

## Journalism in the Age of Social Media

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**Article Info: Received: 22-09-2023 / Revised: 21-10-2023 / Accepted: 23-11-2023**

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**Conflict of interest statement: No conflict of interest**

### Abstract

The extensive usage and acceptance of social media networks is having a profound impact on Indian newsrooms. The massive upheaval that social media has wrought on the media sector inspired the research. Newspapers published between January 2017 and December 2017 were included in the study. Through content analysis of 355 randomly selected copies, we were able to get insight into the pattern of social media citations in the mainstream media. Using in-depth interviews with prominent journalists in editorial positions, this qualitative study sought to comprehend the ways in which major news organizations generate news using social media. Six senior journalists with expertise in both online and conventional news sites were interviewed using an interview schedule. They were all involved in making editorial decisions. Through in-depth interviews conducted before and after mainstream media began using social media, the researcher sought to get a deeper grasp of the news making process.

**Key words:** journalists; social media; Newsrooms; mainstream media

### Introduction

The advent of social media, indeed, is a landmark in the growth of online news consumption. By converting news consumption into a hugely participatory experience through the user-generated content (UGC), social media has fundamentally altered the concept, scope, and practice of journalism. This chapter revisits the defining features of journalism, in the context of the growing social media influence.

The Oxford Dictionary defines Journalism as the activity or profession of writing for newspapers, magazines, or news websites or preparing news to be broadcast. American Press Institute defines Journalism as the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information. The purpose of journalism is to keep the citizens informed about the various incidents. A person who engages himself/herself in the process of preparing and providing news to the media

audiences through affiliation to a media organization is called a journalist.

Journalism is often called a Fourth Estate of democracy which serves in a role of watchdog to monitor the working of governments and also inform people about the working of their elected representatives (Stone, O'Donnell, & Banning 1997). Thus, Journalism is a powerful profession which makes a bridge between governments and the public. The person, who plays the role of watchdog and an informer to the public, can be called journalists.

After observing the social media handles of several news websites, it can be said that social media is playing a significant role in changing the notion of news. The style of writings and the presentation of stories have changed due to social media, although, the elements of newsworthiness such as timeliness, oddity,

proximity, prominence, conflict, and human-interest are still relevant in the social media environment. In the age of social media, visual contents are getting more emphasis to grab the attention of the readers while they are scrolling the screen. Due to the social media, news has become more pervasive beyond the geographical boundaries, and thus, the topics of news have a variety of issues as compared to the traditional form of media. Memes and morphed images of politicians or celebrities are making news in the age of social media.

Social media platform like Twitter and Facebook have completely changed the notion of breaking news; within few seconds news, images, and videos get diffused to the millions of users. Remember the viral video of 'Dabhu Uncle' whose dance video got viral on social media, and then everyone wanted to know about him; this curiosity about him forced media to interview with him. Recently during the Lok Sabha Election-2019, there were several incidences on which memes and videos went viral, and then the mainstream media took notice of the incident to cover. Videos of the lady in the yellow saree on election duty having EVM in the hand; the morphed image of West Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee; memes on PM Narendra Modi about the surgical strike; the tweet of Rahul Gandhi about the word 'modilie'; these are few examples to show how much social media has changed the perspectives of news for mainstream media. Not the only user-generated contents but the users' comments on politicians/celebrities posts are also becoming the news items on social media handles of the media organizations. It can be said that some news articles are being written for the social media users especially such as what is being viral on social media, what is trending on social media and how social media users have reacted on a post.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Dasgupta et al. (2019)** Immunization programs go much beyond a "innovation mission," according to the study "Annihilating Polio: Making a Short Story Long" published in *Economic and Political Weekly*. Reports of service provider inadequacy and exhaustion have been made in UP and Bihar about social

protection from vaccination efforts, particularly beat polio campaigns, by guardians of children younger than five. He argues that vertical programs such as the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), more often known as heartbeat polio, do not allow for community participation in the fundamental leadership process. There are always new developments in the fields of information, education, and communication as well as social mobilization strategies, yet underserved communities in regions of active development continue to be sceptical consumers of these advances. Health services should not be seen as a fundamental part of growth, and the analysis suggests that various people's sentiments should be decreased as well.

Lane, D.R, Harrington (2019), 'Persuasive Strategies for Media-Based Health Campaign,' published by. Presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, they show that primary research is lacking and that important aspects of the effects of mass media are understudied. The results of this investigation lend credence to the idea that these lines of communication can significantly affect the uptake of medical interventions. Promoters of research findings in clinical practice would do well to think about the media as a tool that may encourage the use of efficient services.

According to Gulyas (2016), Simply perusing the existing research leads one to believe that journalists have benefited from the increased audience engagement made possible by social media. The proliferation of social media platforms has allowed journalists to communicate with their audiences in new and exciting ways. But when it came to questions of story source, journalists stuck to the tried-and-true methods of the past, where authority figures were heavily involved.

Johnston (2016), journalists now need to be proficient in a wide range of abilities due to the increasing usage of user-generated material in news reporting. discovered that the increasing usage of user-generated information in news coverage is causing a shift in how journalists do their jobs, as well as redefining the skillsets required of journalists. "Journalists need to

possess and maintain the ability to process user-generated content and to navigate the social media platforms that audiences inhabit," states Johnston.

Owolabi et al. (2019), the "Effect of Consumers Mood on Advertising Effectiveness." The study's foundation was an examination of how the content and context of marketing messages impact consumers' moods, states of mind, and level of understanding. This investigation made use of an experimental study design. Three hundred and twenty people participated in the study. Initiating a negative or good mood was done using standardized 10-minute video snippets. Two measures were used to assess the efficacy of advertisements: the attitude towards utilizing the marketed items and the intention to try the advertised products. According to the results, those who were in a good mood were more open to trying the product than those who were in a bad mood. This led many to believe that advertisements should aim to make viewers feel good.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research strategy used in this study is a hybrid of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The study's quantitative methodology involves polling Indian journalists

on topics related to the impact of social media on news production. Also included in the research is a content analysis of two prominent English-language newspapers in India—the Hindu and the Times of India to uncover how these publications utilize social media to report the news. The research takes a qualitative approach by interviewing prominent mainstream journalists in editorial roles to get their take on how the media outlets use social media to generate news.

A total of 355 copies of the newspapers were examined, including 178 copies of the Times of India and 177 copies of The Hindu. Out of the 355 copies of the TOI and 4 copies of the Hindu that were supposed to have been produced on those days, three were missing since the newspapers were not printed owing to the vacation.

On the following dates, newspapers were not printed –

- 14th March (due to the Holi festival)– 1 day holiday in both the newspapers
- 16<sup>th</sup> August (Independence Day holiday) – 1 day holiday in both the newspapers
- 20<sup>th</sup> October (due to Diwali festival) – 2days holiday in The Hindu and one dayholiday in Times of India.

**Table 1: Total No. of Copies Analyzed (month-wise)**

Months	No. of copies analyzed (Times of India)	No. of copies analyzed (The Hindu)	Total No. of copies analysed
January (1 <sup>st</sup> Jan.-15 <sup>th</sup> Jan.)	15	15	30
February (16 <sup>th</sup> Feb.-28 <sup>th</sup> Feb.)	13	13	26
March (1 <sup>st</sup> March-15 <sup>th</sup> March)	14	14	28
April (16 <sup>th</sup> April-30 <sup>th</sup> April)	15	15	30
May (1 <sup>st</sup> May-15 <sup>th</sup> May)	15	15	30
June (16 <sup>th</sup> June-30 <sup>th</sup> June)	15	15	30
July (1 <sup>st</sup> July-15 <sup>th</sup> July)	15	15	30
August (16 <sup>th</sup> Aug.-31 <sup>st</sup> Aug.)	15	15	30
September (1 <sup>st</sup> Sept.-15 <sup>th</sup> Sept.)	15	15	30
October (16 <sup>th</sup> Oct.-31 <sup>st</sup> Oct.)	15	14	29
November (1 <sup>st</sup> Nov.-15 <sup>th</sup> Nov.)	15	15	30
December (16 <sup>th</sup> Dec.-31 <sup>st</sup> Dec.)	16	16	32
Total	178	177	355

**Table 2: Total No. of Stories having Social Media Sources (page-wise)**

Pages categories	Times of India		The Hindu	
	Name of Page	No. of stories having social media sources	Name of Page	No. of stories having social media sources
Front Page	Front page	77	Front page	92
National Page	Times Nation	164	Nation Page & News page	182
City Page	Times City	66	North, East, West & South pages	60
International Page	Times Global	30	World Page	25
Sports Page	Times Sport	15	Sport page	11
Business Page	Times Business	28	Business page	26
Total		380		396

A total of 776 news pieces were located in both publications that either directly quoted or paraphrased content from social media. The Times of India has 380 items out of 776 that rely on social media sources, while The Hindu has 396 stories of the same kind.

**Table 3: Total No. of News Stories in Both the Newspapers**

Months	Times of India			The Hindu		
	Total No. of news stories	No. of stories from social media sources	% of the total	Total No. of news stories	No. of stories from social media sources	% of the total
January (1 <sup>st</sup> Jan.-15 <sup>th</sup> Jan.)	1540	34	2.21	1549	37	2.39
February (16 <sup>th</sup> Feb.-28 <sup>th</sup> Feb.)	1441	28	1.94	1462	32	2.19
March (1 <sup>st</sup> March-15 <sup>th</sup> March)	1554	35	2.25	1542	33	2.14
April (16 <sup>th</sup> April-30 <sup>th</sup> April)	1518	33	2.17	1502	30	2.00
May (1 <sup>st</sup> May-15 <sup>th</sup> May)	1481	31	2.09	1478	36	2.44
June (16 <sup>th</sup> June-30 <sup>th</sup> June)	1472	26	1.77	1506	32	2.12
July (1 <sup>st</sup> July-15 <sup>th</sup> July)	1558	36	2.31	1564	34	2.17
August (16 <sup>th</sup> Aug.-31 <sup>st</sup> Aug.)	1544	32	2.07	1550	33	2.13
September (1 <sup>st</sup> Sept.-15 <sup>th</sup> Sept.)	1462	27	1.85	1471	31	2.11
October (16 <sup>th</sup> Oct.-31 <sup>st</sup> Oct.)	1473	36	2.44	1444	28	1.94
November (1 <sup>st</sup> Nov.-15 <sup>th</sup> Nov.)	1542	34	2.20	1567	38	2.43
December (16 <sup>th</sup> Dec.-31 <sup>st</sup> Dec.)	1510	28	1.85	1536	32	2.08
Total	18095	380	2.10	18171	396	2.18

From the Table -3, it can be seen that the Times of India is using social media sources by 2.10%, and The Hindu uses 2.18% of the total news stories. The item in both publications said that all the popular social media sites were evaluated.

According to the results of the interviews with top editors, the mainstream media in India has completely integrated social media into their news creation workflow. Nowadays, no editor can deny the influence of social media on their job. Companies in the media industry are working hard to take advantage of social media

in every way possible.

A lot of editors use WhatsApp to keep in contact with their official groups, friends, and family. Editors may use WhatsApp without worrying about their privacy being compromised because of its more private nature compared to other social media platforms.

The null hypothesis is –

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference in the perception of journalists representing the print, broadcast, and web towards the changes in journalistic works due to the integration of social media.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Mean(Q13+Q14+Q15+Q16+Q17+Q18+Q19)	125	4.3214	.83686	3.00	5.67
Journalists' type	125	2.06	.896	1	3

### Kruskal-Wallis Test

**Table 5: Ranks**

Journalists' type	N	Mean Rank
Mean(Q13+Q14+Q15+Q16+Q17+Q18+Q19) Print	46	28.02
Broadcast	25	51.70
	Web Total	54
	125	98.03

**Table 6: Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	Mean(Q13+Q14+Q15+Q16+Q17+Q18+Q19)
Chi-Square	96.603
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Journalists' type

**Interpretation:** At a significance level of 0.05, the Kruskal-Wallis test clearly shows that print, broadcast, and online journalists' opinions about the changes in journalism and their profession as a result of social media are significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to the aforementioned Ranks' study, web journalists are more likely than print journalists to believe that social media has altered the nature of journalism and the profession as a whole.

**$H_{02}$ :- There is no significant association between the professional and personal lives of journalists in terms of the usage of various social media platforms.**

**Table 7: Custom Table**

		Social media usage in professional life						
		Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	WhatsApp	Instagram	LinkedIn	Social bookmarking sites
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Social media usage in personal life	Facebook	112	113	80	96	64	14	44
	Twitter	33	33	30	31	24	5	17
	YouTube	95	99	71	85	56	15	42
	WhatsApp	116	118	85	101	64	15	45
	Instagram	31	33	29	29	26	5	15
	LinkedIn	14	15	4	4	3	1	1
	Social bookmarking sites	9	9	9	9	9	0	2

**Table 8: Pearson Chi-Square Tests**

		Social media usage in professional life
Social media usage in personal life	Chi-square	225.270
	Df	49
	Sig.	.000*

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost subtable.

\*. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Interpretation:** According to the chi-square test, there is a strong correlation between journalists' professional and personal social media use ( $X^2 = 225.270, p < 0.05$ ). Rejecting the null hypothesis follows.

Because there were so few replies, several rows and columns will be blank. This is because the other alternatives were not included. If 20% of the cells have an anticipated count below 5, the Chi-square test could not be valid because of the statistical constraint.

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of the survey, newspaper content analysis, and in-depth interviews with editors all testify to the notion that social media has become a fundamental aspect of news generation in India's mainstream media. Nowadays, social media is a vital element of how news is created. All three kinds of conventional and online journalism agree that social media has transformed the way journalists conduct their work and the stories

they cover. The goal of a newsroom's social media desk is to maintain checks on social media for breaking news, communicate story leads with colleagues, and promote stories on multiple social media platforms. Staffs devoted to monitoring journalistic social media accounts have been employed. Senior editors have identified false news, trolling, and propaganda as the three key difficulties confronting journalists in the social media era. In order to educate its personnel to tackle issues like fake news, media businesses are regularly running training sessions. Additionally, editors are being persuaded by social media. Editors keep an eye on what people are talking about on social media and modify the order of significance of items appropriately. Editors commonly use WhatsApp to interact with official organization groups.

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