India, the so-called 'free' Western news industry remains supremely sceptical and cynical of India's viability as one nation and its future progress. He says that the sight of a developing nation like India growing powerful is insufferable to the Western liberal media. When India launched Mangalyaan (its maiden Mission to Mars) in 2014, a mocking cartoon about India was published in *The New York Times* (NYT) (Fig. 1). It showed an Indian farmer wearing a dhoti, holding a bull with a rope, knocking on the doors of the 'Elite Space Club' where members of few



Fig. 1: Cartoon on the launch of *Mangalyaan* mission by India
Source: *The New York Times* (28th September, 2014)

Western nations are sitting comfortably reading the newspaper (Shekhar, 2021). This was an orientalist depiction of India with an inherent message that India was still a Third World nation dependent on agriculture and stuck in its past. It was struggling to solve its basic problems of hunger, malnutrition and poverty. It was not seen as a nation that could compete with the highly-industrialised nations of the West even now.

This study is an attempt to understand how the Western news portals have covered the latest developments made by India in the field of science and technology. Total duration of ten years (2009–2019) has been taken for the study and a content analysis method has been adopted to analyse the data.

Review of literature

Indian newspapers devoted the greatest proportion of newspaper space to nuclear science and technology, followed by defence, space research, and astronomy and, on an average, Indian newspapers devoted far less than 1% of the total printed space to articles and stories related to science and technology (Dutt & Garg, 2000). Kumar (2017) observed the coverage of defence science and technology related news in Indian press and found that the coverage was inadequate, inappropriate and a lot more was needed to be done from both sides, i.e., press and defence establishments to improve the state of affairs. Guha (2009) explored the coverage of science and environmental stories in *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express* and *The Telegraph* during 2003 to 2007 and found that the news related to science and environment did not get any significant space.

Rizvi (2007) studied the representation of science-related news in the newspapers of India and UK between 1987 and 1997 and found that

The Times of India lagged far behind The Times (UK) both in the attention and space devoted to the science news as well as the efforts made to inform its readers. The comparative analysis reflected that the coverage related to science was more enthusiastic in the British newspaper The Times. Edmund (2016) found that the British press did not give much attention to news stories related to science and technology related to Nigeria between 2007 and 2010. Rather, most of the news stories covered were negative in tone and centred on crisis events. MacBride report (1980) also found that the countries of the Global South (Latin America, Asia and Africa) were projected as spaces with illiteracy, famine, diseases, despotism and poverty with not much scientific developments in the media of developed nations.

Poornananda (1998) found that the backwardness of the developing countries was the main focus of the Western media. He observed that the Western media, especially newspapers, presented a distorted picture of the developments taking place in the developing countries where not much coverage was given to developmental or science-and-technology-related issues. The study found that the resulting picture of India formed by the press of the US was of an overpopulated country of backward and ignorant people, living in conditions of poverty, disease and starvation.

Research questions

RQ 1. How the selected Western news portals (*nytimes.com* and *theguardian.com*) have covered the India-related scientific news between 2009 and 2019 ?

RQ 2. What were the key subjects that were reported?

RQ 3. What was the tone of the science-related news stories published about India?

Research methodology

The international digital editions of *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* (TG) over a ten-year period (from June 2009 to May 2019) was the researchers' subject of analysis. The choice of these news websites was based on the following factors: These two news portals have high online readership. The selected newspapers give good coverage to international news. They are newspapers of record. The Guardian (earlier known as The Manchester Guardian) started publishing in 1821 while The New York Times started in 1851. These newspapers continue to shape the opinion of intellectuals and policy makers. They have worldwide influence and readership. A total time period of ten years

has been taken for the study. This time frame starts from June 2009 and goes up to May 2019. Every alternate month has been selected to collect the required data.

News stories have been taken as the unit of analysis. Primary data obtained by the researcher from the archive section of both the selected newspapers have been used for content analysis. Secondary data in the form of books, magazines, newspaper articles and research papers have been used. All the scientific news stories related to India which were published on the news portals of the selected websites during 2009–19 were further subdivided into the following sub-categories: agriculture, environment, energy, health, and research and development. News stories related to all the fields mentioned above were clubbed together under the umbrella theme of ‘scientific news stories related to India’. Tones of the news stories were analysed by observing the headlines and the overall sense that the news story presented. Holsti’s formula was used for measuring the intercoder reliability and the percentage of reliability obtained was 86%.

Looking at the total number of scientific news stories published between 2009 and 2019 (Table 2) it was found that NYT gave highest coverage to news related to the environment (48.8%) followed by health (22.0%) and research and development (20.7%). Least coverage was allotted to agriculture sub-category (3.7%). On the contrary, even TG gave the highest coverage to the environment (62.0%) followed by research and development (14.1%), and health (13.7%). Least coverage was assigned to agriculture sub-category (4.7%). Agriculture was covered more by TG (4.7%) than NYT (3.7%). Environment was given more coverage in TG (62.0%) than in NYT (48.8%). Energy-related news was covered more in TG (5.6%) than in NYT (4.9%). Health sub-category was covered more in NYT (22.0%) than in TG (13.7%). Research and development was covered more in NYT (20.7%) than in TG (14.1%).

Agriculture

In the agriculture sub-category, all the stories published on the news portal of NYT were found

Data analysis and interpretation

Table 2: Comparison of total number of science-related news stories published in NYT and TG between 2009 and 2019.

Sub-category	<i>The New York Times (NYT)</i>		<i>The Guardian (TG)</i>	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	3	3.7	11	4.7
Environment	40	48.8	145	62.0
Energy	4	4.9	13	5.6
Health	18	22.0	32	13.7
R&D	17	20.7	33	14.1
Total	82	100.0	234	100.0

Table 3: Tone of science-related news stories published on *nytimes.com* between 2009 and 2019

Sub-category	Favourable		Unfavourable		Neutral	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	0	0	2	100.0	0	0
Environment	10	17.9	30	66.1	6	16.1
Energy	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0
Health	5	27.8	7	38.9	4	33.3
R&D	10	58.8	1	5.9	3	35.3
TOTAL	27	32.9	42	51.2	13	15.9

to be unfavourable in tone (Table 3). These news stories were mainly on farmer suicides in Vidarbha region of India due to high debt and crop failure.

Environment

In the sub-category of environment, 17.9% news stories were favourable; 66.1% were unfavourable and 16.1% were neutral (Table 3). Favourable stories were on subjects such as conservation of wildlife; initiatives taken by government and non-governmental organisations to deal with plastic pollution; attempts to increase green cover; significant rise in the number of wild tiger population; the growth of wildlife and biodiversity; the innovative concept of plastic roads to solve the menace of plastic pollution in India; international biodiversity conference scheduled at Hyderabad; relief and evacuation works done during the environmental disasters, etc.

Climate change making adverse impact on the lives of ordinary people in India; air conditioners adding to global warming and climate change; the floods caused in Mumbai due to climate change; deaths due to natural disasters such as landslides, cities and villages of India facing drought and water crisis due to depleting water tables; Rhino poaching in Assam; death of elephants due to electrocution and railway accidents, etc. were some of the subjects which reflected an unfavourable image of India as a nation affected badly by climate change, natural disasters and declining wildlife. News stories such as the continuous degradation in the air quality of Indian cities; several diseases caused due to pollution; high levels of air pollution in New Delhi, and the declaration of an emergency alert to deal with it all, etc. presented the image of India as a highly polluted nation.

Energy

In the sub-category of energy, half of the news stories were favourable and the other half were unfavourable in their tone (Table 3). The growing popularity of hydrogen fueled auto rickshaws and their role in reducing air pollution, India's massive investments in clean energy sources such as solar energy, wind energy, etc. were some news stories which presented India as a nation which was serious about the impact of climate change and was quickly taking steps to end its dependence on fossil fuels and switch to renewable forms of energy which were clean and caused lesser emissions.

Health

In the sub-category of health, 27.8% news stories were favourable; 38.9% unfavourable

and 33.3% were neutral in their tone (Table 3). Health campaign to eradicate elephantiasis; zinc supplements to solve the problem of malnutrition and deficiency; country's efforts to eradicate polio and other such deadly diseases; India slowing down its population growth using cash bonuses as incentives, etc. were some of the subjects which gave an idea that India was making swift progress in its public healthcare sector. Diseases like tuberculosis which were still taking the lives of people in large numbers; death of young children due to mystery illness in Bihar; deaths due to Malaria; malnutrition and impoverishment amongst children, etc were some of the unfavourable subjects. Research being conducted on various diseases; predictions of India becoming the most populous country in the world in the near future were some of the subjects that had a neutral tone.

Research and development (R&D)

In the sub-category of research and development, 58.8% news stories were favourable, 5.9% unfavourable and 35.3% stories were neutral in their tone (Table 3). Role of app-based technologies in solving the daily-life problems of ordinary Indians, technology helping to increase online payments, eco-friendly electric vehicles (cars, motorbikes) changing the face of transportation in India, the success story of India's space missions, etc. were some of the news stories which presented the image of India as a nation which was making huge advancements in the field of science and technology. The Aakash project which failed to provide very cheap tablet computers to students in India was the theme of an unfavourable news story. Solving the mystery of sudden deaths of children in Bihar due to a mysterious disease and India's stand against the technology colonization by big Internet giants were the news stories which had a neutral tone.

Agriculture

In agriculture sub-category, 72.7% news stories were favourable, 18.2% unfavourable and 9.1% neutral in their tone (Table 4). Adoption of innovative farming practices like agroforestry, organic farming by farmers, Rajasthan farmers growing beans to gain more profits, grape farmers of Maharashtra using online mediums to sell their products, concept of seed banks gaining ground to protect crop diversity, women playing crucial role in conservation of indigenous crop varieties, etc. were some of the news stories which gave an idea that the agriculture sector in India was witnessing a lot of positive reforms. While the hardships faced

Table 4: Tone of scientific news stories published on *theguardian.com* between 2009 and 2019.

Sub-category	Favourable		Unfavourable		Neutral	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	8	72.7	2	18.2	1	9.1
Environment	40	27.6	85	58.6	20	13.8
Energy	12	92.3	1	7.7	0	0
Health	18	56.3	13	40.6	1	3.1
R&D	24	72.7	3	9.1	6	18.2
TOTAL	102	43.6	104	44.4	28	12.0

by the tea-farming community, etc presented an unfavourable tone.

Environment

In the sub-category of environment, 27.6% news stories were found favourable, 58.6% unfavourable and 13.8% were neutral in their tone (Table 4). India's initiatives to fight climate change, country trying to reduce its carbon footprints to deal with global warming, IT company Infosys cutting down its energy use by one third, waste being turned into employment opportunities, relief operations conducted during Himalayan earthquake, increase in tiger population by one third, attempts to save endangered species such as Asiatic lion, Amur falcon, Gangetic dolphins, Bengal tiger, etc., Delhi government asking citizens not to burst firecrackers on Diwali to avoid air pollution, introduction of car sales tax to fight pollution, imposition of driving restrictions and introduction of clean fuels to combat smog were some of the positive and favourable news stories.

On the contrary, news stories dealing with subjects such as tribal population losing rights over their land and resources due to mining, the ill-effects of rampant coal mining in Andhra Pradesh, adverse impact of climate change on tea growers of Assam, banned drug causing the death of vultures, disappearance of popular fish species Bombay duck; severe earthquake hitting India and Nepal, water crisis in Delhi and other parts of country, severe drought and crop failures due to two consecutive weak monsoons, etc. were some news stories which were unfavourable in their tone.

News stories with subjects such as threats to wildlife and endangered species due to human activities and poaching; disappearance of tigers from mangroves; the death of elephants due to railway accidents and electrocutions; snow leopards

losing their habitat; Asian elephants being kept in cruel conditions; poaching of Rhinos and tigers, etc. reflected that biodiversity was facing a major threat in India due to various factors. Carrington (2013) in The Guardian reported how the snow leopards and wild yaks were becoming the 'fashion victims' and were being killed in large numbers for making costly fashion accessories.

Energy

In the sub-category of energy, 92.3% stories were favourable and 7.7% stories were found unfavourable in their tone (Table 4). India trying to invest more in green energy; price of solar power getting cheaper; plans to harness almost 60% of electricity from non-fossil fuels by 2027; greater emphasis on energy production from solar power; India signing deal with France to set up nuclear power stations; country witnessing excellent growth in the field of green energy were some of the subjects which gave an impression that green energy and clean energy had become the prime focus in India.

Health

In the sub-category of health, 56.3% stories were favourable, 40.6% unfavourable and 3.1% neutral in their tone (Table 4). Initiatives taken by the government to tackle deadly diseases and improve health facilities in the country; rising awareness about organ donation; state offering free breast implants to the needy; country's efforts to reduce infant and maternal mortality rates; government providing cheaper medicines to public; Indian doctors in great demand in Britain were some of the news subjects which depicted that public health was an important concern in India. Increase in the lifestyle diseases such as diabetes in India; the death of sick people due to biting cold in Delhi; etc. presented unfavourable tone.

Table 5: Total number of news stories published on the websites of NYT and TG during 2009 and 2019

Theme	The New York Times (NYT)		The Guardian (TG)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Political	410	36.1	486	29.5
Social	291	25.6	558	33.9
Economic	143	12.6	110	6.7
Cultural	134	11.8	172	10.5
Scientific	82	8.4	234	16.2
Miscellaneous	63	5.5	53	3.2
Total	1123	100.0	1613	100.0

Research and development

In the sub-category of research and development, 72.7% stories were favourable, 9.1% stories were unfavourable and 18.2% stories were neutral in their tone (Table 4). The discovery of a new species of frog (starry dwarf); development of tidal lagoon technology; launching of world's cheapest smartphone; the idea of plastic roads to get rid of plastic pollution; green wood made from rice waste to help build low-cost homes; country joining the exploration efforts in deep sea mining; nation emerging as a leader in nuclear research and development, etc. were the subjects of some of the favourable news stories.

India's achievements in the field of space science was a major subject which was given a lot of coverage in the Western media. The launch of hi-tech telescopes, space observatory, lunar missions, space missions, rockets and mission to Mars (Mangalyaan) by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) were some of such news stories. India's aspirations of sending astronauts into space by 2022; the discovery of water on the surface of the moon were some of the subjects which reflected that India was making fast progress in the field of space science. In fact, India became the first nation to send a satellite into orbit around Mars on its first attempt (Burke, 2014). It was aiming to send astronauts into space by 2022 and, by doing so, it would become the fourth country in the world to conduct a manned space mission after the US, China and Russia (Safi, 2018).

On the contrary, the claims based on pseudoscience and presence of high amounts of antibiotics in India's farmed chickens, among others, were some subjects which gave an unfavourable tone.

A total of 2,736 news stories were analysed in this study. Out of which 1,123 were taken from *nytimes.com* and 1,613 were taken from *theguardian.com*.

After the data analysis it was found that 8.4% of the total news stories (related to India) published on the website of The New York Times (between 2009 and 2019) were related to scientific issues while this number was 16.2% for The Guardian.

Conclusion

The available literature on the subject suggested that not much coverage was given to the issues of science and technology in developing countries by the media based in developed countries. Even if there was minimal coverage then it was mostly negative in its tone. Maximum number of news stories were related to accidents, tragedy, disasters, crime or some crisis. But the data analysed here shows some different trends. The results of this study show a contrasting picture. The findings reveal that the overall coverage given to science and technology-related issues in the Western media has increased significantly compared to the past (Table 5). This coverage was 8.4% of the total news stories in The Guardian whereas it was almost double (16.2%) in The Guardian. Another major finding was the diversity of the media coverage. A variety of scientific subjects related to public health, space science, technological developments, environmental changes, etc. were covered by both the news portals.

Another significant finding was that although the overall coverage given to scientific news stories related to India had increased, but the tone of the news stories was mostly unfavourable. It is surprising that although India in the recent times has been making rapid strides in the field of Information and Technology, software production, missile development, nuclear and space research, artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, 6G, drones, blockchain technology, etc., but 51.2% of the total science-related news stories published on the website of NYT were negative in their

tone (Table 3) and this number was 44.4% for TG (Table 4). The news stories related to environment and climate change drew the most unfavourable coverage on both the news portals.

India aims to become a developed country by 2047. To achieve this goal, on one hand, the country should increase its investments in research, innovation, technological advancements, and institutions of higher learning. On the other hand, it should also be concerned about its global media perception. India which is currently the fifth largest economy in the world can no longer afford to be seen as the land of snake charmers or bullock carts. Rather, it should try to emerge as a nation which is globally known for its scientific capabilities and innovation. It should strive for a positive global media coverage when it comes to its scientific achievements.

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Role of Social Media in Interpersonal Communication during COVID-19 Lockdown

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ABSTRACT

Under the current scenario, maintaining interpersonal communication in face-to-face mode is a daunting task due to various factors like changing lifestyle, nuclear family, time constraint, etc. Covid-19 pandemic has taught us the importance of interpersonal relationship in our lives. In this digital world, we connect with each other using different communications like smartphones, internet, social media platforms, etc. This not only saves time and resources but also helps in maintaining the personal relationships with family and friends. The present study was conducted to analyse the role of social media in augmenting the interpersonal relationship, particularly during Covid-19 lockdown. An online survey was conducted and about 229 respondents participated in the study, out of which 62% and 38% were males and females, respectively. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents used social media for interpersonal communication during the lockdown period. Social media was used for different purposes during the lockdown period like information/news sharing, entertainment, education and discussing social issues. Majority of the respondents perceived that social media can play an important role in managing personal relationships with family and friends and also act as a learning platform.

Keywords: Interpersonal communication, Social media, Covid-19, Lockdown, Communication tools

Introduction

Now-a-days, technology plays a significant role in people's lives. Mobile networks, along with the internet, have created a platform where people can easily interact within a short period of time. Information and communication tools/devices like mobile phones, desktops/laptops, and tablets have become an integral part of our day-to-day activities, particularly during Covid-19 lockdown period. Social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. have enabled people across the world to network, share, interact and exchange news and information.

The emergence of the internet has greatly impacted the process of communication, particularly as far as interpersonal communication is concerned. Computer-assisted communication is now a predominant form of communication. Social media has impacted various facets of modern life and has a profound influence on interpersonal communication.

The present-day lifestyles and lack of time have made the usage of mobiles and other communication aids more useful for social contact (Subramanian, 2017). Social media provides a platform for interaction among users. Social media is of great help to those who find it more liberating and comfortable to interact online in place of conversing face-to-face because of nervousness. Digital transformation has not only influenced businesses and made the world more accessible, but it has also changed the way we communicate (Vidhya & Kalaiselvi, 2020).

Fulk and Ryu (1990) pointed out that no aspect of human life has been influenced immensely by the internet than the manner in which people communicate with one another. Over the years, communication technologies transformed people's way of life. As a result, interpersonal relationships have witnessed a change *via* new technologies like mobile technology, the internet, social media, etc. Relationships that were initially created and maintained through physical

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interaction have at the moment been complemented by social technology which is responsible for creating a new form of interpersonal relationship. For years, researchers have, on a number of occasions, questioned whether the internet could entirely displace face-to-face communication, especially among friends and family members. Nonetheless, little research has been done to prove the same as most of it has concentrated on the benefits of the internet. Only a handful of scholars like Nie and Erbing (2000) have attempted to investigate the link between the usage of the internet and interpersonal communication with friends and family members.

The 21st century is regarded as the era of a significant revolution in information and communication. The internet has transformed the world into a global village, where information is exchanged instantaneously through computers and smartphones. Consequently, it is easy for people of different cultures to interact effectively. In other words, a virtual reality unlimited by space and time is created and all the users' become components of a global and integrated system linked to one another. As a result, it has led to the growing popularity of social networking sites or social media to be precise among youths and teenagers. The social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook have provided youths with the opportunity to share, network, discuss and create information.

However, the increased reliance on social networking sites, especially among teenagers and youth, is lowering their rate of face-to-face communication with others in the community. They are immersed heavily in the digital world and absent from the physical world. Interpersonal communication is regarded as one of the imperative forms of communication that allows people to relay their feelings, information and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages. In addition, since interpersonal communication is a two-way street (sender and receiver), it harnesses persuasive and influential contact since there is an immediate response. Further, it is considered the appropriate means of strengthening human relationships with others and therefore cannot be entirely subdued or replaced by social networking sites (SNSs).

The use of communication tools like smartphones, the internet, social media and video conferencing has risen substantially during the lockdown period. These have been the major sources of information sharing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. At the same time, sudden increase in complaints of irritability without internet connectivity and smartphones; gambling, inability to concentrate; absenteeism in online educational classes or work

due to disturbed sleep cycles, and unavoidable excessive use of smartphones have been reported in the media (Smith *et al.*, 2020). However, the impact of these tools has not been studied extensively. In this paper, an effort has been made to study the role of social media in interpersonal communication among rural students during Covid-19 lockdown.

Review of literature

Social media is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "a website and application enabling users to come up and share content or take part in social networking." Merriam-Webster defines social media as "a type of electronic communication such as websites for the purpose of social networking and micro-blogging, whereby online communities are created with the purpose of sharing information and different content" (Wolak *et al.*, 2002). Another definition of social media is the interaction between people whereby information is created and shared in virtual communities via technology-based applications.

Communication is a means of transmitting information and making oneself understood by another; a glue that holds a society together. Effectively communicating with other people is an important skill to have in order for people to reach an understanding, influence one another, build trust, and learn more about themselves and how other people perceive them (Goutam, 2013). Effective communication plays a crucial role to maintain a good relationship among the family members staying at long distance. Goutam (2013) has investigated numerous forms of communication which can be of great use for the interpersonal relationships among family members when followed effectively.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, interpersonal relations were disturbed, and regular face-to-face communication among friends and family members was disconnected. However, the social media has created an easy way to connect each other. Andaleep (2021) conducted a study on how family members stay connected during the COVID-19 restrictions in Saudi Arabia. He reported that 2.5% of the participants indicated that they use social media platforms to stay connected with their family members. Almost 80% of Saudi families stated that they used Imo to chat with their family members who were away. Others reported that they used Facebook (70%), WhatsApp (60%), Twitter (55%), and others liked Instagram and Telegram.

Kraut *et al.* (1998) suggested that the Internet could change the lives of normal citizens as much as the phone in the early 20th century and TV during the 1960s. Internet is a conventional universal system of communication in the present day scenario

and getting more popularity with the growth of smartphones (Lathiya *et al.*, 2015). In the present day, social media has played a crucial role in everybody's life. WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, YouTube, etc are the major social media platforms, which are mainly used to disseminate information and collect information on different aspects (Kumar *et al.*, 2022). As far as the educational scenario is concerned, the covid-19 pandemic has opened the window for the use of different online platforms such as Zoom, Cisco Webex, Microsoft Team, Google Meet, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, etc for the teaching–learning process (Kumar *et al.*, 2022).

Social media has impacted various facets of modern life and has a profound influence on interpersonal communication. The present-day lifestyles and lack of time have made the usage of mobiles and other communication aids more useful for social contact (Subramanian, 2017).

The common types of social media sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, Google+, Google Talk, Yahoo Chat, Skype, and WhatsApp (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Rainie *et al.* 2012; Smith & Wilson, 2010). Different social media applications have been used by the students to gain academic knowledge. However, popular social media sites, like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are used only to collect information, not necessarily pertaining to academic knowledge. Meanwhile, social media allows students to develop communities to share experiences, discuss conceptions, and create a space for co-learning (Dutta, 2020).

Before the pandemic, approximately 48% of social interactions by older adults were digital to some degree (occurring via phone, email, social media, or video calls) (Macdonald & Hülür, 2020). The usage of social media is more common among the youth since they have quickly embraced the new forms of media (Lenhart *et al.*, 2010). The majority of students use social media for the creation of individual profiles, to update themselves with the activities they perform throughout the day, and to post pictures and forward messages to family and friends. Again, social media is used to develop professional networks that serve as a relationship booster within the corporate world.

In consideration of psychosocial development, scholars have come to the conclusions that taking part in social networking sites brings about the issue of identity formation and the development of social skills (Snowman & McCown, 2013). Digital technology is essentially the use of electronic devices to store, generate or process data; it facilitates communication and virtual interactions on social media platforms using the internet (Vizcaino *et al.*, 2020). COVID-19 pandemic has imposed digital platforms as the

only means for people to maintain socio-emotional connection (Kaneekar & Sharma, 2020). The digital technology is influencing how people use digital devices to maintain or avoid social relations or how much time they spend on virtual social connectedness (Antonucci *et al.*, 2017). Screen time refers to the amount of time spent, and the diverse activities performed online using digital devices (DataReportal, 2020). A survey recorded about 50–70% increase in internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic and of that 50% of the time was spent engaging on social media in 2020 (Beech, 2020).

Interpersonal communication is considered a mutual, continuous process of sending, receiving, and adapting both spoken and unspoken messages between people so as to create and change the perceptions that exist in our minds (Knapp & Daly, 2002; Smith & Wilson, 2010). Communication between people starts only when there is an overlap between two images and is successful to a level where there is an increase in the overlap. Even though the images in our minds are similar, communication is incomplete if the interpretation is different (Griffiths & Kuss, 2017). Internet-based exchange has changed interpersonal communication globally with its immediacy (Wood, 2016). The use of digital communication technologies is, therefore, not entirely foreign to older people, and researchers suggest that these technologies have beneficial effects on the everyday functioning of older adults. Studies suggest that the use of digital communication technologies, as well as the use of social media networks, may potentially mitigate increased loneliness following forced social isolation (Fumagalli *et al.*, 2021).

Research objectives

1. To study the role of social media in interpersonal communication during Covid-19, and
2. To analyse the use of social media platforms for interpersonal communication and educational purposes.

Research methodology

The research design, target population, sampling strategy, data collection instruments, data collection process, and statistical techniques employed are presented below:

Research design

The present study was an *ex-post facto* research study conducted through an online survey method. A descriptive research approach was used in this study keeping in view its ability to provide precise attributes of an individual, situation or event. It was preferred for this research as the study strived to

determine the role of social media in interpersonal communication through Google Forms.

Sample size and sampling methods

In order to get the sample of the study, the researcher has put to use a purposive sampling technique for the selection of respondents. The questionnaire was sent to about 1000 respondents who were salaried government and private employees, business persons/self-employed, doctors/health care providers, agriculture workers, students, housewives/homemakers, retired personnel, NGO officials, etc. A total of 229 respondents participated in this study.

Research tool

A well-structured questionnaire was used as a research instrument which contained close-ended questions. The questionnaire contained 24 questions covering four aspects *viz.* demographic information, use of social media as a learning platform, interaction with people and role of social media on personal relationships. Online questionnaire tool for collecting the data was developed using Google Form.

Data analysis and presentation

The information collected was analysed by the quantitative method and the results were presented in the form of descriptive statistics, *viz.* simple frequency and percentage. The data are depicted in the form of Table and Figures.

Results and discussion

The results obtained from the analysis of the data collected are presented and discussed below:

A) Demographic profile of the respondents

The data related to the age group, gender, locality, family members, marital status, qualification and occupational status of the respondents was collected. The analysis of data regarding demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Maximum (43.2%) respondents were in the age group of 26–35 years whereas the minimum (5.2%) response was received from the age group of 56–65 years (Table 1). It is clear from Table 1 that out of the total 229 respondents, 62% and 38% were male and female respondents, respectively. Analysis of the qualifications of the respondents revealed that maximum (43.7%) respondents were postgraduates, followed by Doctorate (19.7%) and Graduate degree (25.8%) holders and minimum (1.7%) response was received from High School passouts. This clearly shows that those having higher educational qualifications are more exposed to new and advanced information and communication tools. The majority

of the respondents belonged to the urban locality (55.5%) and were married (61.1%). Nearly half of the respondents (46.2%) had a family size of 2–4 members. This clearly shows that now-a-days, the nuclear family concept is flourishing and hence, information and communication technology plays a vital role in keeping in touch with the scattered family and close relatives. Almost equal response was received from the salaried government (26.2%) and private (27.9%) as well as the students (24.5%).

The other fact which cannot be ignored is that India has scaled new heights in higher education and the future appears to be very bright for the making of an advanced knowledge economy.

B) Role of social media in interpersonal communication

The overall distribution of respondents with respect to the use of social media during the

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Sl. No.	Parameters	Response (n=229)
1)	Age	15-25 years
		18.8% (43)
		26-35 years
		43.2% (99)
		36-45 years
2)	Gender	24.5% (56)
		46-55 years
		8.3% (19)
		56-65 years
		5.2% (12)
3)	Locality	Male
		62% (142)
4)	Number of family members	Female
		38% (87)
5)	Marital Status	Rural
		44.5% (102)
6)	Qualification	Urban
		55.5% (127)
		2-4
		46.7% (107)
		5-7
7)	Occupation	8-10
		29.7% (68)
		Above 10
		16.6% (38)
		7.0% (16)
8)	Occupation	Married
		61.1 (140)
		Unmarried/Single
		39.9% (88)
		High school
9)	Qualification	Intermediate
		1.7% (4)
		UG
		6.5% (15)
		PG
10)	Occupation	43.7% (100)
		Ph.D.
		25.8% (59)
		Others
		2.6% (6)
11)	Occupation	Salaried government
		26.2% (60)
		Salaried private
		27.9% (64)
		Business/self-employment
12)	Occupation	1.7% (4)
		Doctor/Health care provider
		24.5% (56)
		Agriculture worker
		3.5% (8)
13)	Occupation	Students
		1.7% (4)
		Housewife/homemaker
		0.4% (1)
		Retired Working for NGOs Others
		7.9% (18)

lockdown period is presented in Figure 1. It is clearly evident that the majority of the respondents (90%) used social media for interpersonal communication during the lockdown period. As the movement was restricted, the only means to connect with family and friends was social media.

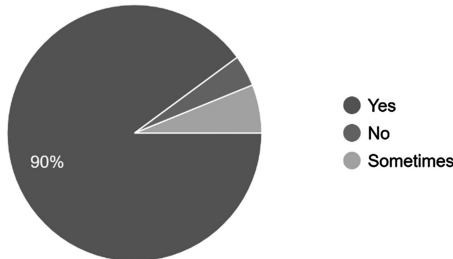


Fig. 1: Use of social media during the lockdown period

Figure 2 clearly reflects that social media was used for different purposes during the lockdown period like information/news sharing (70.3%), entertainment (51.5%) and education (47.6%) and discussing social issues (36.2%). This shows that social media is an important tool not only for entertainment purpose but also for gathering and sharing information/news. One more thing which we can conclude from the response is that social media was used predominantly in the education sector during the Covid-19 lockdown.

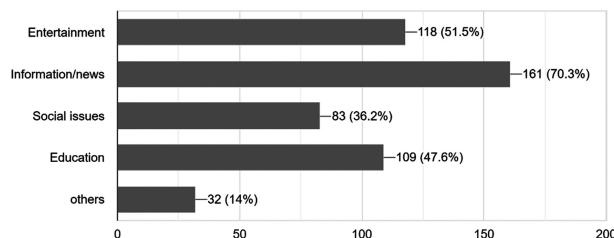


Fig. 2: Use of social media for different purposes

The awareness about different social media sites is present in Figure 3. Majority (79.5%) of the respondents were aware about the different sites. Only about 6.1% respondents were not aware about the social media sites (Fig. 3). This shows that people are using different social media sites for collecting information on the latest issues and also get educated. Awareness levels of the public on various social media sites have gone up significantly during the lockdown period.

The response on the trusted sources of information during lockdown is presented in Figure 4. The respondents have received information from different sources which includes family members, neighbours, government websites, radio, television, and newspapers. It is clear from the Figure 4 that the highest (55%) respondents were in the agreement

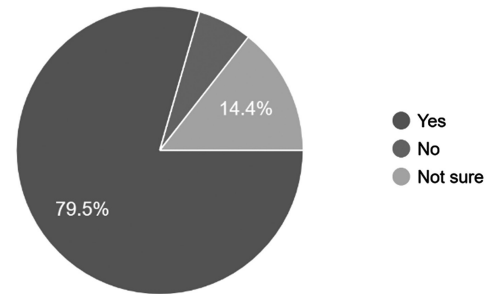


Fig. 3: Awareness on social media sites

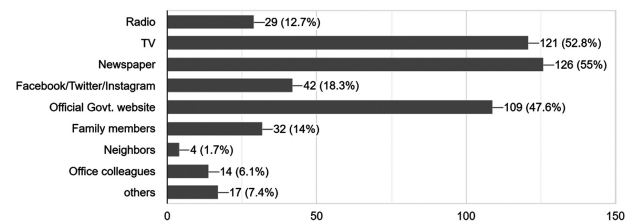


Fig. 4: Trusted source of information

that newspaper is the trusted source of information whereas lowest (4%) stakeholders suggested that neighbours are the trusted source of information.

Figure 5 depicts the different methods of interaction adopted by the respondents for sharing information during lockdown. Majority (81.2%) used cellphones/mobiles for interaction followed by WhatsApp/Messenger (65.9%). Only 10.5% respondents preferred face-to-face mode of interaction. This shows that modern communication tools like social media and mobile phones are the most effective and preferred medium of interaction, collection and dissemination of information during lockdown.

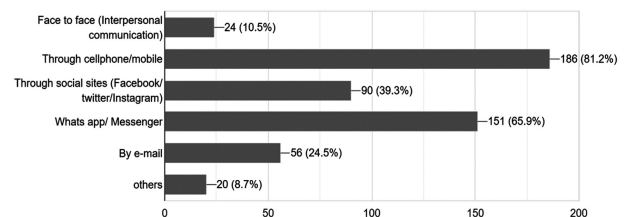


Fig. 5: Methods of interaction during lockdown

The response on the time spent by the respondents on the social media for interpersonal communication during lockdown is presented in Figure 6. It clearly indicates that maximum number of respondents (50%) spent about 1–3 hours on social media whereas only 4% respondents have spent above 6 hours. This shows that the social media can be wisely used for interpersonal communication.

Figure 7 shows the time spent on different social media platforms as a communication tool. Majority (72.5%) of the respondents preferred WhatsApp

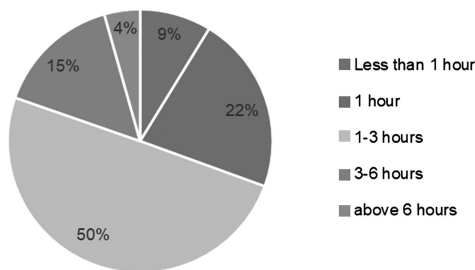


Fig. 6: Time spent on social media during lockdown

followed by YouTube (52%) and Facebook (38.9%) platforms, whereas only 7% respondents used the twitter platform (Fig. 7) for connecting with society. WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms for interaction as they can be used for sharing multimedia information instead of short messaging (Twitter).

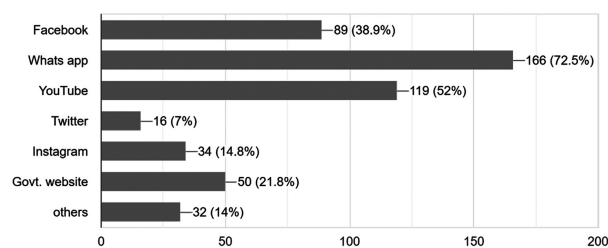


Fig. 7: Time spent on different social media platforms

The response on the impact of social media on personal relationship is presented in Figure 8. Majority of the respondents (50.2%) agreed, and 23.1% respondents strongly agreed that social media has impact on personal relationship. However, 15.3% respondents are not sure about this statement, whereas only 9.6% and 1.8% respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, with the statement (Fig. 8). Hence, it can be concluded that the social media can play an important role in maintaining personal relationships with family and friends.

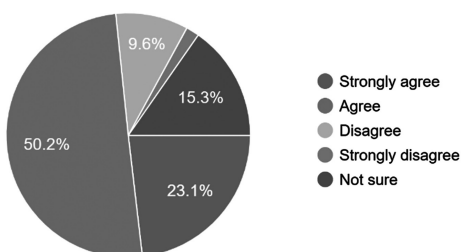


Fig. 8: Impact of social media on personal relationship

Majority of the respondents (73.8%) agreed that social media has significant effect on the social behaviour of friends/family/relatives while 11.8% respondents disagreed with it and 14.4% respondents were not sure about it (Fig. 9).

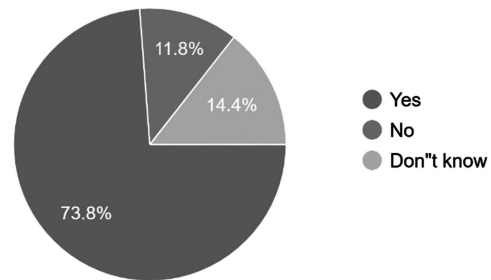


Fig. 9: Effect of social media on social behaviour of friends/family/relatives

Figure 10 depicts the role of social media on learning platform during lockdown. Majority of the respondents (78.2%) perceived that social media acted as a learning platform during lockdown while 10.5% respondents disagreed with the statement and 11.4% respondents were not sure about the role of social media as a learning platform.

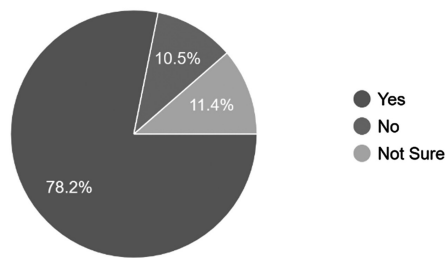


Fig. 10: Role of social media as a learning platform

The response on the use of different social media for educational activities during lockdown is presented in Figure 11. It is clearly evident from Figure 11 that Google was the most preferred medium (59.8%) for undertaking the educational activity followed by the different educational sites (47.2%) and educational apps (40.6%).

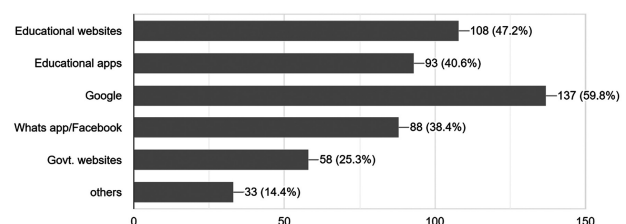


Fig. 11: Use of different social media for educational activity

Conclusion

In this fast-moving world, time is a big constraint in maintaining interpersonal relationships among family and friends. The covid-19 pandemic has taught a lesson about the importance of maintaining interpersonal relationships. During the Covid-19 lockdown, even though stringent restrictions were imposed, information and communication tools like smartphones, laptop/desktop, World Wide Web, and social media platforms have kept us connected

and united. The result of the present study reflects the positive role of social media in maintaining interpersonal relationships, sharing information/news, and creating awareness as well as in educational activities. Social media platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms for interaction as they can be used for sharing multimedia information instead of short messaging like Twitter. It can be concluded that social media can play an important role in managing personal relationships with family and friends and also act as a learning platform.

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Articles having the following sequence will be considered for publication in the Journal:

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- 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

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2. 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.
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4. Tables (clearly labeled with its table number and caption).
5. Figure (clearly labeled with its figure number and caption). Send separate files for all figures and tables.
6. Titles and subtitles should not be merged within the text. They should be typed in a separate line, without indentation. Use lower-case sentences.

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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

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A literature review pertaining to the specific area of research investigation should be selected like the surveys of books, scholarly articles, newspapers, and 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.

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The questions should be focused 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

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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>

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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).

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 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/*infinitescroll=1

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Reference list

Author, A. A. (Date of publication). Title of web page in sentence case. Retrieved from <http://website.com/>

Example:

Hern, A. (2017, April 25). Science and Technology. Retrieved from <https://www.theguard.com>

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