

Present Trends of Newspapers in India (A qualitative study)

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In The evolutions of new media technologies are becoming very popular among new generation. The circulation of newspapers is continuously decreasing in many developed countries. Indian newspapers are also realising the threats from these new media technologies. They are adopting several new trends to survive themselves and face challenges from new Mass Media technologies. The present study is an attempt to identify the new trends and styles which are being adopted by present Hindi newspapers in these perspectives.

Key words:- Indian Newspapers, Media Technology, New Media Trend, Infotainment

The newspaper industry is passing through a transitional phase. The report all over the World indicates that the circulation of newspaper in print form is continuously decreasing. However, the circulation of Indian newspapers is increasing despite economic crisis and other problems. The newspaper industry leads the charge to provide compelling proof that the Internet really is destroying traditional ink-on-paper publishing.¹ On-line newspapers have become a matter of research in several ways. It has affected Print Media.² However, the Indian entertainment and media industry has out-performed the Indian economy and is one of the fastest growing sectors in India. The report of FICCI 2011 gives a very lucrative picture of Indian Entertainment and media industry.³ Newspapers is developing several new trends to survive themselves in the market. Trend is one very wide concept. It covers several dimensions. The content of newspaper is one of them .This is one of the basic element of trend among all kinds of materials.⁴

Print Media are adopting various new trends. For example- the new three-dimensional technology used in the film Avatar has spread to newspapers too. The advantage of the technology is that the images look normal, even when a newspaper is read without 3D glasses. The old technology makes the images look as if they have been printed incorrectly. The adoption of new trend in Mass Media is a continuous process. Any new trend may continue either for a long time or for a short time. In case of newspapers, new trends may be developed in-page designing, news writing, giving headlines, choosing contents, presenting material in various formats, photos, technical application, collecting news, distribution of news and likewise in many other such areas. New trend is required due to competition among newspapers and the challenges they are facing from other new media. Newspapers are trying to present all things in a new way in the newspapers to face all these challenges. Indian newspapers have gone through a tremendous change. Similarly, several new trends have developed in on-line journalism.⁵

Threats to newspapers-

Print Media is one of the oldest traditional media. It has faced several challenges from time to time. New technologies are giving new challenges to this media. Even the publication of newspapers has also become a threat to the environment due to consumption of a large amount of tree for paper. 11% of total tree consumed are used for newspapers.⁶

Print Media have several shortcomings. Electronic Media are more up to date. The speed of Electronic Media is much faster than Print Media. Print Media emphasize on quality and accuracy rather than speed. This media can be issued only to a limited number of people. Electronic Media have no dead line.⁷ It is more interactive and have many other qualities.

Several kinds of new threats have developed to the existence of newspaper industry in recent years. It includes new forms of radio, 24 hour news channel which have been covering all kinds of news stories. Video presentation has become more entertaining and useful. Internet is greatest challenge to Print Media. It has provided a great opportunity to readers to see various types of latest news. Mobile is another very useful technology. There is continuous shifting of reader from Print Media to internet media for reading and viewing news and other things. This trend can be seen more in developed countries than developing countries where the increment in literacy is still increasing the circulation of newspapers.

Global trends in newspapers-

Shashi Sinha, CEO, Lodestar Universal gives several trends in print over the last year. First, there is an emerging audience, with growth in total readership among 12-14 years old. "This could be because news channels are becoming more entertainment focused than news focused. Even today, major share of advertisement go to print .The growth of Hindi newspapers are continuously increasing. Digital media will not replace Print Media but it enhance it.⁸ Antonia Loick says that newspaper publishers in Germany are always on the look out for new products which will help them gain ground in the fight for readers and advertisers . The latest trend is for daily newspapers which are just 24 cm by 42 cm. The handy format and punchy stories aim to attract young readers in particular. Such types of newspapers are mainly for those people who were not habitual of reading newspapers. They are useful for those who just want to inform themselves quickly about important events of the day. This trend is found even in Britain.⁹

Continuous proliferation of social and professional networking sites like 'Face book' and 'LinkedIn' with newspapers and journalists is a new trend of present journalism. Reporters are creating their own profiles, applications and connecting with new audiences. Personalized web is another internet trend. Despite sustained growth in other emerging markets, newspapers continued to suffer from the decline in print advertisement revenues and from dwindling circulation numbers. Throughout 2009, many governments had to aid struggling newspapers, but the debate varies widely with geography. The question of whether to charge for online content was high on the agenda of newspaper publisher across the English-speaking world and elsewhere in 2009.¹⁰

Almost all telecommunication operators in Indonesia are selling updated news through mobile newspapers even without accessing the internet but merely by activating the MMS feature. Thus, many people are now enjoying the feature which helps them to get any news easier. On the other hand, this improvement is in fact may impact the existence of printed newspaper and there can be possibility the printed newspaper to vanish forever.¹¹

But newsrooms everywhere are under extreme economic pressures and have been cutting core staff, making it even more difficult for newspapers to conduct the type of investigative journalism their communities need. It is not surprising if more non-profit (no dividends to shareholders), Internet based (low operating costs) ventures spring up to fill the gaps.¹²

The newspapers are also preparing themselves to face the challenge. Identifying trends for future of newspapers, the World association of newspapers has asked leading newspapers to execute to identify the current trends they believe will have an impact on the future of their business. Some are profound and others are seemingly minor but all have the potential to shape the future of newspapers. It has identified some following trends.¹³

- Infotainment, with games, DVDs, tickets, samples and other non-traditional products are becoming an increasingly important component of the media offering.
- Changing demographics, with more single households, older people and non-traditional families.
- Growing choice, with an infinite number of options making it hard to decide what products and services to buy.
- User-generated content that provides opportunities for self-expression and social interaction.
- Consumer power, where the customer is taking control over brands and information flows on the internet.
- Mobile devices becoming faster, smaller and user-friendly.
- The growing importance of social networks.
- Multi-channel strategies and the diminishing differences between types of news media.

Now it is a fact that most newspapers in the world are declining in circulation especially in saturated markets due to the remarkable competition from the Internet.¹⁴

Indian newspapers-

The second quarterly reports of IRS 2011 suggest that Dainik Jagran continue to be on the top in circulation. The circulation of many newspapers has increased to a great extent. It includes the Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhasker; similarly the circulation of some

newspaper including Rajasthan Patrika, Punjab Keshari and Nai Dunia has even decreased.¹⁵

Indian newspapers: Some Negative Trends

Indian newspapers have several negative trends. Several experts have indicated on this point. Mr. Justice G.N.Ray and Exchairman, Press Council of India has indicated several flaws of Indian Print Media. We can briefly describe some important negative trends of newspapers as below.¹⁶

The corporatization, monopoly, malpractice and corruption, paid news, media trial and superiority of advertising office are some important negative trends of Indian newspapers. Now maximum number of big media is in the control of corporate houses. They are running them like commercial enterprises. Earning of maximum revenues is the main objective of these newspapers.

The monopoly is another problem of modern Mass Media. A certain number of newspapers are covering maximum number of cities of the country. Several kinds of malpractice have also developed in Mass Media. Yellow journalism is one very common practice adopted by mainly medium size newspapers. Similarly, blackmailing is also one big problem in Print Media. The distortion of information is another important drawback. The practice of paid news is also causing a great threat to healthy environment of Mass Media especially Print Media. This practice developed in the last general election in 2009 in India. Today media including newspapers discuss those matters which are sub juiced. Mass Media are often criticized for such practices. Though, it is very difficult to say about its exact affect upon overall proceedings of any matter.

The office of editor was the most important point in the newspaper. They used to control not only the content of newspapers but also the place and quantity of advertisement. But those days have gone. Now the advertising office is superior to any other office in the newspaper.

Some other new trends in newspapers

Several new trends have developed in Mass Media in recent years. Today they are more creative than before. This is done to increase the circulation and attract advertisers. Today all newspapers have their online edition. Modular advertising and sectional pricing are other qualities of modern newspaper. The size of newspaper is also reducing. It is not the trend of Indian newspapers, but in foreign countries, it has become a very common practice. The application of new technology is continuously increasing in newspapers. It is in their professional interest. Similarly, newspapers are also available at a very low price.

Importance of study-

The trend study of media gives a picture of media content, style of presentation and several other things. Such types of studies are useful not only for reporters but also for all those persons who are directly or indirectly involved with Mass Media. The present media especially newspapers have adopted several new trends. The study may give idea about the direction in which newspapers are approaching. The trend study is useful in following way -

- It is helpful in bringing further necessary moderation in the presentation of the content of newspapers.
- It may also help in indicating any kinds of demerits of the Mass Media.
- It will be very useful for media people for further discussion.

The threats to journalism have lead to bring several kinds of changes in the formats of presentation of newspapers. How are Indian Print Media changing themselves? What are necessary changes required in newspapers keeping in view the trend of Print Media? These are some important questions which are required to be known.

Literature review-

There are a lot of materials available about media trend. It is very difficult to discuss them all at one place. Some studies have been done to find the trend of newspapers. There are several articles and studies which are related with the strategy of newspapers for their survival. Rachel Smolkin in 'Adoptor die' says "As newspaper companies confront a challenging future, they are increasingly viewing their trademark print product as the engine driving a diverse "portfolio" that embraces other "platforms" such as Websites and niche publications."¹⁷

Another study is based on seven case studies of newspaper companies in Sweden, Europe and North America, and it analyses newspaper companies' views on future E-

paper publishing. The objective has been to examine the conditions that would enable the e-paper medium to become viable as a newspaper-publishing channel.¹⁸

'New trends in Indian Newspapers: A case study of Marathi dailies in Maharashtra' by Dr Kiran Thakur in a paper presented at 17th AMIC Annual Conference of Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (held From July 14-17, 2008, in Manila, Philippines) has drawn several conclusions about the trends in Marathi Print Media.¹⁹ There is a lot of discussion about the trend of web newspapers, their design keeping in view the popularity and its future prospects.²⁰ The world press trend 2010 has given a detail report about various trends of newspaper of different countries.²¹ Similarly, the report- 'newspapers economics Online and offline' 2010 by Hal Varian also give a detail report about the trend of American newspapers.²² The report of Audit bureau of circulation and Indian readership survey report also give very interesting information about Indian Print Media^{23,24}

Objectives of the study-

The main objective of the study is to find the trends of Hindi newspapers in the field of coverage and design. Following areas have mainly been taken:-

Content, Design and layout, Reporting trend, Headlines, Language, Photographs, style of presentation and any other thing which is meaningful in reference to study.

Methodology-

The observation method has mainly been used to study the trend of presentation of materials. It has been discussed in a qualitative manner to give a clear picture of presentation. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the qualitative approach is more suitable. The content and style of presentation of material have been taken to study.

Sampling of units-

The sixty copies, each of Dainik Jagran, Hindustan, Amar Ujala newspapers of July, August and September 2011 have been taken for observation. These copies have been selected through irregular marking method. Keeping in view the objectives of study, headlines, news, photographs, language, contents design and layout have been taken as unit for study.

Analysis of data-

The content analysis of newspapers has shown several trends which can be described to be new kinds of application in Print Media. These trends are multidimensional and have a wide variety. Main points have been presented here.

Price and Number of pages:

The price of newspaper is not in proportional to the cost of the publication of news paper. It may be said to be very nominal in comparison to the page and material presented in them .The price of 24 page newspaper is 3 to four rupees. It is really far less than the cost of the newspapers. The price of several items has increased ten to twenty or even thirty times, but in comparison to that, the price of newspapers has increased only twice or thrice in the same period.

Newspapers have more pages than before. Earlier, the newspapers had only 8 or 10 to 12 pages, but now the number of pages may be 20 to 24 or even more. It is even 32 pages on the occasion of some festivals or any other special day. The number of page is steadily increasing in all newspapers.

Subjects of coverage, news items and supplements:

Maximum numbers of subjects are now being covered by the newspapers. They are giving information about health, education, science, environment, crime, accident, culture, tourism, literature, information technology, religion, spiritual etc. Maximum numbers of events are being covered by newspapers. The combination of various elements of design is done in some such a manner that they give the style of TV programme. Supplements of newspaper have become an important and regular part of newspaper. All news papers are now giving additional pages covering certain areas of daily life. Similarly, the newspapers also give weekly magazines covering health, beauty, house decoration, designing, health, food habits and modern lifestyles.

Design and layout:

The design and layout of the newspapers have changed to a great extent. They are being presented in a more creative and attractive manner. The earlier newspapers were simple in design. Today, there is maximum artistic approach in the designing of page of newspapers .The advertisement is also a part of designing .Various designing elements like colour, line, text etc are being used in a maximum effective manner. Similarly, the use

of logos, symbols, and other kinds of graphics has also increased. There is not any clear division between news and advertisement in many cases.

Colour:

The pages of newspapers have become very colourful and attractive. The news of various events is also given in a more colourful style. Modern newspapers incorporate colour to grab the attention of readers. Even headlines are multicoloured. Colour has been used at any place to make the page more attractive and impressive. The shade of text may be of any other color besides being black.

Graphics:

Info graphics art is being used to present data which can easily be understood. Such types of graphics include bar charts, pie charts, and pictographs. The graphics-picture is given even of those photographs which are easily available in order to have a fresh test of picture. They are important in those stories where photos do not project exact and correct picture of the scene. This practice is often seen in case of political personalities in all newspapers. Similarly, graphics can also be seen in case of those stories in which photos are not available, but the news is important. Graphics are often used even as filler for blank space. It has become very convenient for reporters to present various kinds of information. For example, some of the graphics which are very commonly used include mobile, court, electricity, economics and other areas. Graphics are used on the basis of imagination about medical, environment, education subjects. The emblem and logo may also be given in some cases.

Text:

The variety of presentation of text has also increased in newspapers. Each page contains a shaded background of text. These types of backgrounds may be of any colours which are available in technology. Earlier, black shades were mainly given to enhance the quality of presentation of the news.

Headlines:

Name plate is one very important for any newspaper. Earlier, a special page was left for it. Now the trend has changed. The nameplate is not a place to give a separate identity. It can be mixed even with picture and other kinds of graphics. This is a very important change from traditional style of presentation of nameplate.

News headlines:

Now headlines are used in more creative style. The tag, bullet, eyebrow, sub headlines are some of the important features of news which are frequently used. The headlines are given in various styles and several new kinds of experiments are being done by newspapers in the case of presentation of headlines. There are some styles of presentation of headlines which have not yet got any name. News headlines are also written on photograph where caption was traditionally written.

The Banner headlines are commonly used even on the inner pages of the newspapers. Sometimes, headlines are given covering two pages on the inner middle pages. Similarly, the fonts point sizes are also bigger than the headlines of most important news given on first page.

Photos:

Present newspapers are giving photographs in a large number. Many times more than half pages contain photos. They are used to illustrate the news. Whenever there is a statement on behalf of leaders, it contains passport size photographs of the political persons. Similarly, if news does not have a it's original photograph, it may be taken from the internet. All kinds of events based social activities are given with various kinds of photographs. The photos of different cultural activities are more prominently given. The numbers of photographs are more than the number of news on certain occasion. The articles given on editorial page did not contain photos. But sometimes 30 to 40 percentage space is given to graphics or photographs. There is no rigidness to keep the shape of photographs in traditional rectangle, square, circle shape and they are given in different undefined shape and size partly due to the facility of easy technological presentation and partly due to adoption of new trends. Whenever, there is any news which do not contain actual photographs of the event, the reporter can manage from art section. Now content, photographs and advertisements are blending with one another in such a manner that readers are force to see them in all.

Trend of Content presentation:

The newspapers are adopting TV style for the presentation for various kinds of materials. Visual variety of materials and various elements the subject, News .articles

features, graphics are certainly being given in TV style of presentation. For examples they give brief story on front page and detail on inner pages. The design of page is done in some such a manner so the advertisement and news text blend with each other. This is given just to make audience view the advertising and to avoid their negligence towards advertising materials. The number and space of advertisement has certainly increased.

Coverage of local Issues:

Newspapers are covering local issues much more than before. Earlier the local coverage was given in two or three pages. Now news of other districts is in a very small quantity. This trend is seen in all newspapers. For example the Daink Jagran Hindustan, Amar Ujala and Rashtriya Sahara newspapers are giving eight to nine pages to local or city news. This trend has certainly deprived the people to know more about the events of other places. A person staying in Lucknow can not know detail events neighboring districts. The information about new job or any other kind information related with this is highlighted by Mass Media. Crime and accident stories are given high priority. The economic page covers mainly investment, loan, insurance, purchase.

Coverage of daily lives' activities and problems:

The daily lives' activities and issue of common people are continuously widely being covered by newspapers. Cultural reporting has got a very prominent place in newspapers. All newspapers are not only giving text materials but they are also giving photos of all these activities. Cultural activities and events have become one very important areas of reporting. The newspapers are now giving information about all those activities which are closely associated with daily lives of common people and society, for example, the information about transport, market, various commodities. Similarly, people's problems associated with water, electricity, transport are being highlighted. It is really a very positive approach of the newspapers. They are fulfilling the need of information of various sections of people. The Print Media are giving maximum coverage to those subjects which are useful in one or other way to daily lives of common people.

Coverage of contents of other media:

Newspapers are covering more and more about various aspects of other Mass Media. It contains information of digital web TV film programmes, radio. Similarly, they also discuss about the artists of these media. They try to provide information about various aspects of web journalism social sites, use of mobiles and other such media. The opinion expressed by eminent persons on Face book and twitter are given by newspapers. Similarly, the news covered in foreign newspapers is also given in newspapers.

News follow-up:

The follows-up of various events have further increased. Newspaper tries their best to give a meaningful coverage of an event. The follow up of news is given more in crime and political subjects. The news series are more prevalent in those events which are of public importance. Many times they launch even a campaign about the issue or subject.

Languages:

The pressure of time and space can very clearly be seen in the presentation of language of news. There are several news-stories which end abruptly without giving any meaningful conclusion. The lack of space in the pages and pressure of time has certainly brought this situation. It has become a very normal trend to give stories without fruitful and meaningful end. Several kinds of mistakes can also be seen in language of news. Similarly, unnecessary rewriting of facts can also be seen in many cases.

Nature of competition among newspapers:

There is strong competition among various newspapers. This can be seen in the style of presentation of news, where every newspaper claims to give the most exclusive news. Many times, they even give the old stories which have motivated or caused the administration to take decision about any problems of subject. There are several stories which are given exclusively only in one newspaper.

The Market oriented information:

The detail coverage of market activities has certainly helped the readers to purchase various items. It also helps the shopkeepers in giving publicity of their items. The people are being guided in purchasing and marketing. They give detail information about new products with photographs. On the occasion of Dipawali, the products may be sweets, jewelry, crackers, various kinds of light for decoration etc. The festivals are very important occasions for the motivating people to go for marketing. This is a kind of combination of market force with newspapers to give such type of information.

History and background of events:

The presentation of historical background of a story has become a very common practice in the coverage of the news. It is given to fulfill the need of complementary information to people about any event. The availability of material has also helped in presenting such background of various events. The histories of various events are being given on specific occasion. For examples, the background of event is given in case of the decision of court, death of eminent personalities, major train and aircraft accidents and likewise any other event. Though these kinds of coverage were given even in the earlier newspapers, but now the frequency and varitus of these kinds of coverage have increased.

Learning from the events:

It is very useful and important trend of newspaper. They use to give various kinds of information for the safety and security of the common man. For example, the news of fire accident also includes the information about the safety measurement needed or to be kept in mind to avoid any such types of accidents. Similarly, death from electrocute also suggests the measurement about how to prevent it from electrocution. It is also true in reference to various diseases. The newspapers are also giving additional information related with any news in form of interview and photographs.

Participatory role of newspapers:

Newspapers are not a simple observer of various events. Now the trend is to show themselves before reader as a guide, motivator, adviser and they do many other such functions which were earlier not considered to be the role of newspapers. It also functions as a friend of readers. How to become voter in political coverage, how to- protect one self from various diseases, How to use various technology, where to invest money and go for tour, How to behave in society, adopt career, develop personality, get once right, and many other such areas are widely being covered by Mass Media.

Participation of common people:

Mass Media are trying to take the participation of common people in expressing their views on various issues. This has become a very regular trend in newspapers. It has certainly helped in associating people with newspapers. This also shows the professional approach of Mass Media. It may be described a kind of marketing of newspapers. These types of participation were given even earlier also, but then the frequency and the quantity of presentation were not so much as it is now. They are inviting readers to work as a citizen journalist in various forms. Invitation for writing letter, articles, photographs, interview of any imminent person are some of measures taken by newspapers.

Participation of media in Social activities:

Newspapers have also been participating in various social activities. They are organizing cultural, social activities. Many times they launch even a campaign for it. For example, Hindustan newspaper continuously drove a campaign for becoming voter. The newspapers organize various camps for social welfare. All these activities are being done just to give a positive image of newspaper and also to associate people with newspapers.

Modernity and consumerism in newspaper:

The overall approach of newspaper is to give a very modern life style. The content, headlines, photographs, articles, feature have orientation towards increasing consumerism, modern social values and culture. Information technology, food habits and many other subjects are being presented to increase modernity in social life style. The trend is to motivate people for consumerism.

Coverage of academic activities:

Newspapers are giving active support to various academic activities which are related with youths and unemployed people. These kinds of practices not only give a good image to newspapers but also associate the youths with newspapers. There are many occasions when the newspapers take the opinion of youths on important issues. They are organizing youth fair, discussion and other programmes.

Lack of development news:

Despite these, there are some areas which are least covered by newspapers. They include information about government programmes, and development issues. They hardly cover such subjects. These subjects are expected to be covered by the newspapers. There are several other positive and negative trends which were observed in the contents of newspapers. They are not being presented here due to the limitation of the study.

Discussion of Findings and conclusions-

The study reveals many new things about the coverage of the newspapers. They are adopting more professional approach and trying their best not only to attract audience but

to associate the readers. The overall approach of newspapers is market oriented. They are presenting the material in some such manner so the attention of readers may easily be grabbed.

- The contents newspapers are covering maximum subjects from different areas of life.
- Local stories are given preference in comparison to news of geographically remote areas.
- The style of presentation is to associate readers with newspapers.
- The newspapers are adopting several new styles in writing the headlines.
- Headlines have become an important means of attraction.
- The newspapers have increased the local content in the coverage of newspapers.
- The newspapers are involving themselves in various social campaigns to associate various section of the society.
- Photos and graphics have become a very important part of the newspapers.
- Use of English words has increased.
- Newspapers are playing several roles at the same time.

Limitations of the study-

Following are the limitations of the study -

- The study is based on Hindi newspapers published from Lucknow.
- It has considered all kinds of presentation in the newspapers.
- It has discussed the contents in a qualitative manner.
- The impact of change of newspaper has not been considered
- There are several trends in internal functioning of the newspapers but they have not been discussed here.

Suggestion for further study-

There are several important areas for further study. Some of them are following-

- 1 -The study can be done in the field of design and layout of newspapers' page.
- 2 -Similarly, the study can also be done by selecting some other elements of newspapers
- 3- These kinds of study can be done in reference to different elements of newspapers.
- 4-The study can also be done in a quantitative manner in reference to one or two subjects.

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