UNIT-4: Different Forms of Media – A Comparison

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DIFFERENT FORMS OF MEDIA: AN INTRODUCTION

Gathering and timely reporting of the information which is unique and unknown is a compulsive urge of human beings. The term, media, is derived from the Latin word "*medius*" which means middle or between, and refers to anything that carries information from the source to the destination. The main purpose of information dissemination is to facilitate communication and learning. Mass communication refers to the delivering of this information to the masses in a collective fashion. Before the advent of science and technology, the method of communication was scribbling on wooden plates and rocks in order to convey messages to the public. Later, with the advent of the printing press, pamphlets, newspaper and other print media gained prominence. The invention of radio and television, which took place in the middle of twentieth century, gave a boost to the mass communication industry. Then on, computer and other digital media brought a new façade altogether to the world of communication. Print media, electronic media and digital media or new media are the three major categories of mass media.

PRINT MEDIA

Print media is considered to be the pioneer form of mass media. It is one of the means of mass communication, which is in the form of printed publications, like newspapers, magazines, leaflets, pamphlets etc. Whatever that is written or printed on paper and is palpable constitutes print media. Newspapers have been the most influential part of print media since its inception.

Newspaper

As we have discussed before, newspaper is a periodical publication containing written information about news, politics, business, sports and art, and often includes materials, such as opinion columns, weather forecasts, reviews of local services, obituaries, birth notices, crosswords, editorial cartoons, comic strips, advice columns, various other informative articles and, also, advertisements. Newspapers are typically published on a daily or a weekly basis.

Today, the newspapers present the readers from all age groups amusement as well as information on a vast array of subjects. It provides daily lessons in living history on a wide scale. Also, it is the only chronicle of everyday incidents in one's own society. It not just guards our constitutional rights, but also watches over the public good. Interestingly, newspaper could play a vital role in helping the readers in upgrading their reading and language skills, like speed reading, in-depth analysis, critical study, spelling, vocabulary and grammar. Besides being a model for journalistic and descriptive writing, the newspaper is unmatched source of topics for debates, panel discussions and dramatics. Also, as newspapers are the mirror of the society, they serve as the best text for all divisions of social studies. Where the world of science fills the newspapers with the breakthroughs in medicine, ecology, genetics and space, the arts also receive a fair amount of attention.

Additionally, newspapers provide abundant knowledge and opportunities to apply practical skills in one's professional life. In short, newspaper also helps in building a whole new set of competencies people need all their lives, for they also called 'living textbooks.' There is a wide range of newspapers which could be categorized on a various basis. For instance, based on the frequency of publication, there are dailies, weeklies and monthlies. *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *The Times of India*, *Dainik Jagran*, etc. are some of the dailies, *The Sunday Standard* is a weekly and *Glam Mint* is a monthly newspaper. Based on the type of coverage, there are general, special interest, trade journals and house organs. Based on the type of approach, there are general, tabloid, sensational and underground newspapers.

There are a few basic criteria of a good newspaper, like:

- Adequate and crisp coverage of important news

- Sense of news worth

- Ratio of space dedicated to news versus to advertisements

- Accuracy and aptness of news

- Unbiased style of editing and reporting

- Variety and balance of contents

- Number of correspondents both local and international versus media house's dependence on wire service

- Dependability of editorials

- Wide spectrum of columnists, both in-house and syndicated.

Magazines

Magazines are periodical publications that are published on a regular schedule and contain a collection of detailed articles on various topics, like food, fashion, sports, finance, lifestyle, and so on. The word *magazine* refers to a collection or storage location, which in this case is information. Magazines are typically published weekly, biweekly, monthly, bimonthly or quarterly and are often printed in colour on coated paper, and are bound with a soft cover.

Besides the evident difference in appearance and design, there are a lot of other differences between a newspaper and a magazine. The writing for newspaper appeals to local geographical audience with a wide spectrum of interests, age group and educational and socio-economical background and mainly focuses on national or local news. Magazines, on the other hand, aim their content at a much narrower target group with specific interest and demographic qualities. Where newspapers employ large staff of writers and editors, magazines reply on freelance writers for a majority of their content as this ensures geographical variety in the content. Where writing for newspaper is objective and impartial, magazine writers enjoy more freedom in display their viewpoint, style, tone and voice in their writing. Unlike newspapers, which have daily deadlines, magazines generally have monthly, weekly or bi-monthly deadlines, which implies that readers get to enjoy more complexity, depth, originality and analysis.

Based on the audience they cater to, magazines are of three types – *consumer*, which is the most popular segment and caters to the common man, *business-to-business*,

which seek to help people in some definite profession or occupation and *organizational*, which are published by companies for their clients or employees, by universities for their students or alum, religious groups or organization for their members, etc. The organization magazines are special-interest and generally published privately.

Leaflet and Pamphlet

Figure 14 Sample of a pamphlet; retrieved from: https://tinyurl.com/y35skcfu on 28 Feb, 2019.

Figure 15 Example of a leaflet. Retrieved from: https://tinyurl.com/yy2scwqc on 28 Feb, 2019.

A pamphlet is an unbound book which has no hard cover or binding. A leaflet consists of a single sheet of paper that is printed either on one side or both sides and folded in half, in thirds, or in fourths. It could also be few pages that are stapled and is distributed free of cost. They are the most common type of print publications used in advertising today. Where leaflet is often a single page, akin to a flyer, a leaflet consists of five or more pages, with promotional information printed on it.

Print collaterals, like leaflets or pamphlets, are frequently used to promote special events, launch new products or companies or catch attention of people towards anything new happening around them. A leaflet is rather a quick-hitter, single-page piece that includes a few key messages along with one or two images. A pamphlet is more thorough and wordy, providing detailed information of the company or its service/product benefits.

Pamphlets are costlier than leaflets in manufacturing and needs to be handed over to target group who would dig into the content. Leaflets, on the contrary, are flexible in placement and can be easily handed over to people personally or sent via emails. Leaflets, due to space limitation, serve the purpose of attracting attention or conveying the message. Pamphlets have a broader agenda to educate customers. Insurance companies or banks use pamphlets to introduce new policies to their customers or informs them about their policies or mission. Also, it costs higher to make a pamphlet because of its size, complexity of content and amount of paper used. To conclude, leaflet is a cost-effective tool to raise awareness among the masses about a need-to-know information in a crisp, yet aesthetically pleasing format, where pamphlet comes handy when the goal is to give more information to the target group in a way that they keep it for future reference.

Posters

Poster is often a single printed paper designed to be attached to a wall or any vertical surface. Generally, posters are bigger in size and include both textual as well as graphic elements or at times, only one of them. Posters are one of the most popular advertising tools, which are designed to be informative and attention-seeking. Banners are generally printed on durable materials, like cloth, and do not include detailed information. They only include logo and short messages. They are often suspended and hung about with support. Posters and banners are not functionally different and serve the main purpose of advertising, spreading message and achieving desired response.

Advantages:

- Big and colourful posters of a queer combination of size, colour and illumination attracts attention and creates a startling rapid impact.

- Placing posters in public places, like trains, buses and cinema halls can have a high frequency of impact on the passers-by.

- They can be placed close to the points-of-sale, so as to catch the target group's attention.

- Posters appeal the potential customers faster and boast drawing power through its provocative design and gripping messages.

- Posters are more affordable than various other advertising tools, especially hoardings or banners. This makes them conducive to an existing campaign where new messages are required to be introduced every now and then.

- Posters could also be made interactive to include coupons or QR codes for the onlookers to scan to gain more information on the business, like emails, phone number or website URLs.

Disadvantages:

- Poster and banners demand that the commercial message be brief and relatively simple. They, however, cannot communicate product details, competitive advantages and consumer benefits.

- Limited availability as prime outdoor locations are restricted by costs, space availability and are usually controlled by large, long-term advertisers.

- Potential customers, like the commuters behind the wheel or in public transports are exposed very briefly to outdoor messages and this minimizes their message retention time.

- Posters and banners generate environmental concern and are often seen to breach the environmental guidelines.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic media is the means of communication in which the audience uses electronics or electromechanical devices to access the content. In other words, it is the storage or broadcast media that employs electronic technology. A few examples include television, Internet, radio, CD-ROMs or any medium which requires electricity or digital encryption of information. Electronic media serves many purposes, like it is convenient in marketing one's business, products or services. Secondly, it is broadcasted to a wider community, unlike the static media. It is, also, an efficient way of communication with the general public. Let us discuss these forms of electronic media in detail.

Radio (AIR/FM)

Radio is an electronic device, which transmits signals by modulating the electromagnetic waves with frequencies lower than those of visible light. Since its inception in the early 1920s, radio has evolved dramatically. During the World War 1, the need for a medium to communicate with the allies was realized and, thus, radio

filled the requirement for wireless transmission of messages. In India, the first radio club was set up in Bombay in 1923, but it was not until July 1927 that the first journal, 'The India Radio,' was started. This was later renamed to All India Radio in 1936. Since then, radio continues to be relevant and potent medium, despite emergence of other, more technically refined forms.

Radio is a sightless medium, where the performers, like speakers, presenters or actors, are not visible to the listeners and this is why it is often called a blind medium. This also compels the listeners to put their creative imagination to use in order to imagine the performance being presented. Radio is exclusively an auditory medium, which have three major elements for its broadcast – sound effects, music and spoken word. Let us look at its various advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

- Radio is classically a low-cost form of traditional media. The radio receivers are relatively cheaper than other models of electronic media. They also come integrated with the communication devices, like mobile phones.

- Among the various channels of media used for information dissemination, radio has the widest coverage and also has the ability to reach out to even the remotest of the household.

- Radio broadcast can be received and understood by the audiences from any socio-economic strata, because unlike print media it doesn't require any amount of literacy from the readers.

- The turnaround time on getting any information on air is relatively briefer and, thus, the intended reactions from the audiences are seen immediately.

- Information broadcast can be done at regional, national or international levels and, hence, radio can address bigger size of audiences.

- The radio listeners need not be actively involved in listening to the programs being broadcasted on the radio, as they need not look at the device and this frees them to do other tasks at the same time, like driving, commuting and cooking. Further, as they are portable, they can be carried anywhere.

- Information and advertisements can be presented as songs, jingles, stories or in endless creative forms, which would enhance the recall value of the listeners.

Disadvantages:

- Since the visual effects are absent, the intended impact might me lesser than expected.

- It could be a source of noise pollution and might lead to air "clutter".

- The clarity of transmission is affected by weather and other environmental factors.

- Less choices and limited radio stations are present.

Television

A television (TV) is an electronic device with a screen, which converts the broadcast signals into pictures and sound in order to create audio-video effects. The word 'television' is derived from the Latin words 'tele and 'visio' which mean 'far' and 'sight,' respectively. Due to its audio-video quality, it is one of the most widely used sources of entertainment and information.

Television as introduced in India in September, 1959. For years, it was debated whether India, being a poor country then, could afford an expensive device like a television. It was even feared that TV might alienate people from their culture and spread consumerism, which could possibly increase the hunger for comfort and luxuries. This could also lead to conflict between rich and poor. However, after a strong advocacy by businessmen, manufacturers and educational institutions, UNESCO offered a grant of $20,000 to purchase community sets. Since then, television has seen its continual growth in India, in terms of technology and expanding reach. Let us get familiar with its advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

- Television provides a wide coverage and cable TV and DTH services have made versatility possible. The information, today, is being broadcasted at regional, national and international level. Television is a common household item today.

- There is an availability of a wide range of channels, which covers almost all aspects of human interests and can engage the viewer's emotions and empathy. It can help the viewers feel less lonely.

- Information through television holds a potential to reach and get comprehended by everyone including the illiterate people, as the messages are conveyed through moving images. Also, visually impaired people could benefit from the audio.

- Since it has both audio and visual effects, the broadcasting can possibly hold the best impact on the viewers.

- It keeps the public informed of the current affairs around the world.

- As it is an indoor source of entertainment, gathering around the television gives families, friends or even the strangers a reason to bond over.

Disadvantages:

- The cost of a television is fairly high.

- Viewers are exposed to informative and knowledge programs as well as the violent or criminal content. In this case, children, without any adult supervision, might get intimidated by viewing such content.

- TV watching might get addictive and reduce physical activities in the viewers. Excessive TV viewing (more than 3 hours/day) might also reduce children's interest in studies and reduced physical activity could lead to sleep disorders, behaviour problems and various other health issues.

- Television's hidden agenda is consumerism. The advertisements are broadcasted with a motive to lure the viewers into buying the products, which might not be as worthy in real as depicted.

DIGITAL MEDIA OR ONLINE JOURNALISM

Introduction

The last decade of twentieth century witnessed an emergence of digital media and it has, undoubtedly, become the pulse of the modern living. The development in internet and World Wide Web has allowed integration of audio and video with multimedia and has opened fresh avenues of communication and information. Any content, be it text, visuals, audios or multimedia, which is communicated through the internet or computer networks, is called as *digital media*. The digital content needs to be created, viewed, distributed, modified and preserved on electronic devices.

The content in this case makes use of electronic devices like computer, laptop, tablets and smart phones for dissemination. Digital media could be integrated in almost all the industries, like entertainment, technology, e-commerce, health, education, government, sports, publishing and television. A few instances of the channels of digital media are websites, blogs, mobile apps, social media networks, like Facebook , Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn , Foursquare and Instagram, live

streaming apps and television channels, ebooks, emails, e-news, location-based services and virtual reality.

Online journalism or digital journalism is a contemporary type of journalism where the editorial content is disseminated via internet, contrary to broadcast or print media. Even though Indian media houses were using computers for designing pages and writing the reports, it was only in 1998 that they introduced their online editions.

Since the beginning of the twenty first century, a steep rise of online news organizations has been observed in India. Despite that, a growing form of journalism, called participatory or citizen journalism, has been seen as becoming popular among the masses, who now have the power to report things or articulate their thoughts on situations around them.

In a way, rapidly growing forms of digital media is ensuring salvage from media biasness along with giving local news the global exposure. In such a situation, even the online audience is growing in size and substance. It can be said that internet has today almost touched the status of mainstream media.

The impact of online journalism could be clearly seen in the journalism practices today. The journalists today are required to be proficient in producing their work suitable for a variety of media, even the public has the access to more information than ever, which has made them more engaged and informed about the matter concerning public affairs and democratic processes.

Forms of Online Journalism

Let us now look at the various forms of journalism that exist within the two dimensions of closed and open journalism.

1. **Mainstream News Sites**

   The mainstream media is the most extensive type of online journalism, for it presents a selection of editorial content either specifically written for the Web or scooped from a linked website. This could also be considered as a highly filtered and moderated form of participatory communication. Some of the famous examples are much-acclaimed sites like CNBC, MSN or BBC. Also, all the digital newspapers fall into this category. Mainstream news sites primarily follow the exact approach of broadcasting and print media of journalistic storytelling, news values and relationship with the readers.
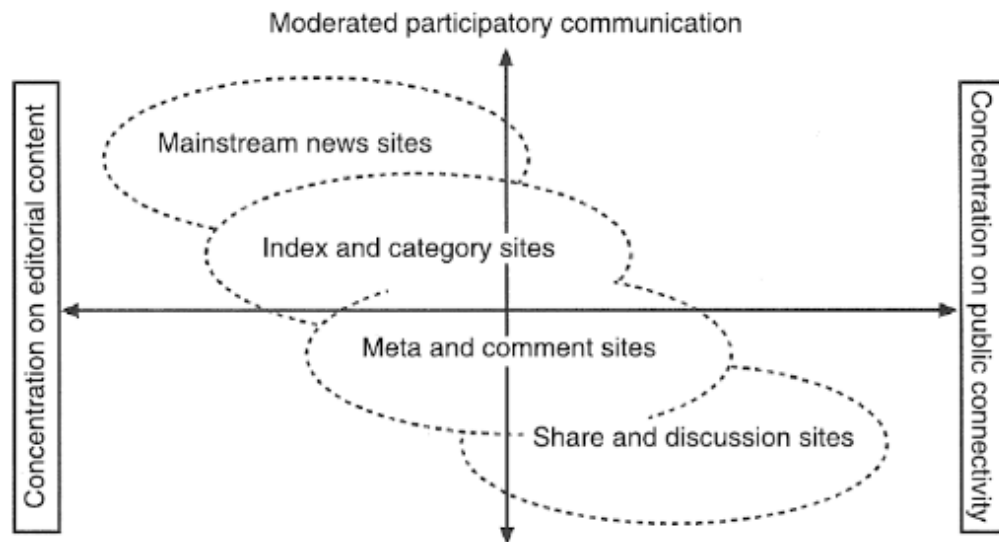
2. Index and Category Sites

Another type of online journalism, i.e., index and category sites were frequently attributed to search engines like Yahoo and Google, a few marketing research firms, like Moreover, and individuals, like Paperboy. In these sites, journalists include deep links to the present news sites by annotating or categorizing these into hyperlinks or accessible lists. These give space for user response, discussions, comments or reactions on the new content published. Web logs or blogs could also be included under this category, as these give the liberty to the public to post their opinions, criticalk commentaries, personal testimonies or first-hand view on stories and events, leaving the links for further reading for the readers.

3. Meta and Comments Sites

These could well be considered as the digital version of journalism as public watchdog, as meta and comment sites let critical comments and substitute media voices come into the picture, for they reflexively monitor and critically analyse the content on new media sites. Alternative news sites, like *Guerilla News Network* reflect on the news provided elsewhere and critically comment on it. They also give space to the news generally silenced by the mainstream media while encouraging the general public to post their own comments and stories, thereby encouraging people participation and feedback.

4. Share and Discussion Sites

Odlyzko (2001) claims that the major reason behind the success of online journalism or digital media was the desire of people to connect with others on a larger, boundless scale. The fourth type of online journalism taps the immense potential of Internet by offering a platform or rather open community for the exchange of ideas or stories. They are often centred on a specific theme and bring people from the all over the world on a single platform.

Characteristics on Online Journalism

All four types of digital journalism discussed above make use of characteristics of networked computer environment where they function. These characteristics are:

1. **Hypertextuality**

   Hypertexts, or the text connected through hyperlinks, can either refer internally to some other section in the same document or externally to documents located elsewhere on Internet. The potential of inter-linking various web pages using hypertextuality gives a new shape to the narrative structure of the news.

2. **Multimodality**

   Multimodality is advanced by elements like hypertextual environments, which includes chunking and interconnectedness of texts visible electronic relations. Journalists can even integrate their content with multimedia elements like images, videos, music, etc.

3. **Shifted time**

   Journalists often archive their work published online so that the viewers can view it later.

4. **Homepage Customization**

   Key features, like recommendations, organizing various sections after understanding the interests of the audience, newsletters, push notifications, freedom to republish and letting the users decide the delivery time of the reports or links, can help the journalists customize the homepage characteristics.

5. **Text Streaming Technologies**

Text streaming or real-time text is a key feature of websites and applications in which the behaviour of the viewers affect the content being streamed. With technology, media houses can control the content they show and modify it per the reactions it receives from the audience.

Fours Methods Adopted for Presentation of Online News

Additionally, there are four ways in which stories are presented in online journalism:

1. Moving pictures – the type of journalism where the animated images are created on screen in order to recreate the sequence of the news story.

2. The video diary – this is further divided in two categories:

    i. The video blog, where one can record personal thoughts and opinions on camera.

    ii. The personal account, where the thoughts or opinions of one person are filmed by some other person and broadcasted live.

3. Edited narrative: this includes recreation of some event or act in the form of a documentary and with the help of a strong narration.

4. TV show/Vodcast: the most redundant type of online videos, primarily meant for the readers who want to download clips from the bulletin.

Advantages of Online Journalism:

- Digital media has opened the floodgates of information to the common man via various channels. Now, the access to information is instantaneous, easier and just a click away.

- The communication across the globe has become easier and faster than anyone would have ever imagined 10 or 15 years back.

- Portable devices as small in size as a smartphone hold a world of information and learning resources within them.

- Live streaming of various important events is available at a snap of a finger. The internet has given the general public the flexibility to communicate globally. Previously, this privilege was restricted to large media firms and news agencies.

- Citizen journalism made possible by social media sites like Twitter allows the viewers to put forth their views and fill the gaps generated by the mainstream media. These sites project the nation's point of view on a subject.

Disadvantages of Online Journalism:

- Accessing the sites online requires internet connection and a compatible electronic device, all of which come at a cost.

- It requires some minimum education for its proper usage and, hence, could be of no use for the uneducated. Further, it could be a challenge for the people less familiar with the usage of technology.

- Giving a lot of time to socializing online is taking away the traditional trend of meeting people in person. Social media is also a source of distraction for anyone who indulges in it continuously. Privacy concerns, anonymity and fake profiles are other major issues which are on a rise today with the increase in the usage of digital media.

- News can be easily manipulated or distorted and authenticity remains a major area of concern. Spreading rumours and hatred is much easier now due to an easy access to the digital media.

- All advantages of the digital media mentioned above could turn into disadvantages, if abused or misused.

- Digital gadgets generally have a short lifespan and could become archaic due to rapid advancements in technology.
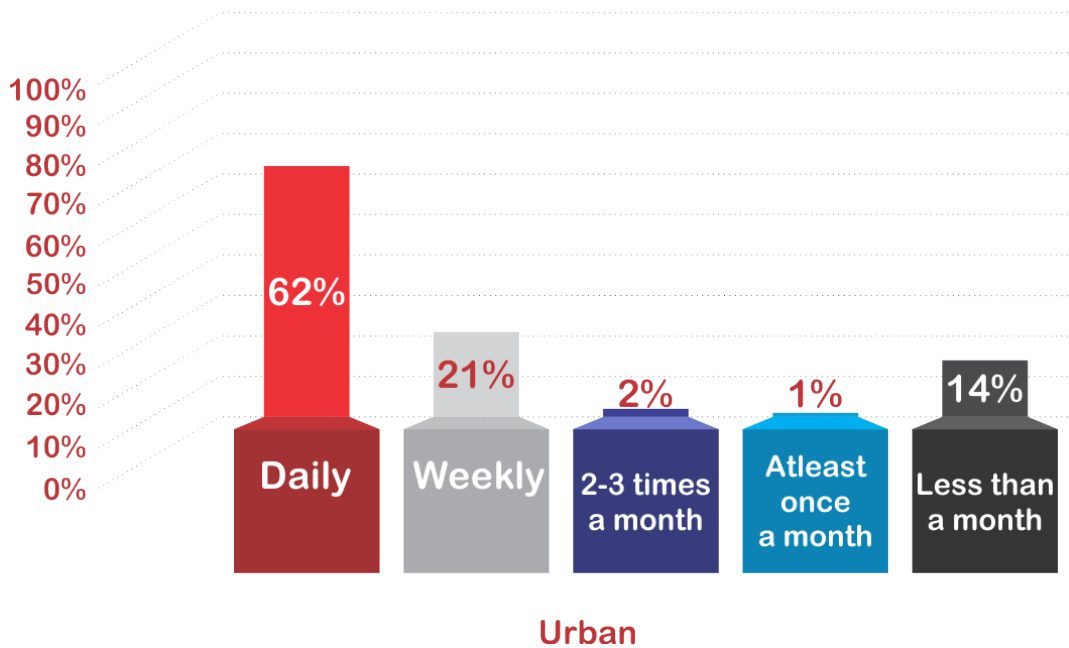

MEDIA ANALYSIS IN INDIAN CONTEXT

The beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed the arrival of print media in India and the country, now, has close to 70,000 newspapers being published in various languages, majorly English and Hindi. There are over 100 million copies of newspapers sold every day. The early 1930s brought radio and, later, television into the national picture and, now, there are over 1600 satellite channels, out of which around 400 are related to news.

With the inception of first newspaper, i.e., Hicky's *Bengal Gazette*, in 1780, the screening of the Auguste and Louis Lumière moving pictures in 1895 and beginning of radio broadcasting in 1927, Indian media, specifically the private media, has been independent and free throughout most of its operational history.

Going by the report published by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI), India is expected to have 500 million users of internet by 2018 and this would be more inclusive across all age groups, genders and geography. Along with the progress in internet access, the media in India is on the brink of a digital revolution.

Frequency of Usage (in %)

62%	**21%**	**2%**	**1%**	**14%**
Daily	Weekly	2-3 times a month	Atleast once a month	Less than a month

Urban

Comparison between Various Types of Media

Let us have a look at the differences between various types of media

Print Media	Electronic Media	Digital Media
Literacy is the most basic requirement for the usage of print media. Only a literate person can read it.	Even an uneducated person can watch a news bulletin and grasp its contents; however, the written matter on the screen wouldn't be read.	Slightly complex for an uneducated person to operate. While the images or sound could be grasped, but what is written on the digital screen wouldn't be read.
Print media works according to deadlines. Usually, a morning daily carries news received until the midnight of the last day.	There is no deadline for the electronic media. News can be updated anytime. Flash news can be displayed and broadcasted anytime.	Information access and updating is instantaneous.
In print media, readers have an option to re-read the contents and recheck what they have read.	Viewers have no control over the broadcasted news. They re-run the show to recheck what they have seen.	Viewers have total control over the content they see online. Rereading, background research and viewing live streaming is all possible. Viewers can even express their opinions on the content.

No scope for discussions or live streaming.	Live telecast is possible; however, viewers cannot involve themselves in the discussions.	Discussions and live streaming is possible.
The language used plays a prdominent part and is always reader-friendly.	The language used is primarily spoken and, hence, viewer-friendly.	Both colloquial as well as advanced level of language could be used, depending on the feature.
Frequent refreshing of news is not possible; only when the newspaper would go to press can the reports be updated.	Minute-to-minute refreshing of news is possible.	Instantaneous updates of news are possible.
Till date, newspapers are considered to be the best consumer value product. An affordable expense of Rs. 3-5 provides with enough information to the readers. It doesn't require any device for accessibility.	Requires accessibility to some electronic device and is expensive.	Requires accessibility to internet in some digital device and is expensive.
Indian readers find print media as the most credible.	Indian viewers find electronic media credible.	Digital media has begun to gain credibility. Legitimacy of the information is still questionable.
Frequent power failure for long hours is common in rural as well as urban India. So, there is no viable replacement for a newspaper.	Frequent power failures for long hours disrupt information dissemination.	Frequent power failures for long hours disrupt information dissemination.
Comparatively less coverage for a piece of news is seen.	In comparison to print, the news coverage is more.	There is boundless coverage of all the dimensions of news.
Is of no use for people with seeing disabilities.	Is a better medium for people with seeing disabilities.	Is a better medium for people with seeing disabilities.

Involves clutter and wastage of paper.	No clutter or paper wastage. Also, it reduces the use of paper and, thus, more trees are saved.	No clutter or paper wastage. Also, it reduces the use of paper and, thus, more trees are saved.
No health-related issues are reported with the usage of print media, provided the reading is done in right lighting and body posture.	Over usage results in health hazards.	Over usage results in health hazards.

The main intent of any type of media is to disseminate information to public in any form, be it electronic, print or digital. Each channel holds its own set of advantages as well as disadvantages. The audience needs to be aware of what works best for them based on their convenience. A majority of people get their daily dose of news through newspapers they love to read while sipping their morning tea or coffee. Then, there are others who like to begin their day while watching quick snippets of news on television. As the day progresses, people stay abreast of news through digital media on their smartphones or computers, where they are fed with even the minutest of updates . A few like ending their day having read a book. Thus, we see that individuals cannot confine themselves to a single channel of media. It is a blend which works the best!

CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Journalism is defined as the practice of collecting and processing information for dissemination to general public. A journalist is a person who collects, writes, edits and publishes the news via print, broadcast and digital media. The development in information and technology has stretched out the possibilities of conventional media. With the emergence of digital media, conventional journalism has adapted itself to latest communication technology and news is being delivered to the public in all possible means.

The concept of citizen journalism is based upon public citizens playing an active role and essentially performing the same tasks that professional journalists execute. It is an alternative and activist form of news gathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions. The main feature of citizen journalism is that it is usually found online. Because of multimedia advancement, people are in many ways an intricate part of the media world through their comments, photos and video clips.

They are no longer inactive or passive observers, but are active creators and critics. In fact, the emergence of the internet with blogs, podcasts, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, media-sharing websites, streaming video and other web-related innovations is what has made citizen journalism possible. Dissemination of content is unrestricted and a large number of audiences could be reached through podiums such as Facebook and Twitter. The content could include text, pictures, audio, video or anything which could possibly communicate any information among the masses.

The internet has given the general public the flexibility to communicate globally. This was the power which was once reserved only for large media firms and news agencies. Citizen journalism is the basis of democracy that encourages public to actively participate in social processes. Few of the instances of citizen journalism converging and reporting major world events are 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the 2013 protests in Turkey, the Euromaidan events in Ukraine and Syrian war and, therefore, the 2014 Ferguson unrest.

History of Citizen Journalism

The idea that each citizen can participate in the acts of journalism has a long history in India. If we look at the global scenario, the modern movement of citizen journalism began after journalists started to question the certainty of their coverage of the news on events such as 1988 US Presidential elections. Those journalists became a part of the masses or civic journalism movement, which tried to compensate the lack of trust in the conventional news media and the widespread disappointment with civic and politics affair.

Initially, the idea of 'public journalism' primarily backed the journalism which was 'for the people' by modifying the method through which professional reporters worked. Leonardo Witt believed that the efforts of initial public journalism were a part of the special projects, which were time-consuming, expensive and episodic. While these dealt with the issues and moved on, the professional journalism was driving the discussion. They would have an agenda of doing stories on 'welfare-to-work' (or social issues, which had direct impact on public, like economy, environment, etc.) and, then, they would hire a cross-section of citizens and note their viewpoints. Since not all the people from the journalism fraternity bought on this form of public journalism, reaching out to the masses from the news studio was not an easy task. This is where the need of live and local reporting was felt.

The term citizen journalism is often interchangeably used for 'user-generated content (UGC)'. However, this term lacks a clear form of conceptualization, as it removes the likely civic virtues of participatory journalism and rather regards it as stunted.

With the growing impact of technology, an average person is able to step into the shoes of a citizen journalist by capturing the news and distributing it globally. A recent trend of journalism which is on a rise today is hyperlocal journalism, which invites the local residents of the subscription areas to come on in and report on the topics which convention media neglects. In short, instead of being the gatekeeper by telling people what should be important to them as news, they are asking the common man to be the eyes and ears of the media.

The history of citizen journalism pre-dates professional journalism by about 200 years. The first newspaper in India was published in 1780, and over the next 200 years, there were hundreds of newspapers being published with varying degrees of success. During this time, none of the journalist was a professional as the profession hadn't been created then. They were the citizens who felt passionately about some matter or had access to printing press, who came forward to write, print and distribute their news. This could well be compared with the 21st century bloggers or photographers.

With the advent of citizen journalism, the profession of journalism is gradually transitioning back to from where it started – the citizens. Even the media houses, today, look out for the citizen journalists, who are able to find stories, follow events, record sounds, photograph incidents and provide the first-hand account of the event.

Forms of Citizen Journalism

1. **Independent Citizen Journalism**: This includes the stories from the citizen journalists who operate in the ways which are entirely independent of the traditional or professional news agencies. This could also include blogs in which individuals report about the events happening in their communities or offer commentary on a variety of issues ranging from personal to political events.

   Blogs are an intricate part of a news website today. The news websites could be run by an individual or a group of people who report on news events in local communities and screen the content before publishing on the live server. Wikinews is one of the examples of such blogs, where anyone can post and edit their stories. YouTube is another platform, which is often used by citizen journalists to voice their report. Additionally, there are hybrid sites as well where professional and citizen journalists collaborate on the same story.

2. **Semi-Independent Citizen Journalism**: This comprises the reports contributed by the citizen journalists to various popular professional news sites. This not only gives them a platform to voice their opinions, but also gives the content a much wider exposure. Semi-independent citizen journalism also includes the comments posted by the general public on the reports published by professional journalists.

Almost every news website today allows the readers to post their comments or thoughts on the report. They are even persuaded to add any extra information they might have to the information posted by the professionals. There are times when citizen journalists are asked to actively work with the professional reporters in putting together a story. The citizen blogs are even incorporated into the professional news websites, where the citizen journalists are responsible for creation, augmentation and fact checking of the news.

Examples of Citizen Journalism

A few examples of the popular citizen journalism sites are merinews.com, The Viewspaper, cgnet.com and citizen reporter section in the popular daily, The Times of India.

Figure 17 Source: Merinews.com; retrieved on 14 March, 2019.

Figure 18 Source: https://tinyurl.com/ydbn8njm; retrieved on 14 March, 2019.

Figure 19 Source: Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/y342mlhc; retrieved from 14 March, 2019.

Have The Canons Deafened Our Hearts?

TVP Editorial   *November 20, 2015*   *Arts,Interviews,News,Society*   *0 comments*

In conversation with Dhruv Sachdeva… The Viewspaper got talking to Dhruv Sachdeva, founder of 'Humour Me', a premium content generator in the Branded Entertainment space. Dhruv has been on quite a journey, he started his acting career with the role of 'Scar' in the musical 'Circle of

Figure 20 Source: https://tinyurl.com/y3v5jpux; Retrieved on 14 March, 2019.

Challenges in Citizen Journalism

There are a few issues facing citizen journalism today. Since it involves the dynamic participation of public or amateur journalists based outside a formal media setup, it is likely that the news-making and news-gathering processes adopted wouldn't comply with the traditional journalistic routines and norms. The content generated by the citizen journalists is 'by the public, for the public' and doesn't follow the journalistic principles of writing, like objectivity; accuracy and fairness. Citizen journalism might be more susceptible to the production and distribution mistakes, false information and fake news. It could also be highly unsystematic, biased and controversial.

This involvement of citizen journalists subsequently could help professional journalists to fill news gaps or see what the public perceives as important. The public due to the accessibility of the digital services could actually benefit as they can generate counter-narrative views to the mainstream news. However in practice, citizen journalism is never perceived emphatically and is often considered to be as competition to journalists' profession and sometimes as unauthorized competition.

The foremost basis behind it is that citizen journalists are not bound to deontological reporting principles. It is noble for the journalists to embrace the citizen journalists; however, it is at best to consider certain guiding principles before framing the report. The news produced by citizen journalists must never be embraced blindly. Collaborating with the citizens journalists could lead to greater prospective; however, not each newspaper article or news would require the cooperation with the citizen. Collaboration demands time and resources and ought to be worthwhile. Hence, quality takes the upper hand in this case. Citizen participation ought to take advantage on the quality of the news and not the quantity. Citizen journalism can, of course, co-exist with professional journalism with constructive intention of filling each other's gaps.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. "Mass Communication has in several ways become less massive and less centralized." Do you agree?

2. Differentiate between leaflets and posters.

3. Compare print, electronic and digital media on the following grounds:

   a. Reach

   b. Affordability

   c. Minimum education required

   d. Minimum resources required

4. Explain the principles of online journalism.

5. Explain the basic principles of writing for web.

6. What are the characteristics of radio medium? Explain the process of writing for radio.

7. Serious news is now news in contemporary journalism. Discuss.

8. List various disadvantages of online journalism.

9. Are anonymous web comments and letters to the editors ethical?

10. Do you think citizen or participatory journalism is blurring the lines of the limitations of professional journalism?

11. What inspires citizen journalists to report a story? Is h/she driven by journalistic values, grievance or just the benefit of being in the right place at the right time?

12. What are the various forms of citizen journalism? Explain with a few examples.

FURTHER READING

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