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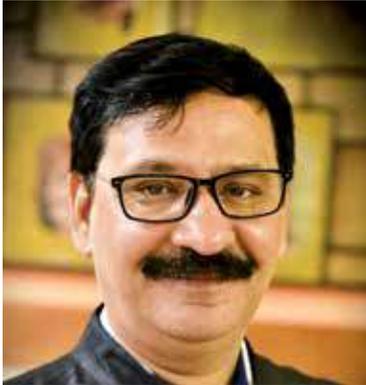
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From the Chief Editor's Desk



Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi
Director General
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On this independence day, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi set a "Panch Pran Target" to make India a developed country by the time it celebrates its 100th Independence Day in 25 years. The five resolutions laid down by the Prime Minister will help India become a developed nation in the next 25 years. The *panch pran* are: i) Goal of a developed India; ii) Remove all traces of colonial mindset; iii) take pride in Indian heritage; iv) unity and integrity; and v) sense of duty among the citizens. In this issue, there are papers that indicate the country's progress towards development.

Media plays a crucial role in the development of any country. The aim of media literacy is to promote an awareness of media influence and an active attitude towards both consumption and creation of media. Technology is continually developing, which increases the amount of information available. Since the 1990s, media literacy has evolved from the concept of choosing what information you need from a pile of information, and testing it on the reliability criterion as well. There has been a rise in fake news and its effect has been amplified by digital technology and social media. This further increases the need for media literacy. People should have the ability to analyse or dismiss fake information. It has become difficult to determine which information is accurate and which is not, the conversation about media literacy has yet to begin at the higher education level and even in the education system.

In this context, the first article in this issue discusses the New Education Policy and Media Literacy. The new education policy of India aims to make the education system more accessible and modern for students. The purpose of this education policy is to train us to think logically instead of just memorising information. By implementing such reforms in Indian schools and higher education systems, the New Education Policy aims to make India a world power in knowledge.

Another paper examines the inclusion of trauma literacy in Indian journalism academia and practice. This study investigates the journalism curricula and practice in the Indian context for inclusion of trauma literacy. It anatomises curricula of 24 journalism schools – public and private – in India, to inspect the element of trauma literacy. The study finds that trauma literacy, as a concept or construct with a uniform meaning, was absent across curricula. Hence, the study proposes a charter for journalism education to include trauma literacy in its curricula; and a framework that may



be used by newsrooms to mitigate trauma that the news workers negotiate with.

We live in a world where mobile phones have become an essential part of our daily lives. The usage of mobile phones has increased rapidly in this digital age, and it has completely shrunk the world. It has been observed that youth are using mobile phones more frequently than ever before, which is seriously affecting their health. A paper in this issue discusses how smartphones affect the overall psychological health of youth in all aspects and also aims to understand the consequences of phone-life balance on the health of young people. In the paper, it is argued that technology-based unhealthy practices for youth should be banned, as they affect their mental health as well as their emotional, behavioural, social, and physical health.

Another paper has explored the factors that influence the use of the internet taking into consideration the Indian context by examining existing research on internet usage and offering a conceptual model and generating relationships between the underlying factors influencing internet usage. With special reference to India, particularly for middle-aged groups, this study proposes a systematic review of factors influencing internet usage based on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and aims to present a conceptual model for assessing the pattern of internet usage and factors influencing it.

Among the papers published in this issue is one that examines what motivates artisans and small businesses to sell their products on Instagram. Another paper aims to develop a framework by reviewing existing literature on health communication campaigns and also attempts to identify the components that health campaign planners should take into account while planning, designing and implementing a health campaign.

More papers on important topics such as development of new models in Public Relations, exploring strategic options for the Agnipath scheme, influence of independent fact checking outlets also got space.

I hope readers will find the topics covered in this issue interesting. For their continued support, I would like to thank the editorial team, the entire editorial board, and the reviewers. I also urge readers to send in their invaluable suggestions.

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi



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New Education Policy and Media Literacy

SANJAY DWIVEDI¹

ABSTRACT

Albert Einstein had said, "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school." Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world. When a big change has to be made in the country, then first of all the education policy is changed. About two years earlier, on July 29, 2020, the Union Cabinet approved the New Education Policy. Education policy is the most important step in preparing the future of any country. Any education policy should not only include the constitutional values of the country, but it should also prepare a conscious and modern generation together with removing social evils as well. However, to make any country's education policy successful, the biggest carrier is the media of that country. For the development of the country in which education occupies a very important place, its real situation can be gauged only through the media. For some time now, when the whole world is passing through the COVID epidemic, the word 'infodemic' has become very popular. Many of its consequences and side effects have also been seen. This word means too much information or, in colloquial terms, the explosion of information. When it becomes difficult to choose which information to believe in and which not to, the situation leads to discourses on media and information literacy. As far as the national education policy is concerned, in that too, provision has been made for logic and creativity along with 'problem solving', which reflects media literacy and new education policy as complementary to each other.

Keywords: *Amrit kaal, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Digital media, Information literacy, Media literacy, New Education Policy*

Introduction

Education is a subject, in which it is difficult to bring about a change overnight. But, if the implementing authorities have the will, then change is not too difficult either. With the New Education Policy in the country, the foundation stone has been laid for many changes. This wind of change will shape the thinking, which has been envisioned in this policy in the coming days. In the last two years, teachers and policymakers have worked hard to bring the National Education Policy on the ground. In the time of COVID as well, suggestions have been taken from millions of citizens, teachers, states, autonomous organizations, forming a task force to implement the New Education Policy in a phased manner. On 15th August, we entered the 75th year of independence. Implementation of the new National Education Policy in a way is a major component of the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*. How far we will go in the future and how high we will reach, will depend on what kind of education and direction we are giving to our youth at present. The new National Education Policy of India is the most important element in the

great endeavour of nation building.

There was a big challenge before our education system during the COVID period. During this time, the way of studying and life as a whole changed for the students. But, the students quickly adapted to the change. Online education has now become a natural trend. The Ministry of Education has also made several efforts in this regard. The Ministry launched the DIKSHA platform and started several courses on SWAYAM portal, and the students from all over the country became a part of it. DIKSHA is a national initiative of the National Council of Educational Research and Training under 'Digital Infrastructure' for schools with an aim of 'Knowledge Sharing'. 'DIKSHA' is developed based on the core principles of open architecture. Launched on September 5, 2017, since then 35 states/UTs have adopted it and along with CBSE and NCERT, it has also been adopted by crores of learners and teachers. Its success can be gauged from the fact that till date its usage matrix after being implemented in all the states has reached to 4,94,61,48,417 (Four Billion Nine Hundred Forty Six Million One Hundred Forty Eight Thousand Four

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Hundred Seventeen), in which students have been engaged in learning activities using 'Diksha' multiple times (diksha.gov.in, June 2022).

The youth of the 21st century want to make their own arrangements, their own world according to their own accord. Today, the youths coming out of small villages and towns are doing wonders. Youths coming from ordinary families and remote areas are raising the country's flag in the Olympics today, giving India a new identity. Similarly, crores of youths are doing extraordinary work in different fields today and laying the foundation for extraordinary goals. Some are giving birth to new genres in the field of art and culture with the confluence of antiquity and modernity. Some are giving new height to human abilities in the field of artificial intelligence. In every field, the youths of India are moving forward to make their mark. The youths of India are revolutionizing the start-up ecosystem, cultivating India's leadership in the industry and giving new momentum to Digital India. When this young generation gets the environment according to their dreams, their power will increase manifold. That is why the new National Education Policy assures the youths that the country is with them in their courage and endeavour. Under the National Education Policy, it has also been kept in mind that the digital changes in education should happen simultaneously in the whole country, and villages and cities should all be equally connected to digital learning. 'National Digital Education Architecture' and 'National Education Technology Forum' are playing an important role in this direction to provide digital and technological framework across the country. Under NEP, a new initiative will be implemented across the country which will be called 'School Quality Assessment and Assurance Framework'. This will tackle absence of a common scientific framework in the dimensions like curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, basic infrastructure, inclusive practices and governance (Saxena, 2021).

The new programmes started under the NEP have the potential to change the fate of India. To realize the possibilities being created at present, our youth must be one step ahead of the world. Be it health, defence, infrastructure or technology, India will have to be capable and self-sufficient in every direction. The way of 'Self-reliant India' goes through 'skill development' and technology, which has been given special attention in the NEP. In the last one year, hundreds of new courses associated with 'skill development' have been approved in more than 1,200 higher education institutions. Today, we are living in such a time where there is a lot of information and words like 'post truth' have entered the everyday

conversation. When something is beyond the truth, when there is no difference between lies and truth, when the idea of right and wrong is not based on fact or knowledge but on the basis of emotion, it is called 'post truth'. In such times, awareness and understanding has to be created among people regarding 'information'. Making things up and promoting them for one's own self interest is not a new thing but the way false information on political, economic and social issues are being spread in the digital world is a matter of concern. In this sequence, with the introduction of discussions like critical thinking ability development, 'peer tutoring' concept, digital library, problem-solving attitude, creative thinking and rationality in the NEP, it seems that this policy has given media and information literacy a special place (National Education Policy, 2020).

Media literacy: The need of the hour

Media literacy education is a process used to advance media literacy competencies. It aims to promote awareness of media influence and active attitude towards both consumption and creation (Hobbs, 2011). The media literacy discourse has not come into being in the COVID period itself. With the development of technology, the amount of information is also increasing continuously. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. To choose the information of your use from the pile of information and the necessity to test them also on the criterion of reliability gave rise to the concept of media literacy in the 1990s. Fake news has become a big business today and digital media has also affected it. So, the need for media literacy increases further. The spread of mass flow of information due to social media is no longer limited to the elite or the media. Due to this network, stopping the flow of information has become impossible. In such an environment, people should have such 'tools' by which they can analyse and even dismiss that information. For this, awareness has to be increased from a very young age because the information starts from early childhood itself. For this, we have to make changes in school curriculum, teaching methods and education system. We have to find ways so that the difference between facts and fiction can be made. With the increase in the number of smartphones and tablets, access to information has become much easier for younger generation. A research in the year 2016 by the Stanford History Education Group revealed that 80% of the students who use different social media platforms cannot differentiate between advertisement and news. This means that students are unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood in the mass of information they are confronted with. However,

some countries had already understood this problem and they have been trying to deal with it over the years (Donald, 2016).

Finland is said to be the country with the best government schools and colleges in the world. From the year 2014, a campaign against false news has been launched in Finland aimed at enhancing the ability of analysis and understanding of students. According to the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study of the year 2016, 82% of teachers in Finland consider encouraging students to develop analytical and independent thinking as an essential task. Finland, in collaboration with institutions or experts promoting fact-checking which means telling the difference between true and false news, is upskilling students to combat fake news. For this, current issues are discussed with the students promoting a culture of asking questions and discussion. This kind of effort is also necessary for teachers in India's higher education institutions (ICCS, 2016).

Today, in India also, it is becoming difficult to find out which information is true and which is false. The conversation is yet to begin to increase media literacy at the level of higher education, and even at the school level. The role of information and communications technology (ICT) is increasing in the field of education but we should not consider working technical ability as literacy. Information is not limited by boundaries so we will have to see as to what is their context and whether it fulfils the condition of being ethical. India's school and college education system to a large extent is limited to the completion of the syllabus. It is not ready for the big responsibility of teaching students to differentiate between fake and real news. The first thing is that it has not even been accepted at the administrative level that how big is the problem of false news. Most of the teachers are not well-versed with digital technology. This is the biggest obstacle in this campaign. There is a social practice of blindly believing in the words printed in the newspapers or said on TV or the forwarded messages on WhatsApp, which needs to be changed by bringing reform at every level. The Education Department can bring about this change by making media literacy as part of the curriculum. Then, dedicated committees involving experts should be formed to prepare a training module for the teachers. In these committees, those working in this field and fact-checking institutions will have to be involved, who have developed a detection system to verify the truth of the information. These committees can be formed on the basis of state or territory so that they can prepare effective training modules keeping their students in mind. The training module should be comprehensive and reviewed on an annual basis,

so as to reflect the changes according to the needs. In the New Education Policy, there is a mention of provisions to promote analytical and independent thinking in students.

Every century is known for something or the other. The 21st century is being considered as the century of the era of 'Internet and Social Media'. Looking at changing dimensions of media, it seems that it is the time for change. New methods of communication and new mediums have come to the fore and have completely become a part of our lives. Social media, as a medium that connects people, have been adopted as an inseparable part of our life. Today, social media is deciding many aspects of our lives. The increase in the social media trends around the world can be gauged from the fact that now the number of people who use social media exceeds the number of people who do not use it. According to Statista (2021) report, social media usage is one of the most popular online activities. More than 3.6 billion people worldwide were using social media in 2020; this number is projected to grow to about 4.41 billion in 2025. The statistics are enough to tell what is the relevance of social media in the present times. Today, people using social media do not know its purpose.

In the year 2019, a survey report by Microsoft said that Internet users in India are more likely to encounter fake news. In this report prepared after conducting survey in 22 countries of the world, it was said that 64% of Indians were facing fake news. This is a matter of concern because the global average is 57%. The most important point of the report was that the role of family or friends was also identified as important in the dissemination of fake news (PTI, 2019). India is emerging as the largest market for internet and smartphones. According to Cisco report (2020), there will be 697.4 million wired/Wi-Fi connected devices in India by 2023 showing an increase from the current figure of 359.8 million. Apart from this, by the year 2022, internet data consumption is expected to grow five times higher in India than it is today (Cisco, 2020). All these statistics show that digital media has reached every household in our country. And, this is the time when we are also following the New Education Policy. Digital education during the COVID pandemic appears to be a major source. When it comes to New Education Policy, digital education is also being talked about. Since digital media also carry misinformation, it becomes necessary to promote discussions on subjects like media literacy.

New Education Policy and media literacy

Regarding education, Mahatma Gandhi said, "For

national education to be truly national, reflection on national circumstances is necessary.” To fulfil this visionary idea of Gandhiji, the idea of education in local languages has been kept in the National Education Policy. Now, in higher education, local language will also be an option for 'medium of instruction'. 14 engineering colleges in 8 states are going to begin engineering studies in 5 Indian languages—Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Bengali. A tool has also been created for translation of engineering courses in 11 Indian languages. This will benefit citizens to be efficient in communication and will be able to negotiate the information reaching them. In this way, different dimensions of media literacy can be included. Its biggest benefit will reach the poor sections of the country, middle-class students living in villages and towns, Dalit-backwards, and tribals. Children coming from these families face the 'language divide' the most. Studying in mother tongue will boost the confidence of poor children and it will be a true justice to their ability and talent.

The National Education Policy offers a new kind of flexibility. While this flexibility is present at the policy level, it also provides choice of options available to the students. Now, only the boards and universities will not decide for students as to how much to study, and for how long. Students will also participate in this decision. The system of multiple entry and exit which has been started, has freed the students from the compulsion of being stuck in a single class and a single course. Through the 'Academic Bank of Credits' system based on modern technology, revolutionary change is about to come in this direction. Now, students, according to their interest and convenience, can select a stream and also skip it.

In this context, to deal with the menace of fake news, the Government of Kerala has launched a digital media literacy programme called 'Satyamev Jayate'. There are five main points of this programme—What is misinformation? Why is it spreading so fast? What are the precautions to be taken while using social media content? How spreading fake news makes profit? And what steps can be taken by citizens to avoid it? (Philip, 2021)

For some years, NCERT introduced a section on media in the syllabus of class 11th and 12th. After this, it was planned to teach media studies as a subject in schools. But, in all these efforts, little to no effort has been made to understand the difference between journalism and media training or media literacy and media education. Is the aim of media literacy to give information to the children about bringing out newspapers or producing radio and television programmes? Those who have given serious

consideration to media studies and media literacy will agree that both do not aim to create media persons. The aim is to educate the media consumers who want to transmit or receive messages and information, about the way media works. It is as important for children to learn to use different communication media as it is to develop a critical understanding of the messages broadcasted from the media before receiving them. 'Media literacy' is a new concept to us, but in many parts of the world, especially in developed countries, experiments are being done for several years. After critical consideration of media studies and media literacy, the purpose of both of these is not to create media persons; rather its aim is to convey information about the working of media to those who are media consumers for taking advantage of the messages and information.

Media literacy is more important today than ever before because due to competition in the market, the nature of media has changed a lot. Besides, as new media has become so mixed in the society in India that if the society is not made aware of its methods, it can prove to be harmful. Information literacy is the ability of a person through which he/she knows what information he/she needs and where to get that information. Apart from this, an information literate person has the ability to evaluate and use that information effectively. From regulation to implementation of National Education Policy, teachers have been actively a part of this campaign. This golden opportunity has come in the lives of teachers to build and draw the outline of the future of the country with their own hands. In the coming times, as the different elements of the new 'National Education Policy' will turn into reality, our country will witness a new era. The 21st century is the century of knowledge. This is the century of learning and research. In this context, the new education policy of India aims to make its education system more accessible and modern for the students. Through this education policy, we will move towards that process which is helpful in life and trains to think logically instead of just rote learning. The policy aims to make such reforms in the schools and higher education system of India so that the country should be called the 'super power' of knowledge in the world. Our National Education Policy will link social wealth, indigenous knowledge and folk sentimentality with modernity and pave the way for the making of a 'complete citizen'.

Conclusion

Media literacy is needed not only for students, but for the whole society. If the administrative officers and employees who play an important role in the formation

of society are media literate, then they will be able to better understand the problem of fake news and its side-effects and will be able to take appropriate steps against it. We have to understand that not every news visible on a social media platform is guaranteed to be correct. It is also the responsibility of the government to prepare a better standard and, at the same time, prepare a syllabus to make every class media literate and implement it in schools. From school education to early childhood care and education, these elements are important for every child throughout their life. This is an extremely interesting and inspiring aspect that the New Education Policy has focused on the importance of developing scientific skills at an early age. Vedic mathematics, philosophy and the exercise of giving importance to subjects related to the ancient Indian knowledge tradition has also been done in the new education policy. The new education policy is based on connecting students to the roots of Indianness by making them 'global citizens' on the basis of tradition, culture, and knowledge. This policy lays emphasis on practical knowledge along with theoretical knowledge, which can lighten the burden of the school bags from the shoulders of the children. An international commission was set up under the chairmanship of the renowned educationist of the world Jacques Delors. The report of the Delors Commission was published by UNESCO in the year 1996. In this report, the four pillars of education of the 21st century were mentioned. These pillars are: learning for knowledge, learning by doing, learning to be, and learning to live together. India's New Education Policy emphasizes on all these things.

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Inclusion of Trauma Literacy in Indian Journalism Academia and Practice: A Corollary Drawn from Empirical Research

NEHA JINDAL¹ & SNEHA MEHENDALE²

ABSTRACT

A significant part of daily reportage deals with covering traumatic events of various kinds. Trauma is often associated with reporting during traumatic events, like conflicts or wars, and lately, during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, trauma literacy is a concept that doesn't find much space in journalism education and practice. This study investigates the journalism curricula and practice in the Indian context for inclusion of trauma literacy. It anatomises curricula of 24 journalism schools – public and private – in India, to inspect the element of trauma literacy. To append this, the study brings perspectives of practicing journalists, via in-depth interviews, on handling trauma. Based on these insights, the study finds that trauma literacy, as a concept or construct with a uniform meaning, was absent across curricula. It also finds from interviewing journalists that they find their own mechanisms to negotiate with the trauma as a part of their practice. Hence, the study proposes a charter for journalism education to include trauma literacy in its curricula; and a framework that may be used by newsrooms to mitigate trauma that the news workers negotiate with. These reflections will help propose a framework for journalism education and find an acknowledgement of handling trauma effectively in the journalism practice.

Keywords: Journalism education, Journalism practice, Mental health, Reporting, Trauma literacy

Introduction

Trauma, in journalism practice, features routinely in everyday coverage, with a significant amount of reportage dealing with traumatic events of various kinds. As journalists get exposed to various traumatic incidents, crime scenes, sites of natural and man-made disasters, they need to interact with people who have been through traumatic events, and thus experience second-hand trauma and resultant stress.

Trauma can be a polysemic concept, and hence the researchers wish to delimit and contextualise it for this paper. In reference to the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma's guide to Journalism and Trauma (2009), it is understood that a traumatic event would mean any event connected to a person, which is unexpected and involves some form of actual or perceived injury or loss, causing distress beyond the usual measure. Being aware about this definition of trauma does not imply trauma literacy. Seely (2020) goes on to discuss the concept of trauma literacy in detail, stating, that it means the awareness on the journalists' part that they will be exposed to psychological trauma in the course of

their professional practice and it will potentially leave an impact. Additionally, it also includes a concrete plan of action for taking care of one's mental health while continuing to be an ethical and respectful news gatherer (p. 119).

This apathy towards acknowledging trauma may find its roots in the lack of awareness towards mental health in the society, as revealed in the interviews with the journalists. As a society, one is hardly ever taught to actively check on or preserve one's mental health. This is not specific to the domain of journalism though. Recognising and acknowledging one's own mental health remains a far-fetched idea, given the taboo this domain finds around.

Review of literature

A nationwide survey done in India in 2018 brings forth that 72% of the sample displays a judgmental or fearful attitude towards mental health (Kantar Public India, 2018). Mohandas *et al.* (2019) argued that regular media coverage of mental health assumed a neutral tone, if not outright negative. Even the other front line workers, like the medical workers or

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the police, hardly ever recognize the psychological effects that the work has on the employees and make provisions to handle it. This is a socio-cultural issue, and while it may take ages for the society as a whole to change and acknowledge this issue, the journalism academia and industry must definitely work towards it, feel the journalists.

Certain efforts are being made recently to increase the awareness of trauma literacy amongst journalists. Google News Initiative Training Network organised various training sessions on trauma literacy in the recent past (Dart Center, 2021). Researchers from the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, as part of the Columbia Journalism School project, have created Journalist Trauma Exposure Scale (JTES), a 23-item self-report questionnaire, enquiring about specific trauma-related events journalists might have been exposed to while on an assignment (Pyeich, *et al.*, 2003). Some non-profit journalism efforts, like the Poynter, offer self-directed courses on trauma and journalism (Poynter, 2021). However, these remain stand-off events, research tools, or MOOCs, and the existence of trauma literacy modules is not reflected in systematic, standardised curricula of journalism schools (J-schools).

Coming to the situation in India, the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education (earlier Ministry of Human Resource Development), of the Government of India has guidelines for institutes of higher education in the country. These pertain to educational resource planning, higher and technical education (technology-enabled learning), enhancing gross enrolment ratio (GER), development of vocational and skill-centric education, and international collaborations (Results-Framework Document, 2014–2015), but no specific guidelines for media education.

When it comes to trauma in the field, war reporters are most likely understood to be exposed to trauma, and the need of looking at the psychopathology of war reporters has been addressed in the past (Feinstein, *et al.*, 2002; Leavot *et al.*, 2013). However, delving deeper into forms of crisis reporting, one understands that it goes beyond reporting catastrophes; it goes to reporting everyday individual sufferings. This acknowledgement seems to be grossly missing in the journalistic practice (Greenberg *et al.*, 2009; Ananthan, 2019) as well as most journalism curricula. The journalist is not conditioned to the fact that trauma from everyday reporting is a part of their profile (Seely, 2020, p. 118).

As trauma encountered by a journalist transcends the beat of war reporting, Backholm and Björkqvist (2012) studied the relationship between potentially traumatic assignments (PTAs) and post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD) for journalists. They found that the PTAs were predictors of PTSD in journalists participating in the study. This warrants a closer look at and a more critical deliberation of how journalists deal with this second-hand trauma and stress. The pandemic has emphasised the need for trauma literacy, as journalists, irrespective of their usual allocated beats, training and experience, had to continuously cover the COVID-19 issue and cases, and deal with subsequent trauma.

Dworznik and Grubb (2007) make a case for introducing journalism students to the potential exposure to trauma in the course of their professional practice, so that they are not completely caught off guard. Seely (2020) discusses the published results of a US-based survey (as cited in Melki *et al.*, 2013) where 50% of the surveyed journalists said that trauma education received little importance in the curriculum (p. 120). Dworznik and Garvey (2019) found that only one program offered a course about trauma reporting, regardless of the schools partaking in the survey reported this to be an important topic.

Seely (2020) talks about the gap in higher education journalism curricula worldwide, with regard to training students on how to cover trauma and how to deal with it when on field. She agrees that an entire course dedicated on trauma literacy may be "unrealistic for many journalism programs, but even the mention of trauma in journalism course syllabi is uncommon." (p. 118).

Research objectives and questions

Journalism is a cultural resource and has to be culturally contextualised. Therefore, one finds various differences in how the journalism practice pans out in different cultures. The journalism curricula usually feature elements which are specific to the local/regional practice of journalism, along with some universally accepted definitions, norms and ideals; for example, Objectivity (Cottle, 2007). Hence, it becomes imperative to see if Indian journalism curricula and practice feature any trauma literacy elements. Building on the above mentioned studies on trauma literacy in US-based journalism curricula, this study evaluated this in the Indian context and proposed the following objectives.

The present research addresses the need to study the missing deliberation on trauma literacy in J-schools' curricula, by identifying the element of trauma literacy therein, and append the findings by interviewing journalism practitioners on trauma literacy.

- To examine the curricula of J-schools in India to identify the elements of trauma literacy.
- To highlight the need for including trauma literacy

modules in curricula based on interview findings from practicing journalists.

Research methodology

The study uses two types of qualitative methods. Secondary data was collected from curriculum of twenty-four (24) Indian journalism schools in order to examine the trauma literacy element. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex statutory body governing higher education in India, lists the total number of accredited universities in India. With 45,000 higher educational institutes in India, there are 1,043 universities—49 central universities, 405 state universities, 135 institutes of national importance, 126 deemed to be universities and 328 private universities (Sridhar, 2021). From this list of central (public) and private universities available on the UGC website (Consolidated list of all universities) updated as of August, 2021, UGC-accredited universities were selected to finalise the representative sample of universities which have a journalism or media school. Out of this list, 24 journalism schools (12 public and 12 private) were finalised using a table of random numbers, under a zone-wise segregation to have representative samples from north, south, east, west, north east, and central zones within India.

Curriculum of journalism schools, both public and private, was obtained from selected institutes' websites. Institutions' heads/administrators were contacted via email (extracted from institutes' websites) and telephone to gain access to curriculums unavailable on the websites. The syllabi were then data-mined for aspects of trauma literacy, for the purpose of this study.

Public universities are generally thought to be more rigid in terms of quickly changing the curriculum, however there was more compliance in the curriculum of public universities vis-à-vis keeping abreast with the changes and industry demands (Jindal, 2020). This contrasts the pre-conceived albeit prevalent notion that private universities are understood to update curricula more frequently in order to suit the VUCA (short for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world outside (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014).

For the second objective, the researchers, with a qualitative methodological framework, conducted in-depth, focused, open-ended interviews with eight practicing journalists. All these journalists report beats that may lead to them encountering and/or dealing with trauma while reporting in the field and after that. The interviewees were selected by non-probability sampling procedure following a judgement sampling method. The interviewees

were with field experiences of ten to twenty years in print, broadcast and wire services. These interviews took place between the months of March 2021 to May 2021 and were done remotely, considering the pandemic-imposed lockdown in the country.

Findings and analysis

Trauma literacy in curricula

The analysis of curricula revealed that they have been designed considering all major disciplines under the Journalism and Mass Communication umbrella. All media—print, electronic and new media are in the syllabi of both public and private journalism and mass communications schools in the country. These syllabi were found to be skill-centric, industry-focused, and practice oriented. Some syllabi had minor modules or topics on trauma literacy modules, however, an overarching structure or theme could not be spotted.

The only course with two units on conflict reporting is offered by the Central University of Kashmir, a public university. Additionally, it features a module on conflict photography in the photography course, an entire course on covering conflict and development, inclusive of understanding the stakeholders and dynamics of conflict, human face of the conflict, challenges in conflict reporting, safety of journalists; Geneva Conventions: Journalists are civilians too (Protocol I-Article 79), conflict reporting checklist, equipment (satellite phone, bullet-proof vests, GPRS, etc.). Besides offering techniques on writing pitches and reporting from conflict zones, working with local sources and guides, and meeting deadlines, the course includes case studies which largely talks about the experiences of journalists reporting from conflict zones.

Dibrugarh University is a public university in the northeast Indian state of Assam. It offers a course 'peace and conflict journalism' as part of the journalism syllabus, but covers only the reporting section and not safety guidelines or trauma training. Sikkim Manipal University, a private university, offers topics like media reforms module, media justice and media pluralism; multilateral initiatives like internet governance and cultural exclusion to diversity.

Inspection of curriculum of other universities in the representative sample: public— Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Pondicherry University, and Indira Gandhi National Tribal University; and private—Jodhpur National University, Kakatiya University, and Birla Global University - to name a few - for the component on trauma literacy, or trauma post reporting revealed that albeit there are several courses and modules on reporting crises,

training on trauma literacy is absent. Some topics included are the reportage of marginalised sections—children, dalits, tribals, gender, and media coverage of violence and related laws—hate speech, global and internal conflicts and terrorism.

Trauma and working journalists: Inferences from interviews with the journalists

Supplementing the findings of study of journalism curricula with journalists' experiences with trauma literacy, the researchers conducted in-depth, focused, open-ended interviews with eight journalists, from six towns and cities in India. The aim was to understand their experiences with reporting trauma, either as a part of their education or in their professional practice. Below are some prominent themes that emerge after analysing the interviews:

(i) Absence of trauma literacy in curricula:

All except one journalist have pursued their post-graduate degrees in journalism and one with an undergraduate programme in media too, before the post-graduation. All journalists unanimously said that the journalism education they received did not have any specific module on how journalists can deal with various kinds of trauma that they will eventually encounter in their practice. Two of them mentioned that they had a course named media psychology, however, it's nature was theoretical, with no insights on what to do if faced with a trauma or a conflict.

An example of Jalees Andrabi, South Asia correspondent with Agence France-Presse (AFP) is worth mentioning here. Jalees comes from the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir and has completed his education there. Despite it being a perpetual socio-political conflict-ridden state, the curriculum did not have any specific element mentioning the trauma which the journalists may have to face. Sharing one of his experiences, he says, *“While travelling with a few colleagues during election time, our car hit a landmine leading to an explosion. Dealing with the loss of life of a colleague, that of the driver, and loss of limb of another colleague is a situation no journalism school prepares you for.”*

Another crucial point to note here is encountering trauma in different beats. As mentioned above a course in conflict reporting has some modules on safety aspects for journalists, however, it is a wrong assumption that only conflict or war reporting leads to the exposure to trauma. Amongst the interviewed journalists many were not war or conflict reporters per se. But in their beats like health, crime and civic, they had come across enough situations which would cause trauma of some sort. Over the past one year, when all journalists irrespective of their assigned beats, had to do COVID-19 reporting, exposure to

trauma was multifold. The journalists hence, mention that subject-specific courses in the curricula need to have the trauma literacy element too.

(ii) Varying newsroom cultures: There is always a gap between industry practices and the academic teachings in any field (Allen *et al.*, 2020, p. 2). The researchers asked the journalists if their professional practice held any element of trauma literacy, if not their education. In the answer to this question, the newsrooms show a mixed picture. All journalists concur that most Indian newsrooms do not have specific training for the reporter in dealing with trauma. Many newsrooms organise training sessions on ensuring physical safety for the journalists, though. Journalists recounted incidents of training on physical safety—from what to do in case one is kidnapped, or the newsroom is attacked, or the safety gear to carry when going out to cover landslides and riots, etc. However, being in these situations inflicts serious mental effects. *“No one talks about preparing for dealing with the mental effects, ever”*, says Taniya Dutta, a senior reporter with a British news agency. *“I am not saying that a reporter has to undergo a psychological consultation or counselling after coming back from every assignment. But we can certainly benefit from one-odd lecture or talk organized by the newsroom,”* says an Indian Express journalist.

A couple of journalists shared some positive experiences too in this regard. A journalist working with the BBC India happily says that her current employer shows far more awareness when it comes to trauma and its effects. At joining the BBC, she underwent a detailed session on taking care of one's own mental health, in the course of reporting. Even today, she says, the employees receive an e-mail or a message when some trauma inducing incident takes place. They have a counsellor on call, and a helpline. As a part of HR policy, the organisation also started offering 'COVID care leave', which the reporter could avail of in case they feel that there has been a rather strong physical or mental exposure to COVID-19 related trauma. *“They encourage us to reach out in case we need an ear. Especially during the second wave of COVID-19, when so many of us lost someone or the other from close circles, and had to deal with this loss, such support is crucial.”* Another journalist working with a major daily in Chennai says that their employer has instituted a counsellor for journalists in this pandemic era. *“Things seem to change slowly. But this awareness should continue even after the pandemic is over,”* she says.

(iii) The multifold, multilayered trauma: Interviews with these journalists brought out another interesting observation. Trauma is a multi-layered concept, and this needs to be acknowledged. A

journalist witnessing a traumatic situation at work might be impacted with a second layer of trauma, as a result. Many journalists work on a story for several days. This may cause prolonged mental stress. “*In the case of COVID-19, so many people I had spoken to in my course of reporting are no more. In a couple of cases, they died even before my stories were out. It has been traumatizing and I have no idea how to deal with it,*” expresses the BBC India journalist.

Impact of covering certain kinds of stories breaches the professional realm and goes deeper into affecting an individual’s mindset and feelings. Chhayanka Nigam, another interviewee shared that she had trust issues and paranoia after covering rape stories. “*Every story I cover leaves a little piece of itself with me, to put it metaphorically*”. Such stress is more long-lasting.

Another stress inducer to be factored in here is the rampant job losses that journalists faced in the past year due to COVID-19. The journalists who have been fortunate to retain their jobs have been stressed out with the fear of losing that job someday. This makes them work longer shifts, without complaining or taking a break. This exacerbates the trauma they have been going through.

Furthermore, a bureau chief at Hindustan Times highlighted the constant ‘on’ nature of the pandemic, which traumatizes the journalists more. He says “*We are used to covering a whole range of issues—murders, riots, bomb blasts, terror attacks, natural disasters, rapes, protests and even all-out wars. But most of the traumatic incidents or stories get over in a particular time period. We invest ourselves in that, get affected, but also get over it in two-three weeks’ time. The pandemic is just on 24/7. There is no end in sight. It is like a dull, constantly throbbing headache that just does not stop.*”

A journalist with the Indian express highlighting an often overlooked aspect here, mentioned the existing psychological profile of a journalist. They may have had certain experiences in their life and they will react very differently to different traumatic incidents than other journalists. Many things can trigger unwelcome psychological reactions in a journalist, and there has to be an acknowledgement of this. The concept of trauma is thus multifold and multilayered, and any trauma literacy programme or intervention needs to acknowledge this nature of the concept.

(iv) The Lack of acknowledgement: A sociocultural issue: This brings the discussion to a wider, more crucial point. All journalists asserted that there is a distinct lack of acknowledgement for mental health needs in our professional spaces, with regard to journalism education and practice. “*The J-schools actually teach us to be a neutral, detached*

observer. In fact, the definition of a good reporter is—often someone who quickly, efficiently gets stories, while being sane, unaffected and balanced all the time. This makes many reporters boast about how unaffected and ‘strong’ they are even in the face of greatest of traumas. This is problematic. If someone doesn’t get affected by the trauma around, it is a problem, not a badge of honour!” says the BBC India journalist. Jalees Andrabi, the AFP correspondent says that a journalist may feel that they have a shield, but incidents like riots makes one realise that journalists are as vulnerable as everyone else, and violence will always have an impact on all.

Discussion

The journalism curricula analysed for this study makes the lack of trauma literacy component evident. Not only is trauma literacy, as a concept or construct, absent across curricula, but even syllabi with some concepts regarding trauma fail to elaborate on its nature. For example, covering marginalised communities like Tribals and Dalits, would have been, in our opinion, an excellent laying ground for introducing trauma literacy. So is the case with a module like media coverage of violence. However, the opportunity seems to be missed here. Only exception, if any, seems to be the Central University of Kashmir. This may be the case since Kashmir is itself a conflict zone and hence the said training for journalists is an exhaustive part of the curriculum in this one representative university sample. Even if this is understood to be an example of culturally or regionally contextualising the curriculum, such review is not seen amongst university curricula from other regions.

The personal accounts and reports of the interviewees’ dealing with trauma, even fearing their lives while reporting everyday distress causing incidents, only strengthen this argument. It should serve as a wake-up-call for journalism education to include trauma literacy as a module in their curricula. The journalists, naturally, come up with their own mechanisms to negotiate with the trauma as a part of their practice, given the lack of specific curricular orientation. Most of them assert that writing on traumatic incidents or covering stories in detail provides them solace and helps them deal with the trauma. Many have also sought professional counselling after covering traumatic incidents. However, they were largely on a personal level and not institutionalised by the newsroom.

Charter for J-schools: A corollary to the absent trauma literacy training

The study proposes certain policy-level suggestions for incorporating trauma literacy in

J-schools' curricula, derived from the findings above, from both inspecting J-schools' curricula and interviewing journalists. They are as below:

(i) More realistic, less aspirational classrooms:

The J-schools need to offer courses inclusive of more realistic accounts of what a journalist has to face in the field. Many students tend to develop a romantic idea of what the profession is like, without acknowledging the effects the journalistic practice will have upon them. The recognition of the fact that every journalist, at some point in their career, will report some sort of conflict and face some kind of trauma needs to become a part of the course curriculum.

More focus should be given on educating the journalism students about how to recognize this trauma and how to take appropriate action about the same. There was a strong resonance of the fact that J-schools may gain significantly from adding a module or a workshop on trauma literacy, and/or a series of talks by journalists reporting not just conflict and war, but everyday crime. It may not only be a gravely needed and much called-for value addition to journalism curricula, but will be a tremendous upgrade for journalism students going into everyday beat reporting, and will positively impact their practice.

(ii) Specialised practical training: A journalism class features students with varied career aspirations. Designing specific assignments which expect the students to expose themselves to a possible trauma while reporting, is a pragmatic suggestion and can be incorporated. After returning to the class, the educator and the students should discuss the experience in detail where some practical suggestions on how to deal with trauma can emerge. Such teaching will be a beneficial investment for a J-school.

(iii) Teaching media psychology: As mentioned by some respondents, some institutions offer a course on media psychology to journalism students. Such a course needs to feature across all J-schools' curricula. More importantly, it won't suffice to run such a course theoretically. The circumstances where psychology might be relevant for a journalist and how they will negotiate with the psychological effects, needs to be discussed more directly. Hence, incorporating talks from journalism practitioners detailing their personal experiences can be a helpful tool in these sessions.

(iv) Newsroom-level improvements: The interviewees recommended newsroom level initiatives, which, most prominently included having a trained psychologist in a team or on-call, and having institutionalised support structure for journalists. As this came from some journalists who dealt with reporting induced trauma on their own, and without institutional support, this particular recommendation

is pertinent.

Conclusion

An analysis of the curricula has established that all major streams, mediums, updated concepts and industry trends are reflecting in the curricula. Most representative syllabi show a focus on an increasing industry demand and hence have incorporated topics like skills, practice and output. Besides incorporating the industry's trend shift in mediums and technology, when it comes to topicality in syllabi, the paper has highlighted the missing component of trauma literacy in Indian J-schools' curricula. The study has identified that the concept of trauma literacy is absent from curricula of several institutes, and if there is a module or note on it, it is non-reflective in nature. There are instances where cultural or regional implications appear to be the reason for a module or construct on trauma literacy, but the depth of the topic remains missing. Appending the findings from analysis of syllabi are the experiences of journalists, underlining the lack of formal education in trauma literacy and various individual mechanisms to cope with it. However, merely weighing on this absence will neither suffice nor constructively benefit journalism practice. In identifying a few pain points regarding the absence of training or conditioning towards trauma literacy like the lack of acknowledgment of multifold trauma and that of independent newsroom cultures, inferences from interviews have revealed possible solutions, like specialised training and newsroom-level improvements. Hence, the study makes several suggestions with reference to curricular changes and suggests incorporating specifics like teaching media psychology to aspiring reporters and keeping classrooms realistic. This, if acted upon, can provide major qualitative improvements in journalism education in India.

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Appendices

Overview of Curricula: List of institutions

Public

1. Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Centre for Journalism and Mass Communication, Srinagar, Uttarakhand
2. Central University of Kashmir, School of Media Studies, Ganderbal, Kashmir
3. Pondicherry University, Department of Electronic Media and Mass Communication Kalapet, Puducherry
4. Krishna University, Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh
5. University of Burdwan, Department of Mass Communication, Burdwan, West Bengal
6. Behrampur University, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Odisha
7. Maharaj Sayajirao University of Baroda, Faculty of Journalism and Communication, Vadodara, Gujarat
8. Rastrasant Tukodji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur
9. Tripura University, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Agartala, Tripura
10. Dibrugarh University, Centre for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication, Assam
11. Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh
12. Devi Ahilya Vishvidyala, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Indore, Madhya Pradesh

Private

1. Jodhpur National University, Faculty of Arts and Commerce, Jodhpur, Rajasthan
2. Shri Ram Swarup Memorial University, Institute of Media Studies, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
3. Kakatiya University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Warangal, Hyderabad
4. Reva University, School of Arts and Humanities, Bangalore
5. Birla Global University, School of Communication, Bhubaneswar
6. Adamas University, School of Social Science, Journalism and Mass Communication, Kolkata, West Bengal
7. Flame University, School of Liberal Arts, Pune
8. Rai University, College of Media & Communication, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
9. Mahatma Gandhi University, Department of Multimedia and Mass Media, Khanapara, Meghalaya
10. Assam Don Bosco University, Assam
11. Jagran Lake City University, School of Media and Communication, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
12. Amity University, Amity School of Communication, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

List of interviewees (Journalism practitioners)

1. Jalees Andrabi, South Asia Correspondent, Agence France-Presse, 15 years' experience with print media and wire news services
2. Taniya Dutta, Senior Reporter, British News Agency, 10 years with the agency
3. Journalist, BBC India, 14 years' experience in broadcast and digital media (requesting anonymity)
4. Yogesh Joshi, Bureau Chief, Hindustan Times, 16 years' experience in print media
5. Geetanjali Gayatri, Special Correspondent, Haryana desk, The Tribune, Chandigarh, 20 years' experience as a print journalist
6. Journalist, The Indian Express, 14 years' experience in print media (requesting anonymity)
7. Chayyanika Nigam, former Crime Reporter, Millennium Post and Mail Today, 10 years' experience as a print journalist
8. Journalist, 10 years' experience in print media (requesting anonymity)



Impact of Phone Life on Psychological Health of Youth

PRIYA SACHDEVA¹ & ANUBHUTI YADAV²

ABSTRACT

The mobile phones have now become an essential part of today's life. The mobile phones usage is rapidly increasing in this digital age. It has totally shrunk the world into it. It is imperative to study the usage of mobile phone and how it is impacting the health of youth. The main aim of this study is to understand the consequences of phone-life balance on the psychological health of youth. The health of youth is expressed in terms of mental, emotional, and physical health parameters. Hypothesis testing research design is used in this study and data is collected from 208 respondents using structured questionnaire. It is revealed that there is huge and deep impact of technology on the youth health, not only mentally, but also emotionally, physically and socially. The technology in one way has given access to creative thinking and easy access to life necessities and, on the other hand, it has ruined their health by making them addicted to it and disturbing their life balance deeply which has resulted in mental illnesses, stress, unhealthy relationships, poor lifestyle, and addictions. The young generation of today's time is recommended to use smartphones in a positive way so that work–life balance should not be disturbed. Also, the unhealthy practices through technology should be banned for youth as it not only adversely affects their mental health but also disturbs their emotional, behavioural, social and physical health quotient. This paper adds value on how smartphones are affecting the overall psychological health of the youth in all aspects.

Keywords: Addiction, Emotional health, Mental health, Technology, Youth, Smartphones

Introduction

Phone usage has been an inevitable part of individual life in the 21st century. The acceptance and adoptability of this technology is across the globe amongst all demographics. The usage of smartphones and its effects on our lives cannot be escaped which has altered the spectrum of our mental health. Self-efficacy, frequency and duration are the predictors of habits of youth, which lead to poor memory and quality of sleep. It is revealed that maximum students in urban areas have smartphones and they are disinterested in learning while traditional learning is still preferred by students in rural areas. The new theory of Digital Learning Effectiveness as a learning mode during and after the lockdown will have to attract the attention of educators and educational agencies and also the policy makers in the direction of the students' problems in digital learning (Chitanana, 2022). It was revealed that students' habitual smartphone use has impacted significantly not only their cognitive health but also exhibited their addiction to smartphones (Li *et al.*, 2021). The most common symptom was found to be headache which is followed by an irritable and

angry behaviour. Other mental symptoms included anxiety, insomnia, lack of performance in academics, and lack of concentration as found by Acharya *et al.* (2021). The students started to become anxious and depressed and also socially dysfunctional as revealed by Marques *et al.* (2021). Gupta *et al.*, Garg and Arora (2016) stated that with the mobile phones' positive role in our daily lives, its over-usage has an adverse impact on aspects like psychological health, sleeping patterns, as well as academic performance of the students. The issue of being constantly engaged on the mobile phone can be alleviated through self-control (Yao *et al.*, 2020). Buctot *et al.* (2020) stated that HRQoL (health-related quality of life) differ significantly between adolescents with or without addiction of smartphones. The various cross-sectional, empirical studies and longitudinal studies implicated that engagement patterns that are used by social media and smartphones which in turn increases self-destructive behaviour, mental stress, and suicidality amongst youth as revealed by Jaoude, *et al.* (2020). A rise in behavioural difficulties, peer and emotion-related problems is associated with the frequent use of computers as well as the internet as

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stated by Poulain *et al.* (2019).

According to Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA) (2015) report, the world's half of the population has access to some or the other mobile subscription. The virtual reality has become available across the world. This is set to revolutionise the way we interact with technology, which is consuming more and more of our time, and has now complicated day-to-day life. Lefebvre (2009) writes that mobile technology has advanced from simple call and text messaging to having internet access, email, high-quality camera and multimedia services. Ling (2001) remarked that the existence of mobile phone is almost a decade old only; in this short span of time, it has become rapidly popular and youths are playing vital role in it. There is swift adoption rate by youths for this technology and many more factors have played a significant role in augmenting the pace like day-by-day cost of handset is being reduced, availability of wide varieties of sizes linked with pre-paid SIM cards, etc. (Ling, 2003).

The results of secondary research have revealed that the young generation prefers mobile phone over television (Enpocket, 2005) or the Internet (Hession, 2001). Netsafe (2005) claimed that mobile phone has become a symbol of high status for the younger generation. The various features of the phone, appearance, applications and personalised accessories are testimony for upgradation and reflection of status that is why about 60% of young people are always ready to make an upgrade when it comes to their mobile phones.

Srivastava (2005) reported that mobiles are being seen as a fashion statement used to satisfy the needs of an individual by having choices in terms of a number of features in the mobile phones. Williams and Williams (2005) claimed that mobile signifies part of the peer group and also having a mobile phone means that one can be connected socially with friends and family. It is now considered as a way of being an independent individual and it is what sets one apart from their families.

According to National Youth Policy Report (2014), the youths form 27.5% of population in India. This report has defined the youth as the individuals with age in the range of 15–29 years. The present study aims to understand the impact of phone life on psychological health of youths. Three dominating psychological constructs taken into consideration are emotional, mental, and behavioural health.

Theoretical background and conceptual framework

This study is conceptualised to establish the relationship of phone life with mental, emotional, and behavioural health of youth. Mobile phones

have become very important aspect of our lives. The use of mobile phones is increasing by the day. According to datareportal.com, there would be an exponential rise in smartphone users as more than two-third of the world's total population uses a mobile phone, reaching 5.34 billion in July 2022. Today mobile phone is considered as a major necessity of life. Mobile phones are useful, there is no doubt about it, but one cannot ignore the negative impact that it has on both children as well as young people. One does not have enough information nor does have enough time to be sure that cell phones are safe, and there's reason for concern that they may be harmful. In spite of all its benefits that mobile phones provide, its use has proved to have extremely dangerous and destructive effects on our society. It is creating many health issues due to excessive use. It has also shown high negative effect when not used properly. Rather *et al.* (2019) revealed that a new phobia termed as NOMOPHOBIA (fear of living by not having a smartphone) has become a common problem among adolescents. Also, health issues like nervous system syndromes, depression and anxiety are major causes of concern. Over usage of smartphones can also lead to complications in psychological and physiological aspects. If restriction and moderation in usage hours are taken into consideration then this can ensure well-being of adolescents and can inculcate good behavioural habits, education and values.

According to the 2017 article "Effects on the Brain," published in Deccan Chronicle, authors discovered an imbalance in brain chemistry in adolescents who depended on smartphones and the Internet. They tend to check the phone every 5 minutes for messages, information, or occasional calls.

According to a survey by the PEW Research Center (2022), 46% of Americans say they cannot live without a smartphone. Hyung Suk Seo, a researcher at Korea University in Seoul, South Korea, used magnetic resonance spectroscopy (MRS) to gain unique insights into the brains of teenagers who are addicted to smartphones and the Internet. MRS is a type of MRI scan that measures the chemical composition of the brain. Seo said that "a team analysed 19 young people diagnosed with internet or smart phone addiction. 12 of the addicted youth received 9 weeks of cognitive behavioural therapy, modified from a Cognitive Therapy Programme for gaming addiction. The higher the score, the more severe the addiction." The results depicted those addicted teens had significantly higher levels of depression, anxiety, insomnia severity, and impulsivity. Studies show

that teens who spend too much time on their mobile phones tend to feel stressed and tired. In some cases, it can also cause mental illness. High mobile phone usage can adversely affect stress levels. Constant ringing tones, vibrating alerts and reminders can strain mobile phone users.

In a study conducted at Gothenburg University in Sweden, researchers investigated whether there was a direct link between the psychosocial aspects of use of mobile phones and its impact on the mental health of the young adults. The participants under study were a group of 20 to 24 years old. They found that high mobile phone usage in women led to an increased amount of stress and sleep disorders, and high mobile phone usage in men was linked to sleep disorders and symptoms of depression.

In general, overuse of mobile phones can be a risk factor for adolescents with mental illness. Most young people keep their cell phones nearby while sleeping to answer text messages and phone calls. You feel obliged to use it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It causes sleep disorders. Scientists have discovered that a child's brain voting activity can change by up to an hour with just a two-minute phone call. For exploring plasticity of brain smartphones have created a grand opportunity, like it generates the sudden feeling in smartphones users to use their fingertips, especially thumbs in a new way. The phones have become spy and are tracking the history of digital footprints of users to provide a tailor-made data based on user's behaviour. The researches have unleashed that the electrical activity in the brain of phone users is super enhanced when all their fingertips were touched. The fact is that the amount of brain cortex activity with the thumb and index fingertips was directly proportional to the phone usage intensity. Radio waves from mobile phones penetrate not only around the ears but also deep into the brain. Impaired brain activity can affect a child's learning and other behavioural problems. If they talk on the phone during a break, it may affect their mood and even their ability to study in class.

Advances in technology have made it possible for researchers to fairly calculate the physical and chemical changes in the brains of addicts. Irrespective of addiction, even if it is just a smartphone, the areas that control "attention, execution control, emotional processing" are affected. These studies show that physical changes also occur in the dopaminergic system. Dopamine is a chemical produced by our body that allows us to experience joy and reward. Scientists have noticed low levels of dopamine receptors in the brains of smartphones and internet addicts. It depicts how some teens need and increase certain activities to feel satisfied or happy, such as

receiving new notifications on their mobile phones. Similarly, if one doesn't receive notifications or lose access to smartphone, it can work the other way and lead to depression. Staring too long at the screen can cause anxiety and depression. People like constant updates and interactions from their friends (Kwon *et al.*, 2020; Heitmayer & Lahlou, 2021).

According to a Northwestern University study, the longer people spend on the phone, the more likely they are to get depressed. Abuse of mobile devices by adolescents is associated with many negative psychosocial consequences. It is this area that needs attention. It is not recommended to give out mobile phones if the child is under 16 years. The child's brain is highly sensitive to take in the effects of radiation from mobile phones.

Young people tend to be more bored because mobile phones constantly occupy the brain. They tend to be more violent and frustrating, even during regular discussions. This, in turn, complicates social life. The worst scenario is for the child to stop communicating with the family altogether. Children may feel the need to keep checking the messages. It's frustrating to stay away from smartphone for a long time. This shows the aggressive behaviour within the family and the impact of smartphones. Children and teens are addicted to mobile phones. The use of mobile phones can cause improper behaviour in children. It's easy to see which websites have harmful and offensive content. This can cause the child to feel frightened and confused. Exposure to these substances at an early age can also cause problems with body image. Teenage kids communicate with each other on their phones and thus get engaged in negative activities. This is extremely dangerous and has a great negative impact on our society. Our new generation is completely overwhelmed by this negative side of the mobile phones (Um *et al.*, 2019).

Cell phone addiction (excessive cell phone use or cell phone addiction) is an addiction syndrome found in cell phone users. Some mobile phone users depict problematic behaviours which are often related to substance use disorders (Billieux, 2012). These actions include mobile communications, spending large amounts of money and time on their mobile phones, and using it in socially or physically inappropriate situations such as while driving a car. Increased use led to an increased cell phone talk time, adversely affecting relationships, and even causing anxiety when disconnected from the cell phone or good network strength. The above theoretical background leads to the proposal of a conceptual framework to conduct a study as shown in Figure 1.

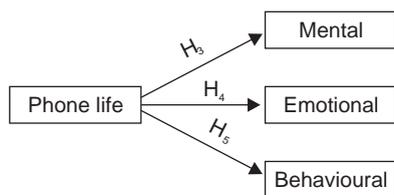


Fig. 1: Phone life— conceptual framework

Objectives of the research

The objective of this research is to study the impact of phone life on psychological health of youth. The health of youth is expressed in terms of mental, emotional, and behaviour parameters.

Hypothesis of the study

- H₁: There is significant difference in level of phone life, mental, emotional, and behavioural health across gender of youth (male vs. female).
- H₂: There is significant difference in level of phone life, mental, emotional, and behavioural health across age group of youth.
- H₃: There is significant impact of phone life on mental health of youth.
- H₄: There is significant impact of phone life on emotional health of youth.
- H₅: There is significant impact of phone life on behavioural health of youth.

Research methodology

The health of youth is expressed in terms of mental, emotional, and physical health parameters. Hypothesis testing research design is used in this study and data is collected from 208 respondents using structured questionnaire. The independent variable is phone life and dependant variables are mental, emotional and behavioural health of youth in this study.

Design: Hypothesis testing research design is used.

Sample size: Primary data is collected from 208 youths of Delhi.

Sampling techniques: Convenient sampling technique is used.

Sample description: The sample is described with two demographic factors—gender and age

Table 1: Sample description

Demographics		Frequency	Percent
Age	15–20	96	46.2
	20–25	42	20.2
	25–29	70	33.7
	Total	208	100.0
Gender	Male	135	64.9
	Female	73	35.1
	Total	208	100.0

group as mentioned in the Table 1.

There are 135 males and 73 females in sample. There are 96 youths in the age group of 15–20 years, 42 youths in the age group of 20–25 years, and 70 youths in the age group of 25–29 years.

Measure: A well-designed questionnaire is used to collect data.

Data analysis tool: SPSS 21 was used.

Results and discussion

Reliability results

The value of Cronbach’s alpha in Table 2 revealed that reliability of phone life, mental health, and emotional health have high reliability as the respective values of Cronbach’s alpha are more than 0.7 except for behavioural health (0.699) which is close to 0.7. Cronbach’s alpha higher than 0.7 is considered as a good scale (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 2: Cronbach’s alpha value

Variable	No. of items	Reliability
Phone life	13	0.743
Mental Health	7	0.724
Emotional Health	7	0.860
Behavioural Health	7	0.699

Descriptive analysis

This section is divided into three parts—(1) Mean and standard deviation of variables, (2) Comparative means of variables with respect to gender of respondents using independent sample t-test, and (3) Comparative means of variables with respect to age group of respondents using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test.

Mean and standard deviation

This is overall mean and standard deviation of sample about phone life, mental health, emotional health, and behavioural health.

The mean value of all variables taken under study—phone life, mental health, emotional health, and behavioural health—are above average. It can be

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Phone Life	208	2.15	4.54	3.761	0.375
Mental Health	208	2.14	4.43	3.805	0.526
Emotional Health	208	2.00	5.00	4.014	0.575
Behavioural Health	208	2.71	4.71	4.077	0.448
Valid N (List-wise)	208				

interpreted that usage of phone has become part of a life. It has certain relation with mental, emotional and behavioural health of youth. Highest mean was reported for behavioural health followed by emotional health and then mental health (Table 3).

Comparative means with respect to gender

This analysis is conducted to study the difference in perception of respondents about phone life, mental health, emotional health, and behavioural health with respect to gender of youth. For this independent sample t-test is conducted as only two classifications are taken—male and female (Table 4).

Independent sample t-test is conducted to study the significant difference in perception of respondents with respect to gender about phone life, mental health, emotional health, and behavioural health (Table 5).

The mean value of phone life is reported above average for both. It can be interpreted that usage of phone is same across gender. There is slightly higher mean value is reported for male respondents as compared to female respondents towards—mental, emotional and behavioural health.

The p-value in t-test result is less than 0.05

for mental health and behavioural health. So, it is interpreted that there is significant difference in perception of male and female respondents about mental health and behavioural health. It is reported high in male respondents for both types of health. The p-value in t-test result is more than 0.05 for phone usage and emotional health. So, it can be interpreted that there is no significant difference in perception of male and female respondents about usage of phone and emotional health. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis H_1 is partially accepted.

Comparative means with respect to age group

There are three classes of age that are used for youths—15–20 years, 20–25 years, and 25–29 years. To study the difference in comparative means, one-way ANOVA is used and results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

The mean value for phone life is almost same for all three age groups but higher mean is reported in the age group of 25–29 years for mental health, emotional health and behavioural health. To the significance of the difference among age groups with respect to study variables, the ANOVA result is presented in Table 7.

The value of p is more than 0.05 for phone life (0.842) and emotional health (0.077); it reveals that there is no noticeable difference in usage of phone and emotional health of youths with respect to mentioned age group. The value of p is less than 0.05 for mental health (0.000) and behavioural health (0.003); it reveals that there is a significant change in mental health and behavioural health of youths with respect to mentioned age group. To know the difference with respect to age group, multiple comparisons results are presented in Table 8.

In mental health, there is a significant difference between age group of 15–20 years and 25–29 years, and 21–25 years and 25–29 years, but there is no

Table 4: Group statistics with gender

Gender Statistics		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Phone Life	Male	135	3.777	0.3858	0.0332
	Female	73	3.730	0.3553	0.0415
Mental Health	Male	135	3.857	0.5684	0.0489
	Female	73	3.710	0.4272	0.0500
Emotional Health	Male	135	4.058	0.5911	0.0508
	Female	73	3.933	0.5393	0.0631
Behavioural Health	Male	135	4.117	0.4782	0.0411
	Female	73	4.003	0.3779	0.0442

Table 5: Independent samples test results with gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Difference
Phone Life	Equal variances assumed	2.229	0.137	0.871	206.000	0.385	0.0475	0.0545
	Equal variances not assumed			0.893	158.471	0.373	0.0475	0.0532
Mental Health	Equal variances assumed	1.184	0.278	1.930	206.000	0.038	0.1467	0.0760
	Equal variances not assumed			2.098	184.834	0.037	0.1467	0.0699
Emotional Health	Equal variances assumed	0.267	0.606	1.497	206.000	0.136	0.1247	0.0833
	Equal variances not assumed			1.539	159.722	0.126	0.1247	0.0810
Behavioural Health	Equal variances assumed	0.794	0.374	1.753	206.000	0.041	0.1135	0.0647
	Equal variances not assumed			1.879	178.681	0.042	0.1135	0.0604

Table 6: Group statistics with age group

Descriptive		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence interval for mean	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
						Phone Life	15–20
	20–25	42	3.782	0.3493	0.0539	3.673	3.890
	25–29	70	3.770	0.3992	0.0477	3.675	3.865
	Total	208	3.761	0.3752	0.0260	3.709	3.812
Mental Health	15–20	96	3.729	0.5245	0.0535	3.622	3.835
	20–25	42	3.632	0.6656	0.1027	3.425	3.840
	25–29	70	4.014	0.3466	0.0414	3.931	4.096
	Total	208	3.805	0.5269	0.0365	3.733	3.877
Emotional Health	15–20	96	3.937	0.6265	0.0639	3.810	4.064
	20–25	42	3.983	0.7461	0.1151	3.750	4.215
	25–29	70	4.138	0.3114	0.0372	4.064	4.213
	Total	208	4.014	0.5752	0.0398	3.935	4.093
Behavioural Health	15–20	96	4.029	0.4521	0.0461	3.938	4.121
	20–25	42	3.949	0.5589	0.0862	3.774	4.123
	25–29	70	4.220	0.3177	0.0379	4.144	4.296
	Total	208	4.077	0.4479	0.0310	4.016	4.138

Table 7: ANOVA result with age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Phone Life	Between Groups	0.049	2	0.024	0.172	0.842
	Within Groups	29.097	205	0.142		
	Total	29.146	207			
Mental Health	Between Groups	4.866	2	2.433	9.481	0.000
	Within Groups	52.603	205	0.257		
	Total	57.469	207			
Emotional Health	Between Groups	1.692	2	0.846	2.596	0.077
	Within Groups	66.816	205	0.326		
	Total	68.508	207			
Behavioural Health	Between Groups	2.342	2	1.171	6.124	0.003
	Within Groups	39.201	205	0.191		
	Total	41.543	207			

Table 8: Multiple comparisons results

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I–J)	Std. Deviation	Sig.	95% Confidence interval	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
						Phone Life	15–20
		25–29	–0.02514	0.059	0.672	–0.1419	0.091
	20–25	15–20	0.03686	0.069	0.597	–0.1006	0.174
		25–29	0.01172	0.073	0.874	–0.1333	0.156
	25–29	15–20	0.02514	0.059	0.672	–0.0916	0.141
		20–25	–0.01172	0.073	0.874	–0.1567	0.133
Mental Health	15–20	20–25	0.09651	0.093	0.304	–0.0883	0.281
		25–29	–0.28512*	0.079	0.000	–0.4421	–0.128

(Contd...)

(Table 8: ...Contd.)

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Deviation	Sig.	95% Confidence interval	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
Emotional Health	20-25	15-20	-0.09651	0.093	0.304	-0.2813	0.088
		25-29	-0.38163*	0.098	0.000	-0.5766	-0.186
	25-29	15-20	0.28512*	0.079	0.000	0.1281	0.442
		20-25	0.38163*	0.098	0.000	0.1867	0.576
	15-20	20-25	-0.04549	0.105	0.667	-0.2537	0.162
		25-29	-0.20128*	0.089	0.026	-0.3782	-0.024
		20-25	0.04549	0.105	0.667	-0.1627	0.253
		25-29	-0.15578	0.111	0.164	-0.3755	0.063
25-29	15-20	0.20128*	0.089	0.026	0.0244	0.378	
	20-25	0.15578	0.111	0.164	-0.0639	0.375	
	Behavioural Health	15-20	0.08078	0.080	0.319	-0.0787	0.240
		25-29	-0.19065*	0.068	0.006	-0.3262	-0.055
20-25		-0.08078	0.080	0.319	-0.2403	0.078	
25-29		-0.27143*	0.085	0.002	-0.4397	-0.103	
25-29	15-20	0.19065*	0.068	0.006	0.0551	0.326	
	20-25	0.27143*	0.085	0.002	0.1032	0.439	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

significant difference between 15-20 years and 21-25 years age groups as the value of p is less than 0.05 for former pairs and more than 0.05 for last pairs. Further, this result has been confirmed by homogeneous subset results presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Homogeneous subset results for mental health

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Tukey B ^{a,b}	20-25	42	3.6327
	15-20	96	3.7292
	25-29	70	4.0143

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a, Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 61.840.

b, The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

In behavioural health, there is significant difference between age group of 15-20 years and 25-29 years, and 21-25 years and 25-29 years, but there is no significant difference between 15-20 years and 21-25 years age group as the value of p is less than 0.05 for former pairs and more than 0.05 for last pairs. Further, this result has been confirmed by homogeneous subset results presented in Table 10.

Based on results, the proposed alternate hypothesis H₂ is partially accepted. It is interpreted that there is significant difference in level of phone life, mental, emotional, and behavioural health across age group of youth.

Table 10: Homogeneous subset results for behavioural health

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Tukey B ^{a,b}	20-25	42	3.9490
	15-20	96	4.0298
	25-29	70	4.2204

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a, Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 61.840.

b, The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Correlation analysis

The correlation matrix provides preliminary support for some of the hypotheses of the study. Another objective of conducting correlation analysis is the examination of multi co-linearity among the dimensions and purification of scale used in this study. So that it can be inferred that variables are independent in nature. In present study, four one-dimensional constructs have been taken—phone life, mental health, emotional health and behavioural health. The inter-dimensional correlation coefficient should not be too high (over 0.8) because this can be a problem of multi co-linearity that means factors are not independent in nature (Hair, *et al.*, 2010). The correlation result presented in Table 5 revealed that the values of correlation coefficient is less than 0.80 with

Table 11: Correlation results

		Phone Life	Mental Health	Emotional Health	Behavioural Health
Phone Life	Pearson Correlation	1	0.323**	0.406*	0.524*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N		208	208	208
Mental Health	Pearson Correlation		1	0.618*	0.763*
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000
	N			208	208
Emotional Health	Pearson Correlation			1	0.706*
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000
	N				208
Behavioural Health	Pearson Correlation				1
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N				208

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

another factor, then it can be interpreted that they are independent in nature and case of multi co-linearity does not exist in this study (Table 11).

The results of correlation revealed that all relationships are significant and positive. The result of correlation analysis shows that phone life is having significant and positive relationship with mental health ($r = 0.323, p < 0.01$), emotional health ($r = 0.406, p < 0.01$), and behavioural health ($r = 0.524, p < 0.01$). This is the basic support for the proposed hypothesis H_3, H_4 and H_5 .

Regression analysis

Regression analysis had been conducted to examine the proposed hypotheses in order to check the impact of independent variable on dependent variables.

Impact of phone life on mental health

In this regression analysis, phone life is taken as an independent variable and mental health as a dependent variable and results are presented in Tables 12, 13 and 14 followed by discussion of the results.

In Table 12, the value of $R = 0.323$ indicates a weak relationship between phone life and mental health. The value of $R^2 = 0.104$ explains that 10.4% of the variation in mental health is explained by phone life, while 89.6% remain unexplained. Thus, the predictive ability of the model is weak.

Table 12: Model summary of phone life and mental health

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.323 ^a	0.104	0.10	0.49991

a. Predictors: (Constant), SM.

The results in Table 13 describe the overall variance accounted for in the model. The value of significance level ($0 < .05$) indicates that the phone life is predictor of mental health and have an effect on relationship bond as indicated by the F (23.956) statistics.

Table 13: ANOVA results of phone life and mental health

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.987	1	5.987	23.956	0.000 ^b
	Residual	51.759	206	0.250		
	Total	57.267	207			

a, Dependent Variable: Mental Health.

b, Predictors: (Constant), Phone Life.

The result in Table 14 shows the standardised coefficient beta value indicating the change in one unit of independent variable has corresponding change in dependent variable. It means that one unit change in phone life will have 0.323-unit change in mental health. It is interpreted that phone life is

Table 14: Standardised coefficients of phone life and mental health

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.101	0.350	6.753	0.000
	Phone Life	0.453	0.093	0.323	4.041

a. Dependent Variable: Mental Health.

having significant impact on mental health. Thus, the alternate hypothesis H_3 is accepted.

Impact of phone life on emotional health

In this regression analysis, phone life is taken as independent variable and emotional health as dependent variable and results are presented in Tables 15, 16 and 17 followed by discussion of the results.

In Table 15, the value of $R = 0.406$ indicates a weak relationship between phone life and emotional health. The value of $R^2 = 0.164$ explains that 16.4% of the variation in emotional health is explained by phone life, while 83.6% remain unexplained. Thus, the predictive ability of the model is weak.

Table 15: Model summary of phone life and emotional health

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.406 ^a	.164	.160	.42480

a, Predictors: (Constant), Phone life.

The results in Table 16 describe the overall variance accounted for in the model. The value of significance level ($<.05$) indicates that the phone life is predictor of emotional health and have an effect on relationship bond as indicated by the F (21.640) statistics.

Table 16: ANOVA results of phone life and emotional health

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.404	1	6.404	21.640	0.000 ^b
	Residual	62.759	206	0.301		
	Total	69.163	207			

a, Dependent Variable: Emotional Health.

b, Predictors: (Constant), Phone Life.

The result in Table 17 shows that one unit change in phone life will have 0.406-unit change in emotional health. It is interpreted that phone life is having significant impact on emotional health. Thus, the alternate hypothesis H_4 is accepted.

Table 17: Standardised coefficients of phone life and emotional health

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2.251	0.384		5.857	0.000
	Phone Life	0.469	0.102	0.406	4.609	0.000

a, Dependent Variable: Emotional Health.

Impact of phone life on behavioural health

In this regression analysis phone life is taken as independent variable and behavioural health as dependent variable and results are presented in Tables 18, 19 and 20 followed by discussion of the results.

In Table 18, the value of $R = 0.524$ indicates a moderate relationship between phone life and behavioural health. The value of $R^2 = 0.2745$ explains that 27.45 % of the variation in behavioural health is explained by phone life, while 72.55 % remain unexplained. Thus, the predictive ability of the model is moderate.

Table 18: Model summary of phone life and behavioural health

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1.524 ^a	0.2745	0.2743	0.54907	

a, Predictors: (Constant), Phone Life.

The results in Table 19 describe the overall variance accounted for in the model. The value of significance level (<0.05) indicates that the phone life is predictor of behavioural health and have an effect on relationship bond as indicated by the F (24.214) statistics.

Table 19: ANOVA results of phone life and behavioural health

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.370	1	4.370	24.214	0.000 ^b
	Residual	37.174	206	0.180		
	Total	41.543	207			

a, Dependent Variable: Behavioural Health.

b, Predictors: (Constant), Phone Life.

The result in Table 20 shows that one unit change in phone life will have 0.524-unit change in behavioural health. It is interpreted that phone life is having significant impact on behavioural health. Thus, the alternate hypothesis H_5 is accepted.

Table 20: Standardised coefficients of phone life and behavioural health

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	2.621	0.297		8.814	0.000
Smart Mobiles	0.387	0.079	0.524	4.921	0.000

a, Dependent Variable: Behavioural Health.

Conclusion

The outcomes have revealed that there is significant impact of phone life on psychological health of youth health that means mental, emotional and behavioural health. The phone has become one of the important requirements of our day-to-day life because of its easy access and multi-purpose use. One way it has given access to connect with distant people and easy access to life necessities but, on the other hand, it has ruined their health in every possible way by making them addicted to it and disturbing their life balance so deeply which has resulted in mental illnesses, stress, unhealthy relationships, and lifestyles. The young generation of today's time is recommended to use phone in a positive way so that work–life balance should not be disturbed. Also, the unhealthy practices through technology should be banned for youth as it not only affects adversely on their mental levels but also disturbs their emotional, behavioural social and physical levels.

Limitations and future scope of the study

This study is limited to use of phone and its impact on mental, emotional and behavioural health. Data is limited to youths and Delhi only. Only two dimensions of demographic are taken into consideration.

In future, this study can be extended to people of all age groups and cross-country for better interpretation and understanding. Many more variables can be taken into consideration like social, physical, etc. Further, it can be explored with respect to other demographic variables like marital status, education level, profession, etc.

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The Craft #Regram—Selling Indigenous Products Using Instagram: The Upsell and the Downside

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ABSTRACT

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms in the world. It has seen a phenomenal increase in the number of users in the last decade. With the list of professional features it offers, the social media platform is also popular with brands looking to build communities and engage with their customers directly. For people engaged in the arts and crafts sector, Instagram seems the logical choice, considering the visual nature of the platform and business tools that it offers. This study looks at the motivations that drive artisans and small businesses to sell their products on Instagram. In depth interviews with 10 active sellers on Instagram were done to gather meaningful data, based on experience. All the participants believed that Instagram was an invaluable tool for building the brand and marketing; however, as a standalone, it was ineffective for sales. Omni-channel retail is suggested as the best way forward to ensure the best possible outcomes. Apart from limitations of the platform, there are challenges in setting up online presence as well. The level of digital skills involved mean that the artisans looking to set up an online storefront have to move beyond their artisanal skills and learn entrepreneurship and technical skills required to run such a business successfully. Gaining the trust of the customers is another challenge, who are difficult to convince of the authenticity of indigenous products and the quality of handicrafts. Since the quality of online products, that are not branded, is questionable, this paper proposes establishing a quality assessment body that can issue quality mark certification to ensure the authenticity of the products. This will not only improve the trust of the customers in such products, but it will also help small businesses establish their brands through labels and quality marks.

Keywords: Indian handicrafts, Instagram, Omni-channel retail, Social media, Technology and Indian crafts

Introduction

Indigenous or native art and craft can be traced back thousands of years. This also means that such art has endured and continues to survive. This is only possible because of the flexibility and the willingness of the artisans and craftspeople to adapt (Varma, 2013). Adapting, while keeping true to the indigenous nature of the art and products is complicated (Jhaveri, 2020). While the Internet has brought everyone closer and helped in documenting every facet of art and craft and made the dissemination of information regarding technique and form possible, the sustainability of the sector is challenged by genericide and duplication.

There are an estimated 200 million artisans in India, with the handloom and handicraft industry accounting for the biggest numbers in employment after agriculture (Agarwal, 2021). It is a key means

of livelihood for people in both rural and urban areas (Jaitly, 1990), and is also becoming a viable second income for the younger generations who are monetising their artistry and craftsmanship using social media and other digital mediums (Luckman & Andrew, 2018a). The ease of establishing a virtual store and the ability to network through social media provides budding entrepreneurs and small business owners a sense of real and sustainable work (Luckman & Andrew, 2018b). For the purpose of this study, a small business is identified as one with fewer than 5 employees and with annual revenue of less than INR 10 lakhs.

This has resulted in a creative micro-economy that is giving small business owners and independent artisans and craftsmen the access to a rich international online marketplace and an opportunity to sell directly

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to the buyers. These micro-entrepreneurial pathways give the business owners a sense of optimism, especially in light of small investments required to set up a virtual presence in comparison to a physical store. However, behind the glitz and glamour of selling directly to the buyers virtually, lies the complexity of setting up that virtual presence, digital marketing and competing in a hyper-competitive market at low profits.

The added pressure of competing with numerous other similar businesses can also be an impediment. Simply creating an online storefront on Google or a website to sell products might not work. Sellers have to engage with their customers, engage in influencer and affiliate marketing and even use digital marketing tools to reach more people. Acquiring such skills can be a deterrent for a lot of artisans and handicraft sellers. The level of skill involved and the kind of competition online might make it a questionable investment for the sellers. And yet, there has been an increase in the number of online sellers since the beginning of the pandemic. Instagram, especially, has seen a major increase in the number of business users in India. As not much is available, in the way of literature, about the interaction of art and craft retail and social media as a marketplace, Instagram will be a good place to start.

This study will look at the motivations of people selling their art and handicrafts on Instagram and the challenges they face. It also plots a way forward for the sustainability of the sector.

Literature review

Arts and crafts play an important cultural role in India by cultivating an authentic experience that is unique and usually indigenous to different parts of the country (Barnard, 1995). The art and craft sector in India is also deeply linked with tourism, representing the cultural history and traditions of the many different parts of the country (NCERT, 2011). Despite being the second biggest sector in terms of employment and representing tremendous economic potential, most of the artisans still reside in rural areas. While there have been an increasing number of attempts to include rural artisans in the design process (Bhandari & Kalra, 2018), there is still a huge digital divide between the rural and urban areas of India and that limits participation, collaboration and innovation.

The inability to adapt to the changing times, newer technologies and modern marketing methods often means loss of revenue for artisans and craftspeople, who turn to other sources of income (Jain, 2016). The lack of domestication of technology in rural areas of India, especially in the arts and craft sector has led

to an overwhelming dependency on sales through physical stores and exhibitions. Domestication theory describes how technology (especially media technology) is tamed and appropriated by its users (Ward *et al.*, 2006). The theory, proposed by Roger Silverstone, details four steps of domestication (Silverstone & Haddon, 1996):

1. Integration of technologies into everyday life,
2. Adaptation by users and their environment,
3. Feedback post adaptations to shape next generation of technologies,
4. Conversion, highlighting the extent to which technology reflects the culture of the users.

Due to the glaring divide in access to technologies between the rural and urban users, the former have not been able to move beyond step 1 while the latter are already on step 4—technological development has become synonymous with urban development (Kim *et al.*, 2009). Despite several governmental initiatives and a universal push to get more people online, take-up among business, especially small business, has not been as expected with some businesses and individuals not adopting digital technologies, thereby not being able to avail the numerous benefits these technologies present (Harwood, 2011).

The extraordinary adoption of Instagram

Instagram was launched in 2010 through the app store and was immediately popular, amassing one million users within 10 weeks of its launch. Twitter, in comparison, took two years to have as many users. Over the years, Instagram, owing to its professional benefits, started gaining popularity with businesses and even educators (Carpenter *et al.*, 2020). By the end of 2020, there were nearly 130 million Instagram users in India. The COVID-19 pandemic inspired individuals, institutions and businesses to find creative ways of using Instagram; for example, hosting a virtual art show (Pippitt *et al.*, 2021).

Globally, 9 out of 10 people on Instagram followed at least one brand (Instagram Internal Data, 2019). In addition, as of 2018, 90 million people were tapping on product tags each month. This has made the popular social media platform a must for the big brands as well as small business owners. One of the expanding groups using Instagram for business is the arts and crafts community with people, ranging from hobbyists to artisans showcasing and selling their craft on Instagram.

Although numerous businesses and individuals have been using Instagram to sell products, it is still not an established selling platform. However, it has already been established as one of the best visual platforms for brand building, especially for businesses selling visually attractive products (Latiff

& Safiee, 2015). This makes Instagram an ideal platform for artists and those creating content around art and craft (Black, 2018).

Research question and objectives

The aim of the paper will be answer the question: What is the primary motivation for indigenous art/craft sellers to opt for Instagram to sell their products?

In doing so, the study will also attempt to understand:

- Is Instagram a good platform to sell indigenous art/craft?
- What are the different challenges faced by indigenous art/craft sellers while selling for Instagram?
- What is the best way for indigenous art/craft sellers to sell their products online?

Methods

A qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews was implemented for this study. In-depth interviews (n=10) were conducted to collect primary data while secondary data was collected through review of literature. A purposive sampling method was used to select the participants. Individuals and small businesses using Instagram for selling their products were selected for the study. A manual search on Instagram was done to identify the accounts that had been actively selling art and craft in the last three months. 30 such accounts or pages were identified and contact was initiated through Instagram messaging, email and over the phone, where a phone number was available. 10 of those were eventually shortlisted on the basis of the nature of their business, the number of employees and the annual turnover.

The account owners were contacted over the phone and interviews were scheduled. The interviews were held telephonically and were recorded with express permission of the participants. The recordings were transcribed and translated to English, where needed. The transcriptions and translations were cross-checked by two experts to ensure consistency and accuracy of the obtained data.

A thematic analysis was done to analyze the qualitative data to draw themes and sub-themes. Open, axial and selective coding was done to find patterns and determine themes. To ensure reliability of the data, inter-rater reliability was employed. Two peer reviewers were asked to rate the code and a near perfect score was obtained.

Results

Omni-channel retail

All the participants used Instagram and at least one more channel to sell their products. 90% of the

participants used their websites as the online storefront and Instagram as the primary marketing channel for their products. Only 2 of the ten participants sold their products from a physical storefront but all were open to selling at exhibitions, crafts and art fairs. All the participants believed that in the new normal, selling online will be a preferred choice for everyone looking to sell art and craft products, if they have the necessary skill to do it. Fifty percent of the participants believed that physical storefronts will still dominate due to various factors, including but not limited to, lack of digital skills of artisans and craftspeople, growing competition on social media platforms, and changing advertising features of social media platforms.

One participant pointed out that “Instagram is great for now. However, I don’t see it as a preferred platform for selling in the near future. It’s visual nature does mean that it might be the preferred platform for marketing”.

Another participant added that “Instagram is the flavour of the week. To be truly successful, we need to sell on various channels and market on even more to ensure good sales and greater visibility”.

The upside of selling on Instagram

The visual appeal was the single biggest factor that drove the participants to start selling on Instagram. As one of the participants indicated, “Our products are artistic and it is all about how they look. Instagram is one platform that is all about that. Even the layout is like a visual directory of products that the consumers or potential customers can just look through”.

Four advantages were mentioned by the participants who used Instagram for selling. 100% of the participants believed that ‘Networking and Community Building’ was the single biggest advantage of using Instagram for selling. One of the participants pointed out, “Instagram works with a unique algorithm that favours sellers like us. Once your content gets a few likes and comments, the algorithm shows your content to similar audiences and you start building a community of like-minded people. Not every one of those people is a customer but it pays off to know these people and build connections”. The organic reach of Instagram was another advantage that drove sellers to use the platform. “New features like reels, especially in the wake of the TikTok ban, have really given us the opportunity to reach as many people as possible. Yes, we need to know what kind of content will work and use the right hashtags, but once you get the hang of it, it is pretty doable”, said a participant who used Instagram to start and run her raisin art business.

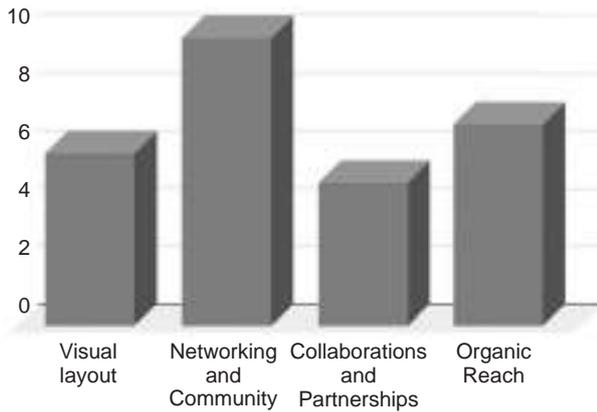


Fig. 1: Biggest advantages of using Instagram for selling art and craft

Figure 1 shows the four biggest perceived advantages for people in arts and crafts using Instagram to sell their products.

The downside of selling on Instagram

The increasing competition and ‘noise’ were the two single biggest disadvantages identified by the interviewed sellers. 80% of the participants believed that Instagram was becoming a hyper-competitive platform, which was not conducive to business. One of the respondents believed that “Instagram is not all that great for sellers as it relies too much on content and digital marketing skills. Between two businesses, no matter what the quality of the product, whoever has the better content and budget for running ads will see more engagement and thus sales”. Another participant also suggested that too many people and small businesses were on Instagram selling art, handicrafts and handloom and it was becoming increasingly difficult to attract new customers.

Forty per cent of the participants were concerned about the growing noise, i.e., Instagram accounts focused on highlighting similar products without any affiliations with actual sellers. One participant claimed that “the growing noise is making it difficult for our potential customers to find us. Instagram is full of such content and pages now, and these pages are better at curating content than us, which results in better engagement and more followers for them. This means that we have to spend an additional amount of time on content and marketing to compete, which is simply not possible”.

Another downside to using Instagram for selling was found to be lack of actual sales. Ninety percent of the sellers interviewed reported that Instagram didn’t help them make actual sales but helped in generating leads. “Instagram is good for networking and collaborations, but when it comes to actual sales, it usually takes place on the website or over the phone”, stated one of the participants.

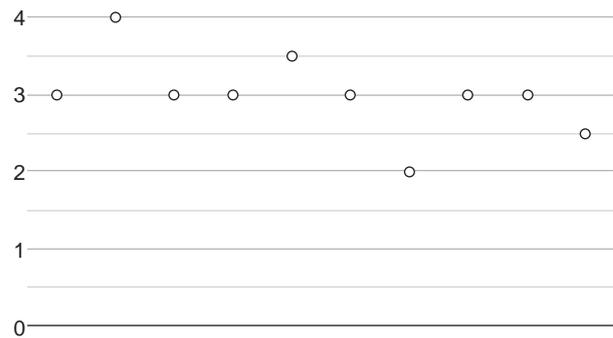


Fig. 2: Responses on the Likert Scale by the respondents depicting the ease of access for setting up a shop on Instagram (5 being the easiest)

Ease of setting up shop on Instagram

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the easiest, setting up a shop on Instagram was rated (median) at a 3, which depicts ‘somewhat easy’. The responses of the 10 participants are depicted in Fig. 2.

One of the interview participants believed that Instagram was one of the easiest platforms to use to set up a digital store, “because everything is visual and organized. All you have to do is fill out a few details and start posting content”. However, another participant differed—“If we are talking about just starting a business account, that is pretty easy, but setting up a store where you can sell on Instagram is not that easy. You will need some digital skills to be able to properly set it up, fill in the details accurately and properly use the hashtags or ads to your advantage. For a beginner or someone who is not digitally aware, it might be challenging”.

Instagram for sustainability of art and craft

Sixty per cent of the respondents believed that Instagram was not going to play an important role in the sustainability of the arts and crafts sector in India. Every participant believed that sustaining art and craft would take major policy changes while

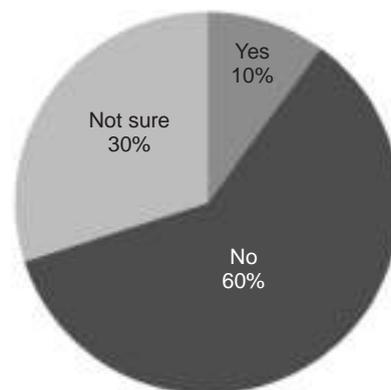


Fig. 3: Distribution of responses for whether the participants believed Instagram was going to play a pivotal role in sustainability of the arts and crafts sector in India

Instagram will remain a major marketing channel for artisans and small businesses looking to sell organically and building a community online. The distribution of responses to whether the participants thought Instagram could play a pivotal role in the sustainability of the sector in India is depicted in Fig. 3.

Discussion

With the widespread proliferation of smartphones and increasing number of people coming online, virtual or online shopping has also been gradually becoming popular. With more than 300 million online buyers, the e-commerce market in India is expected to be worth USD 200 billion by 2026 from nearly USD 38 billion in 2017 (IBEF, 2021). Arts and crafts sector has also seen online retail opportunities open up, however, the change up hasn't been as effective and deliberate as for other sectors. For those who have moved online, websites are the digital storefront while social media is mainly used for marketing and community building. For those using social media platforms like Instagram for selling, there are a number of crucial factors at play.

The visual appeal

Instagram is predominantly a visual platform, which suits the arts and crafts retail. An Instagram page works like a dynamic product catalogue that the potential customers can go through and place their orders. However, while Instagram has been effective in spreading awareness about the products and generating leads, very few actual sales happen on Instagram. As most of the businesses and even individuals have their own websites, the leads can easily be diverted and converted there.

Effective marketing and branding tool

Instagram is an effective way of connecting, collaborating and building communities, which are essential for arts and crafts sellers. By focusing on creating content, the sellers are able to organically reach people interested in such products, thanks to the algorithm that matches users to the content that they would like to see. The platform also allows sellers to collaborate with influencers who can then popularize the products and the brand, thereby increasing the reach of the brand and size of the community.

Let the customers find the sellers

The possibility of potential customers finding the Instagram page, based on their interests, is exciting for the sellers. It takes away the burden of advertising to the right audience and instead gives customers the power to find the products. With no geographical

limitations, the customers are able to view and purchase products that are indigenous, unique and usually unavailable in the physical marketplace. This was also supported by the Hiscox Online Art Trade Report (2014), which revealed that 75% of the online buyers of arts and crafts shopped online as it allowed them to find things that they wouldn't normally find in the physical marketplace.

The growing competition and noise is discouraging the sellers

With an increasing number of people joining Instagram every day, the number of sellers is also increasing drastically, creating saturation for products that have a limited audience. Features like paid advertising and factors like 'quality of content' put the small businesses and artisans with limited resources at a disadvantage who cannot compete with the spending power of the bigger brands. It would take time, effort, and money to compete, which smaller brands do not have an abundance of. This makes selling on Instagram a questionable prospect as investment in digital literacy and investment of time won't guarantee definite sales, even if it means definite reach and engagement.

Omni-channel retail is the way to go

Most successful sellers rely on three or more channels for selling. The most common are physical stores, websites, and one or more social media platform. Instagram can be used to generate awareness and leads that can be converted into actual sales on other channels. Newer features like 'Reels' are allowing sellers to create snackable video content that can go viral and bring instant fame and followers. However the limitations of budgets, time and digital literacy can inhibit that, and thus having multiple channels for retails is the sensible choice for arts and crafts sellers.

The sustainability of the sector would not be ensured by a single platform

The pandemic highlighted an already known challenge of the arts and crafts industry: most of the independent artisans and craftspeople live from sale to sale, often working multiple jobs to make ends meet. The power looms and genericide had already made it difficult for such sellers to make a living from their products in the recent past, however, the pandemic and lockdown restrictions pushed many into abject poverty due to the failure to pivot to the digital space. The digital divide was never so obvious and the problems of access, distribution of resources and lack of digital literacy became the defining factors of decline of the sector during the pandemic.

Indigenous products, especially, have been badly impacted as duplication and genericide have resulted in lack of appreciation as well as a lack of trust in the authenticity of these products. Creating indigenous art and craft is a tedious task and the sellers need to be compensated fairly to keep the artisans interested in investing time and effort in such products. As the problem of “fake” and “unauthentic” products plagues the online retail space, solutions at a policy level will be needed.

Conclusion

Instagram is an effective marketing tool that gives the sellers a great platform to build a community, collaborate with influencers and reach people organically. The growing competition means that smaller brands will not be able to match the spending power of the bigger brands and will not be able to sustain their business on Instagram. Omni-channel retail is a must for arts and crafts sellers to ensure maximum possible sales. Focusing on a single platform like Instagram for sales is ineffective, even if it provides good opportunities for building brand awareness.

Genericide and a lack of trust in online products can hamper the sales of arts and crafts in India. Indigenous arts and handicrafts, especially, need an identification and quality mechanism to ensure authenticity to gain consumer trust. A quality mark certification for arts and crafts is suggested to tackle this problem. Such a mark would identify the indigenous characteristics of the products while also rating the products for quality, finishing and build quality. In online retail, this would inspire confidence in the potential customers and also lead to better sale outcomes for the sellers.

Policy reforms are required across the board, from improving access to the latest technology to imparting digital literacy in artisans and crafts people. In the new normal, with depleted resources, those involved in arts and crafts might not be able to set up and maintain physical stores again. This would see a major loss of skilled artisans, who would prefer more secure jobs with better potential payouts. As most of the indigenous art is currently passed down from generation to generation, workshops need to be conducted to impart this education and skill to as many people as possible.

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Exploring Strategic Options for the Agnipath Scheme of the Indian Armed Forces: Innovative Approaches

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ABSTRACT

India has launched the “Agnipath scheme” in consonance with militarily superpower nations across the globe. The policy is undoubtedly innovative and path-breaking as it would allow the youngsters to work with the armed forces and enhance their overall development. After the exit, the militarily trained persons would get jobs in similar cadres or go for start-ups using the lump sum corpus return. However, certain apprehensions in the minds of a section of aspirants and intellectuals have recently been reported in the media. This paper has attempted to widen the attractions of the scheme by incorporating social security benefits within the limiting resources and constraints. The paper explores strategic options that can be offered to the Agniveers, and the incumbents can exercise to franchise the best-suited model depending upon their socio-economic priorities. Offering pensions to the Agniveers would fulfill the state's commitments towards achieving inclusive and sustainable development goals by sustaining their livelihood following the principles of ‘universal basic income’. The paper also portrays a comparative study among the similar schemes offered by global players and reveals that the Agnipath scheme emerges better on various dimensions. This paper has also suggested ways to ensure the academic progression of the recruits along with other non-pecuniary benefits.

Keywords: Agnipath scheme, Social security benefits, Sustainable Development Goals, Non-pecuniary benefits, Agniveer, Indian armed forces

Introduction

The world has witnessed rapid technological changes equally relevant to the armed forces. The days are gone when the size of soldiers determined the strength of the armed forces. Instead, it is desirable for a country to accommodate high precision technology and sophisticated arms and ammunition, including artificial intelligence (AI)-based guided missiles where soldiers' casualties are replaced by automated drones or robotic technology. The defence strategy tactics equations and manifestations are becoming more techno-savvy. The global superpowers are adopting innovative technology ecosystems to modernize their armed forces while they make their citizens ready as and when they would be required for deployment.

‘Agnipath’ is an innovative scheme recently announced by the Government of India to offer opportunities among the nation's youth to serve in the Armed Forces. Many of us dream of working in ‘uniform services’, which remains unachieved most of the time for various reasons. Countries like Israel,

the United Kingdom, and the United States of America have already experimented with similar models, where youths are engaged in the armed forces for a specified period and after which they are separated from the services. This enables the country to get the best possible young and energetic workforce, and they can take pride in the country's sovereignty. On the other hand, short-service recruits can also get many opportunities after completing the service. Service models like this have been experimented earlier in India; for example, appointments in the territorial services or the short-service commission, where a graduate can join par equivalent commissioned officer for a definite period of service.

With the advent of geopolitical dynamics, India needs to build a large well-equipped armed force. On the contrary, it would create unendurable fiscal pressure on the economy. So, the government has coined this Agnipath scheme to possess a trained armed force that can be deployed in exigencies. At the same time, the young minds of this country can have the opportunity to work for four years with a fair

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compensation package. One-fourth of the personnel would get confirmed in the armed forces based on their ratings in the performance appraisal system. The remaining three-fourths of the recruits will be separated from the service with a definite financial package. Such recruits would get preferences in government services, including police, paramilitary services, and private organizations. They can even start new entrepreneurial ventures.

This approach paper has attempted to incorporate additional social benefit measures for the short-term recruits (Agniveers) so that if separated, the incumbents and their dependents would be entitled to receive a defined pension in the line of the Contributory Defined Pension System (CDPS) model designed by Chakrabarty and Singh (2022).

Review of Literature

The Agnipath scheme in a nutshell

The Indian Government announced a new recruitment policy, 'Agnipath Yojana' for the Indian armed forces on June 14, 2022. The policy is an outcome of nearly two years of extensive brainstorming by the government representatives and the chiefs of all three wings of our proud armed forces, viz., the Indian Army, the Indian Navy, and the Indian Air Force. The policy intends to recruit suitably qualified recruits to the Indian armed forces for four years and infuses a sense of 'josh' and 'jazba' (SNS New Delhi, 2022). The idea is to pool tech-savvy young men to serve the forces with the highest order of discipline, commitment, and patriotic values. A tech-savvy cadre is indispensable in contemporary warfare. Hence, they have been aptly named 'Agniveers.' Agnipath also aims to reduce the average age of the armed forces by approximately four to five years. The Agnipath Yojana has several advantages from which the Indian youth can benefit. They would learn essential professional skills such as ethos, courage, team spirit, and commitment to duties. These skills would be crucial for the youth in all their professional ventures after the service. The scheme envisages national integration, nation-building, improved battle preparedness, youthful profile, confident citizens, and smooth integration of the able youth into the national mainstream. The cadres who do not get retained would have an incentivized exit option. The government has declared a combo of the composite annual package, allowances, Seva Nidhi, death compensation, and disability compensation (MyGov.in, 2022).

Features of armed forces recruitment across the world: A comparative study

A comparison of the recruitment policies of the

armed forces in select world superpowers can be assessed in Table 1 below.

Nationwide unrest over the Agnipath scheme

India recently witnessed unfortunate nationwide unrest and protests by a small section of youngsters against the newly devised Agnipath scheme (Express News Service, 2022; IANS, 2022). Although the scheme clearly states that 25% of the select incumbents would be confirmed in the service, most of them opine that the proposed scheme does not ensure permanent jobs for the recruits in the armed forces. Another set of arguments revolves around the lack of pension and gratuity for the recruits who would get separated from the service after four years of engagement. There are apprehensions about the future career and livelihood uncertainty of short-service recruits. This apprehension is perhaps due to misconceptions or being motivated by wrongly perceived notions. However, all these apprehensions can be resolved within the existing structure and framework if the dimension of social security benefits can be augmented in the spirit of the CDPS model (Chakrabarty & Singh, 2022). The CDPS model enhances the holistic well-being of Indian citizens by extending pension benefits to all the professional spheres, including the government, PSUs, and even the private sector. The CDPS model could enhance employee retention in the government sector through guaranteed pensions for the employees and non-guaranteed financial benefits extended to the legal heirs of the employee post demise.

Objectives of the study

- To study the overview of the compensation plans for Agniveers under Agnipath scheme.
- To explore the strategic options for the Agnipath scheme incorporating innovative approaches.

Research methodology

The present study is based on the influx of media reports that emphasise nationwide unrest over the recently adopted Agnipath scheme by the government. Based on various literature reviews and media reports, it was attempted to understand the scheme using secondary information and explore possible strategic options that may be incorporated within the scheme, focusing on social security measures and innovative approaches.

Analysis and interpretation-I

The scheme invites youngsters to join the armed forces for four years after school education, and 25% of them would get confirmation based on specific

Table 1. Armed forces recruitment features in select superpowers of the world

Nation	Nature of recruitment	Service tenure	Scope for academic progression	Employability after service	Scope for life skills development	Pension provision	Retention
USA	Voluntary	Four years	Up to 100% of the tuition fee assistance, living and books stipend, capped loans and grants, benefits end ten years from the last service date.	Homeland security, Coast guard, Fire-fighters, Military police, Trainers, Start-ups, etc.	Intense focus, teamwork, advanced leadership skills, adaptability, superior decision-making skills, resourcefulness, flexibility, persistence, extreme discipline.	Yes (after 20 years of service)	Four years of a reserve duty period for all the recruits
France	Voluntary	One-year contract (extendable up to five years)	–	Job search assistance, nursing, police services, lifeguards, etc.	Vocational training, soft skills, citizenship training, first-aid training.	Yes (after 19 years of service)	–
China	Obligatory	Three-year conscription for males aged above 18 years in the army, and four years in the navy and air force	Academies for becoming an officer in the forces	Non-commissioned officers; civil service jobs, jobs in state-owned enterprises.	–	Yes (with no more than 20 years' service, variable pension system based on different laid criteria)	–
Russia	Obligatory	One-year conscription for males aged between 18-27 years	–	–	–	–	–
Israel	Obligatory	30-month conscription for males, 24-month conscription for females	–	Reserved jobs for the newly discharged soldiers, job boards in universities, telephone helpline for job seekers after service, counsellor (informal education).	Highly advanced technology, high level of motivation, teamwork, psychologically strong.	Yes (after 12 years of service)	10% of the recruits retained for a contract of seven years
India	Voluntarily	Four years	Two seats reserved in every HEI	Paramilitary forces, home guards, Airports, Private security agencies, Defence research laboratories, Railways, Educational institutions, Gym instructors, etc.	Highly disciplined, Commitment to work and nation, Skilled with hands-on training with the latest weapons and equipment, Adaptability, Fearless, etc.	Yes* (Pension options available for choosing)	25% recruits to be retained and inducted into the regular service cadre

Sources: Arieli, 2017; Bawden-Davis, 2017; B'Nefesh, n.d.; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022; Hickey, 2016; Jeantheau, 2021; Leckie, n.d.; Xiaoci & Xuanzun, 2022

Table 2: Agnipath scheme benefits as proposed by the Government of India

Years	Customized Package (Monthly in ₹)	In-hand (70%) (in ₹)	Compulsory contribution to Agniveer Corpus Fund by the recruits (@30%) (in ₹)	Compulsory contribution to corpus fund by the GoI (in ₹)	Final Return on Exit under Seva Nidhi Package (including accumulated interest)
Year 1	30,000	21,000	9,000	9,000	*The scheme has no social security benefits (Pension, Gratuity, etc.)
Year 2	33,000	23,100	9,900	9,900	
Year 3	36,500	25,580	10,950	10,950	
Year 4	40,000	28,000	12,000	12,000	
Total contribution in Agniveer corpus after four years of service			5,02,000	5,02,000	₹ 11,71,000
Exit after Year 4					

Source: (SNS New Delhi, 2022)

performance criteria. The remaining 75% would get separated from the service with a lump sum return and plenty of future career opportunities. A schematic description of the broad compensation plan for the Agniveers is enveloped in Table 2.

The Tangible Financial Benefits of the Agnipath Scheme

1 st year: ₹21,000 × 12	= ₹2,52,000
2 nd year: ₹23,100 × 12	= ₹2,77,200
3 rd year: ₹25,580 × 12	= ₹3,06,960
4 th year: ₹28,000 × 12	= ₹3,36,000
Total in-hand salary from four years of service	= ₹11,72,160
Retirement/exit from service after 4 th year (approximate growth @8.05% per year compounded)	= ₹11,71,000
Grand total of earning of Agniveer after four years of service	= ₹23,43,160

This scheme has been adopted by the central government to provide more opportunities to the youngsters so that they can be part of financial inclusion immediately and land on a financially independent life in the near future with the total income of nearly a quarter crore of rupees in total. Apart from that, the Agniveers are entitled to have a cover of ₹48 lakh of life insurance (in case of death) during their service period without any deductions from their salary (News9 Staff, 2022). In addition, the recruits are also covered by insurance benefits based on the level of disabilities i.e., one-time ex-gratia of ₹44 / 25 / 15 lakh based on percentage of disability @ 100%/75%/50%, respectively (Money Control News, 2022). All these entitlements essentially reinforce the quality of life of the recruits,

future progression, and even comprehensive support package for uncontrollable uncertainties so that the cardinal interests of the recruits and their families may be protected.

Analysis and interpretation-II

Incorporating the social security benefits in the Agnipath scheme in line with the CDPS system

It is attempted to explore various pecuniary and non-pecuniary added benefits that can be offered to the Agniveers so that they can exercise their choice as per their career objectives and family commitments. Two innovative models have been developed within the limiting financial outflow on salary heads, where the component of gratuity and life-long pension can be offered along with slightly lower lump sum return at the time of exit (as elaborated in Tables 3 to 7).

The 15% contribution by the government towards the corpus shall be added to the corresponding 10% contribution made by the employee (in line with the CDPS scheme). The remaining 15% (of the 30% contribution pledged by the government) may be used to generate returns like a monthly recurring deposit (RD).

The corpus of ₹2,92,907 would be generated from the government contribution of 15% of the cadet's salary for four years, which was accumulated at @8.05% growth per year.

After the extended discussion of retirement benefits proposed for the Agniveers, it is desirable to visualise the comparative analysis of the three models for an overall assessment and ease of choice. The same may be seen in Table 6.

Intangible or indirect privileges and opportunity matrix for the Agniveers

Some of the non-financial intangible benefits that Agniveers may be entitled to receive are as follows:

- Exposure to an excellent army training

Table 3: The corpus contribution matrix

Contribution under	Employee		Government	
Existing Agnipath Scheme	30% (compulsory)		30% (compulsory)	
Proposed CDPS System	20% (optional) and 10% (compulsory)	10%	15%	15%
	20% (optional)	Employees' contribution @10% to be invested by the government to generate fixed pensions for the short-term recruits and their dependents	Employer's contribution @15% to be invested by the government for generating fixed pension for the short-term recruits and their dependents	Creating a corpus for payment of gratuity and lump sum final returns
		25% inclusive of employee and employer contribution to be invested for generating pension corpus with a guaranteed monthly pension benefit @8.6% of average salary* amounting to ₹ 3,000 per month		

Source: The authors

*Average salary = $(30000 + 36500 + 40000)/4 = ₹ 34,875$

Monthly Pension = 8.6% of the average salary = ₹ 3,000

Annual pension = ₹ 3,000 × 12 = ₹ 36,000

Table 4: Calculation of the compounded corpus value

Years	Contribution @15% of monthly salary (in ₹)	Annual contribution (in ₹)	Annualised yield @8.05% growth* per year (in ₹)	Compounded value after completion of the fourth year @8.05% growth* (in ₹)
Year 1	4,500	54,000	56,397	71,143
Year 2	4,950	59,400	62,037	72,427
Year 3	5,475	65,700	68,616	74,139
Year 4	6,000	72,000	75,198	75,198
The total value of the 15% contribution by the government after four years				2,92,907

*Assuming the growth of the fund @8.05% in proximity with the current EPF rate

Source: The authors

- Exploring the essence of adventurous life
- A disciplined lifestyle with imbibing maturity

Indicative extensions of the benefit vectors for the Agnipath scheme after incorporating social security measures among the multi-stakeholders

For the recruits:

- Opportunity to work with the armed forces, resembling dreams coming true.
- Understanding various operations of armed forces and acquiring knowledge of multiple skills.
- Handsome salary at early ages of career: India ranks low in the average salaries drawn by its citizens for work. It was once ranked 72nd among 106 countries surveyed by Picodi.com (PTI, 2020). The median monthly salary of the youth in India is between ₹16,000 (Singh, 2022) and ₹21,000 (Kanwal, 2022). The Agnipath scheme

is destined to provide the Agniveers ₹30,000 per month in the very first year of service, which eventually will be raised to ₹33,000 in the second year, ₹36,500 in the third year, and ₹40,000 in the final year of service. These amounts are way better than the current national average.

- Serving the armed forces needs strong psychological bending and resilience. Four years' service in the Agnipath scheme would ensure whether the recruits can serve such stringent disciplinary life for an extended period or not. This would neutralize the growing cases of suicide in the armed forces.
- If the social security benefits are incorporated, the short-term departing recruits and their dependents would be entitled to receive a fixed pension throughout their lifetime or the corpus in lieu of only after completing four years of service.

Table 5. Calculation of financial package post-retirement under the proposed model

Take-home salary (₹)	Guaranteed pension per month (for the incumbent and the dependent for rest of the years)	Gratuity after completion of four years' continuous service (@15 days per completed year of service)	Lump-sum final return at the end of the fourth year	If opted by the cadet for a 20% contribution in an assured growth fund (@8.05% per annum)	Total package after exiting from service
21,000 23,100 25,580 28,000	₹3,000 per month or equivalent return of pension corpus of ₹4,82,850	2 month's average salary = ₹69,750	₹2,23,157	(94,860 + 96,569 + 98,854 + 1,00,261) = ₹3,90,544	With availing guaranteed pension (in ₹): (69,750 + 2,23,157 + 3,90,544) = 6,83,451 Without availing pension (in ₹): (4,82,850 + 69,750 + 2,23,157 + 3,90,544) + 5,000 (non-refundable one-time seed grant for not availing pension) = 11,66,301 + 5,000 ≈ ₹11,71,000

Source: The authors

Table 6: Compensation plan (GP, Gratuity) for short-term recruits assuming a 10% contribution from the employee

In-hand salary (IHS) (₹) (Increased by 28.57% with reference to the corresponding year at Model 2)	Guaranteed Pension (GP) per month (for the incumbent and the dependent for the rest of the years)	Gratuity after completion of four years' continuous service (@15 days per completed year of service)	Lump sum final return at the end of the fourth year	Total package after exiting from service
27,000 29,700 32,850 36,000	₹3,000 per month or equivalent return of pension corpus of ₹4,82,850	2 month's average salary = ₹69,750	₹2,23,157	With availing guaranteed pension (in ₹): (69,750 + 2,23,157) = 2,92,907 Without availing guaranteed pension (in ₹): (4,82,850 + 69,750 + 2,23,157 + 5,000) = 7,80,757

Source: The authors

Table 7: Comparative illustration of retirement benefits for the Agniveers from the different models

	Gross Salary (in ₹)	Take-home salary (in ₹)	Lump sum Return	Gratuity (in ₹)	Pension
Model 1	Year 1 → (30,000 × 12)	1 st Year: 21,000 × 12 = 2,52,000 2 nd Year: 23,100 × 12 = 2,77,200	11,71,000	Nil	Nil
	Year 2 → (33,000 × 12)	3 rd Year: 25,580 × 12 = 3,06,960 4 th Year: 28,000 × 12 = 3,36,000	[₹2,23,157 + ₹3,90,544 (if opted a deduction of 20% for assured growth fund)]	69,750	₹3,000 per month for the employee and his dependent legal heir or anytime right of withdrawal of the pension corpus amounting to ₹4,82,850
Model 2	Year 3 → (36,500 × 12)	The total salary drawn in four years of service = 11,72,160	= ₹6,13,701		
	Year 4 → (40,000 × 12)				
	Total = ₹16,74,000	Year 1 → (27,000 × 12) Year 2 → (29,700 × 12) Year 3 → (32,850 × 12) Year 4 → (36,000 × 12) = ₹15,06,600	₹2,23,157		
Model 3					

Source: The authors

- Three-fourths of the short-term recruits will be separated from the service with a definite financial package. Such recruits would get preferences in government services, including police, paramilitary services, and private organizations, and they could even start new entrepreneurial ventures.
- The retiring short-term recruits may be provided special provisions (two seats over and above the existing strength) for admission in the 10+2 and equivalent courses and each program of the UG/PG level offered by any HEI in India so that their academic progress should be prioritized as a mark of their sacrifice to serve the motherland through the armed forces.
- It would enhance the overall employability and potential job opportunities for the recruits.

compared to the number of confirmed recruits. This model would strengthen the armed forces with young blood and ignited minds.

- The mission Agnipath would create armed forces professionals who can be deployed in exigencies or war situations.
- The Agnipath scheme would enhance the employability of many youths with a fair compensation package blended with corpus fund and social security benefits. With a greater likelihood, it would wipe out the nation’s commitments towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the SGD-1 and SDG-2.
- The model Agnipath would improve the culture of national integration and pride for the country among the youths of the society.

Indicative career progression of Agniveers after four years of service

Once the tenure of short-term service recruits is over after four years of service in the Indian armed forces, they will have a range of options to choose from to progress in life and sustain their livelihood. The possibilities are depicted in Figure 1.

For the society:

- Serving in the armed forces will enlighten the recruits with the philosophy of sacrifice, cooperation, and collective efforts. Even if the short-term recruits are separated from the service, the culture of sacrifice will remain instilled that will be useful for society forever.

For the country:

- The mission Agnipath would attract many youngsters into the armed forces, of which three-fourths would be separated after four years of service. It can be interpreted that a more significant number of recruits will be inducted

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to uphold the Agnipath scheme, a strategic decision adopted by the highest policy-making body of India to serve the armed forces most effectively and efficiently. This innovative plan would provide immense opportunity

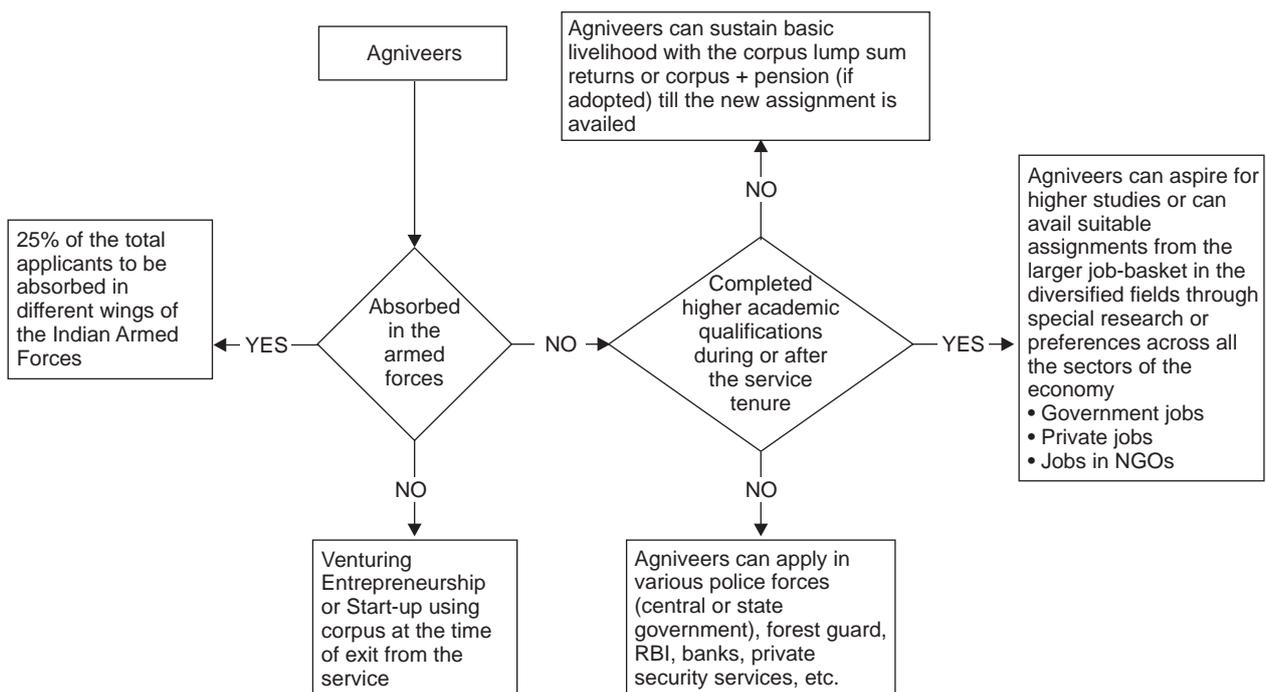


Fig. 1: Career progression options for Agniveers after dissociation from the Armed Forces
Source: Author’s contribution

to the youth ready to serve the motherland at a young age. The scheme would impart numerous life skills, interpersonal skills, physical fitness skills, and armed force training to those recruits. From the government's perspective, all these skill sets would be provided to the short-term trainees as part of the investment in human capital so that after four years, whoever would have to be separated from the job, would be enriched and empowered enough to rejuvenate their careers either in government or corporate jobs or establishing new entrepreneurial ventures.

It is evident from the table that the Indian government has provided the best possible package to the short-service *jawans* within the limiting constraints. The Agnipath scheme aims to recruit voluntarily, has provision to retain 25% of the Agniveers (higher than any other country), and promises a salary higher than the country's per capita income. If the apex bodies consider the propositions of this paper, then there can be a provision for pension and gratuity.

The untiring efforts are already paying dividends, as nearly 94,000 applications have already been received by the Indian Air Force alone in the past few days (Sengar, 2022). The paper has widened two additional modes of offerings so that all the concerns and apprehensions can be adequately addressed. If adopted, the potential recruits would enjoy the flexibility to choose the best package that suits their family liabilities and livelihood. Model 2 and Model 3 have essentially incorporated social security benefits in pensions to attract those sections of the population who feel more comfortable with a low but steady retirement package after retirement, along with a handsome lump sum amount. The provision of pensions extended to the Agniveers would endorse the state's commitments towards achieving inclusive and Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 1 and 2) by ensuring their livelihood in consonance with the principles of 'universal basic income' (Chakrabarty, 2019). However, Model 1 strongly advocates that the retiring *jawans* should be given a hefty corpus to rise high if they can venture into new business. The model offers flexibility to the pension choosers, who can surrender their monthly pension and take back the appropriate pension corpus at any point in their retirement career. This paper is prepared with a view that the apex authority of the country can incorporate other models as well so that we can move from a cloud of confusion to the whole-hearted spontaneity of the country.

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Planning Effective Mass Media Health Campaigns: A Conceptual Framework

KAJAL PARMAR

ABSTRACT

Public healthcare has always been one of the top priorities of welfare states across the world. A lot of resources are spent on promoting better public healthcare for the masses by almost all the democratic countries of the world. Due to their extensive reach and virtually universal access, mass media have become the primary vehicle to deliver multifarious health-related messages to various target audiences. Mass Media health campaigns play a significant role in the promotion of public healthcare. If planned, designed, and executed efficiently, a mass media health campaign holds the power to enhance the quality of life of the underprivileged and deprived sections of the society. Well-planned and designed mass media health campaigns have been found to be expedient in ensuring the success of health programs across the globe. For a health communication campaign to bring out desired outcomes, it needs to incorporate the right elements of a successful campaign. This paper aims to develop a framework by reviewing existing literature on health communication campaigns. It attempts to identify the components that campaign planners should take into account while planning, designing and implementing a campaign. The components for a successful campaign identified during the course of this study were formative research, use of theory, audience segmentation, message design, proper outreach and targeting, channel selection, supportive environment and monitoring. If incorporated properly in a mass media health campaign, these components may help in augmenting the efficacy of the campaign enabling it to achieve its objectives.

Keywords: Channel Selection, Formative Research, Mass Media, Message Design, Public Health, Public Health Campaigns

Introduction

Good health is crucial for the development of an individual as well as a nation. Better policies and prevention programmes eradicating various communicable and non-communicable diseases, broader investments in healthcare policies, health programmes and campaigns being designed and implemented by the government organizations, all contribute towards economic advancement and development of a nation (Dodd, 2005, p.46). Health promotion is an important determinant for the progress of any country towards its population's well-being. It is a unified term for all the actions and approaches taken by the nations, pledged towards improving the health of masses (Crosby, *et al.*, 2015, p.3–32; Tones & Green, 2004, p.13). There are various public health policies, programmes and campaigns facilitating health awareness and promotion amongst the masses.

Mass media campaigns have proved to be an effective tool in sensitizing people towards their health and promotion of general healthy practices (Noar, 2006, p.4). Public health communication campaigns are extensively used to achieve the goals of different health programmes and interventions.

Public health communication can be defined as the promotion of conducive health environment among the population by positively influencing the population and stakeholders, using mass media tools and techniques (Maibach & Holtgrave, 1995, p.219–220). Mass media have been in use since decades for the promotion of health and well-being. Mass mediated technologies have proved to be efficient ways fostering a positive climate of health information (Jesus, 2013, p.528). The health-related messages usually disseminated through the print or the electronic media. These media continue to be

effective platforms to advance better health among the masses. These have been used commonly to raise awareness about certain health issues, health-related topics and to foster behavioural changes (Corcoran, 2007, p.73–93). Even at present these are the most preferred mass media to reach the desired target audiences in most of the developing countries.

Health scenario in India

India is home to more than 1.3 billion people. According to the report – World Population Prospects, 2019 released by the United Nations, India will surpass China as the globe's most crowded country by 2027 (United Nations, 2019, para. 4). With this envisioned scenario of India's population at present and in the coming years, it becomes imperative to analyse the factors influencing the health sector in the country. As mentioned earlier, health is essential for the progress of any nation, thus the arena of health and the determinants of health promotion need to be critically studied.

Since the Independence, Indian government has been making dedicated attempts to remove the root causes of numerous communicable/ non-communicable diseases and health problems like maternal mortality, child mortality, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, emerging and re-emerging communicable/ non-communicable diseases. The National Health Policy of 1983 and 2002 effectively addressed various health problems and determined the health priorities in India (National Health Policy, 1983 & National Health Policy, 2002). The National Health Policy of 2017 aimed to provide the access to quality health care to the people by reducing the burden of medical finances; by lowering the cost of healthcare delivery; by providing and promoting preventive care programmes and by promoting health care at policy level (National Health Policy, 2017). Some of the gravest healthcare problems India is facing include, issues related to reproductive health, maternal health, child health, adolescent health along with communicable/ non-communicable diseases and problems like leprosy, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), tuberculosis, mortality by cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes, respiratory problems, mental health, drug abuse, tobacco use and many more. These are some of the most challenging health problems which were addressed in the National Health Policy of 2017 as top priority. To effectively address and strengthen the health care delivery system, the policy articulates a concerted and collaborative action at national and sub-national levels to expand the scope of health interventions and health programmes.

A properly planned, designed and executed campaign holds the power to improve the health condition of millions of destitute and underprivileged citizens. Successful mass media health campaigns and interventions are responsible for the success of health programmes. A huge chunk of money, labour and time is poured into these health campaigns every year, to promote well being and discourage unhealthy behaviours among the masses through health promotion interventions (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437). Mass media health campaigns can be referred to as health interventions which can be considered as promising tools for persuading and changing public behaviour regarding various health problems (Noar, 2006, p.2). Health interventions as elaborated by Guttman (1997, p.102) are the actions taken to persuade the views, thoughts and behaviours of the targeted audience using interventionist approaches and strategies.

India has gained success in eradicating diseases like smallpox and pulse polio and has been able to achieve increasingly lower infant and maternal mortality rates owing to its dedicated public health policies and mass media campaigns. There are number of health programmes like nutritional programmes, the programmes to control communicable/ non-communicable diseases and campaigns designed by the government on reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health, in order to improve health and well-being of the citizens like National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, Janani Suraksha Yojana and many more.

Research has started to reveal that there may be a number of social, economic, demographical or cultural factors contributing to the success or failure of a campaign/ programme. Previous researches have stated that for a communication campaign to bring out desired outcomes, it becomes necessary to address the right components of effective campaign while planning, designing and implementing it among the at-risk group (Rice & Atkin, 2001, p.102–135).

Aim of the study

This study aims to discuss the importance of mass media health campaigns in the public health sector. Further by traditionally reviewing the existing literature on mass media health communication campaigns, this conceptual paper aims to study the factors contributing to the success of mass media health campaigns. It aims to develop a conceptual framework by identifying the components that campaign planners should take into account while planning, designing and implementing a successful health campaign by reviewing existing literature on health communication campaigns.

Literature review

The mass media campaigns in health sector have been utilized extensively during past many decades to promote good health decisions; reduce unhealthy activities like smoking, alcohol and drug abuse; encourage behavioural changes; improve health screening awareness; and promote physical activities. A number of studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of mass media health campaigns. A study on the Australian mass media health campaign targeting physical activity ‘Active Australia Initiative’ concluded that the campaign positively influenced the audience exposed to its messages (Bauman *et al.*, 2001, p.45). The use of mass media in anti-smoking and drug abuse prevention campaigns have proved a strong dependence of health campaigns on mass communication. Globally, research studies on the effectiveness of smoking cessation campaigns like California Tobacco Control Programme (Pierce *et al.*, 1998, p. 893–899), education programmes for youngsters (Flynn *et al.*, 1992, p.827–834), anti-alcohol and drug abuse prevention (Allara *et al.*, 2015, p.1–10) programmes and campaigns have suggested mass media as the most promising tool for promoting healthy lifestyles and habits (Flay, 1987, p.153–160). Studies have suggested that mass media health campaigns if designed and implemented effectively can lead to the promotion of healthy behaviours like safer sexual practices, sanitation and cancer screenings. Various literature reviews also suggested that in the worst-case scenario the health campaigns can be ineffective and backfire if not planned, designed and executed appropriately (Allara *et al.*, 2015, p.1–10). Hence, they should be implemented according to the framework of effective and rigorous campaign studies.

The review of the national as well as international health campaigns literature has helped in identifying multifarious factors and conditions required for health campaigns to be effective. Campaigns are not just a direct straightforward effort in health promotion and disease prevention. Instead, the health campaigns are more like an activity of exercising information control, creating awareness, sensitizing masses, which are being operationalized under variety of factors and conditions. From the past research work done on mass media health campaigns, various components can be identified which make a campaign successful in achieving its goals like use of theoretical frameworks, targeting, message designing, monitoring, etc. Changing the information climate successfully is the primary goal of most of the public health communication campaigns, with the final aim of altering behaviours among the target audiences to prevent chronic illnesses and problems (Randolph &

Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437). As per this approach the various aspects must be addressed by a mass media health campaign in order to accomplish all its goals in the present media environment.

Research method

This study is a conceptual traditional review of available literature on mass media health communication campaigns. In this review of literature, the focus is on the previous research findings on the selected topic. These reviews are very important as they form a base for comprehending the past, present and future way to go of a particular research topic (Rozas & Klein, 2010, p.394). During this literature review the author searched for the keywords like “health campaigns”, “media health campaigns”, “health communication campaigns”, “media and health”, “mass media health campaigns”, and “media and communication campaigns” from the Google Scholar database. Through advanced search option, articles related to mass media health communication campaigns published from 1970 to 2020 were searched using selected key words. The title and abstract of each and every item was scanned for the appearance of searched key words. The full-text versions of only those article items containing the searched key words were obtained. For further selection and filtration of articles, the full-text versions of such articles were scanned thoroughly. Those journal articles, book chapters, reports, and articles discussing the importance and the effectiveness of various components of health campaigns were selected and finally reviewed to develop a conceptual framework.

Formative research

Mass media campaigns have the capability to reach large number of populations. Successful media health campaigns should have a formative research base which includes the commissioning of preliminary research with the target audience, the problem or issue and pretesting of messages. Formative research can be defined as the set of activities defining the problem area, target audience, their behaviours, it collects data about the variables that may affect the program implementation (Valente & Kwan, 2001, p.160–183).

Formative stage is a primary phase that can enhance the campaign effectiveness by gathering information about the audience. Conducting formative research with the target population is very crucial to understand the population, their behaviour, preferences, and problems (Fernandez *et al.*, 2019, p.7). It helps the intervention planners devise favourable messages, emotional appeals,

effective channels and theoretical frameworks (Atkin & Freimuth, 2001, p.102–103). It is an important part while designing and implementing an effective communication health campaign (Maddock, Silbanuz & Nash, 2008, p.213; Noar, 2006, p.24).

Along with the understanding of behaviours of intended audience and problem area, messages designed need to be pretested and thus their future effectiveness should be researched in prior to their implementation over the target population (Noar, 2006, p.29–30). Valente and Kwan (2001, p.163) indicated that the messages need to be pre-tested by the programmers to enhance their knowledge about the beliefs, attitudes, acceptance, and audience reactions during the course of production. It helps to understand that what type of message appeals, content and style of the messages, channels, any need of supplementing messages are required to enhance the outcomes of the campaign. The pretesting of messages designed for the campaigns is very fruitful in measuring the campaign's success parameters.

The planning of a campaign is effective if all the variables connected to it are well researched and taken into the consideration by the programme planners. The primary stage is important for guiding the planning of an intervention about the factors which are promising. This research also provides the insights about the conditions that may be ineffective during the course of campaign. Aschemann-Witzel *et al.*, (2012, p.5–11), posited that the information gathered by conducting preliminary evaluation can provide valuable insights about the research area environment.

Investigating the research field anterior of planning an intervention will help in bridging the knowledge gap between the target audience, problem area and the programmers. Thus, formative research is pivotal to improve the design of the campaigns (Synder, 2007, p.37) and well researched and effectively planned campaign account for successful and long-lasting effects (Farrelly, Niederdeppe, & Yarsevich, 2003, p.35–47; Noar, 2006, p.5–6).

Theory based campaigns

During the planning of public health communication campaigns, the theories act as a powerful tool in making informed choices (Edgar & Volkman, 2012, p.587). They aim to influence and alter people's intentions to adopt, reject or change behaviour (Fishbein & Yzer, 2003, p.164–183). The concepts underpinning the campaign planning and designing are very crucial to understand. To achieve the desired results, mass media campaigns need to identify those theories which can guide their message production and campaign strategy.

and Randolph Viswanath (2004) claimed that the determinants of behaviour that will be targeted through a campaign need to be reviewed critically to make a clear understanding of them (p.419–437). To alter behaviours, promote healthy habits or influence health decisions, attaining knowledge about the target audience behaviour becomes important. A thorough understanding of human behaviour strategies should be at the forefront while planning any communication health campaign (Corcoran, 2007, p.5–31).

There are number of theories of health behaviour, which the health promoters use while planning and implementing their campaign strategies like Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p.176–187), Diffusion of Innovation (Kaminiski, 2011, para. 1), Elaboration Likelihood Model and Heuristic Systematic Model, Extended Parallel Process Model, Social Cognitive Theory, Health Belief Model, Theory of Reasoned Action, Instrumental Learning, Integrative Theory of Behaviour Change, Message Frames, Self- Efficacy, Trans-Theoretical Model and Uses and Gratification Theory (Atkin & Rice, 2001; Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437). The selection of the theoretical frameworks can be based on personal choices, target groups, funding, health problems or illnesses, time, behaviour that need to be targeted, stakeholders, organizations and so on.

A theory aids the practitioner in predicting the plausible results of interventions. A theory is not direct gateway to plan a health strategy; instead, it provides the health promoter enough knowledge to plan an intervention, to predict the relationship between internal and external variables that may affect the intervention outcomes. Theories should be used as conceptual foundations to the campaigns and as a guide to campaign to achieve the desired results (Dixon, *et al.*, 2015, p. 469–579).

The theories allow the health practitioner to identify the actions to influence behaviour change, predicting the campaign after effects on targeted audiences, their beliefs, attitudes and cognition (Anker, *et al.*, p.439–456; Corcoran, 2007, p.5–31). The tradition of inclusion of theoretical frameworks in planning process of a campaign is important (Friedman, *et al.*, 2016, p.97). This should be done so that any communication gap between the health promoter and the targeted audience could be eliminated.

Airhihenbuwa and Obregon (2000) also stressed on the importance of the application of theories across the spectrum of public communication campaigns (p.5–15). His work indicated that an effective communication strategy is a critical component in global health promotion and it should be well grounded in a sound theoretical framework so that

it can be applicable in different regional and cultural contexts. Thus, it is clear that theory is an important component for the success of a health communication campaign.

Audience segmentation

Audience segmentation is another pivotal campaign design principle. The application of this principle can help campaign planners to reach the specific audience (Fernandez *et al.*, 2019, p.1–11; Pedrana *et al.*, 2014, p.695–705). This principle has emerged from the idea that rather than reaching a broad public with interventions, the programmers should identify and reach the intended audience (Pechmann & Reibling, 2000, p.80–94; Atkin & Rice, 2001). Segmentation is a systematic process for defining one's audiences for an intervention or campaign (Slater, 1996, p.267–284). Thus, the term audience segmentation means dividing and organizing heterogeneous audience in to smaller groups according to their common characteristics, communication needs, choices and behaviours, so that the communication activities can be more effective (O'Sullivan, Yonkler, Morgan & Merritt, 2003, p.53–72).

The technique of social marketing to divide the audience in to commonly characterised subgroups is beneficial; the same practice can also be applied to health promotion (Corcoran, 2007, p.5–31). These segmented subgroups later can be targeted with specific messages or information. But for that, the subgroups should be homogeneous, have similar determinants and variables, and then only appropriate common messages and intervention strategies can be designed for them (Kammer, *et al.*, 2016, p.1–18; Slater, 1996, p. 267–284).

Rice and Atkin (2001) indicated that message efficiency and effectiveness are the two advantages of dividing the public from heterogeneous groups to homogeneous or identifying target population according to their personality traits, needs, demographic characteristics, problem variables, social, economic and cultural constructs. There are number of studies which used the principle of audience segmentation to make customised messages and tailored approaches in health communication campaigns based on demographic variables like gender, age, ethnicity and behavioural characteristics (Noar, 2006, p.29).

There are enormous number of audience segmentation methods and strategies like demographics, surveys, using media, key psychological variables, focus group discussions, available resources (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2003, p.53–72) and commercially available segmentation

schemes like VALS- values and Lifestyle, etc. These strategies and methods can be effectively used to segment the audience according to the campaigns. The audience is segmented on the basis of the taxonomies of the variables in question firstly, and then various methods and strategies come in to play.

By segmenting the audience, it becomes more specific that which sub group of the audience needs to be targeted with tailored approaches and messages (Atkin & Rice 2001; Maibach, *et al.*, 2011, p.1–9). Audience segmentation is very significant in designing messages that address concerns, needs and perspectives of the specific population. In this the formative research on audience attitudes and assessment of intended messages becomes important (Slater, 1996, p.267–284). Hence it can be posited that audience segmentation is an important factor which contributes for the effectiveness of a campaign.

Message design

The next step after successful segmentation of audience should be the effective use of message designing strategies so that the message designers can create persuasive and creative messages for the target group (Noar, 2006, p.29–30).

Palmgreen and Donohew (n.d.) stated that the campaign designers need to develop messages that can generate maximal audience attention and interest (p.27–43). There are number of formal features through which the messages can be turned into creative, attractive and novel ones (Pedrana *et al.*, 2014, p.695–705). To make the messages eliciting reactions from the audience following are the pivotal conditions:

Sensation seeking targeting: The work of Palmgreen and Donohew (n.d.) on drug abuse prevention approach, designing SENTAR (sensation-seeking targeting) has led to the successful decrease of marijuana usage among the sensation-seeking target group particularly youth (p.27–43). His work has stressed on the importance of designing campaign messages which have high sensation-seeking characteristics to elicit high level of attraction from the segmented audience and holding their attention for long. It can be stated that messages with low sensation-seeking values may be of no effect in changing the attitudes of target group. Thus, campaign messages need to be specifically appealed at-risk groups according to their sensation seeking values (Donohew *et al.*, 1989). The literature reviewed suggests that in drug abuse prevention related televised advertisements; sensation value of messages is of much importance. The sensation value in terms of televised messages can be defined as the features of audio-visual messages to generate strong or weak

sensory emotional responses and appeals among the audiences.

Strong emotional appeals: Along with sensation-seeking approach to message designing there are other approaches contributing for the success of mass media health campaign messages like the use of emotional appeals, which can be positive or negative. Through the use of positive emotional appeals, target members may be motivated to change behaviour which will benefit their health. With the use of negative emotional values like fear appeals and disgust, the people may be feared of the consequences of not adopting a healthy lifestyle or behaviour. Such negative appeals have proved to be very promising in altering audiences' behaviours like the use of seat belt to prevent accidents and punishment, junk food leading to cardiovascular diseases and so on. Previous research suggested that the use of fear appeals has led to effective outcomes in changing audience behaviour. Fear appeals which are persuasive in nature and arouse strong emotions of fear should be used in messages. Strong fear appeals lead to strong attitude and intention changes (Witte & Allen, 2000, p.591–615). Hence emotional appeal is an important component of message designing (Donohew *et al.* 1989; Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437).

Message framing: As a lot of time and money is being poured over the mass communication health campaigns by the campaign planners, so the message designing should be given equal importance. In this view another factor for a good message design is the concept of message framing (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437) along with the use of sound message designing theories.

Clear messages: The messages which are targeted to the at-risk group should be clear and understandable (Pedrana *et al.*, 2014, p.695–705). Messages are the soul of any communication campaign. They should be reached to the audience appropriately and consistently on time and should be phrased with clarity in simple and clear language (Aschemann-Witzel *et al.*, 2012, p.5–11; Pechmann & Reibling, 2000, p. 80–94).

Counter advertisements: Counter advertisements can be effectively used as a part of message designing. The use of counter advertisements in smoking cessation or tobacco-cessation behaviours has been proved optimal in limiting certain habits among the at-risk audience (Seigel, 1998, p.128). They can be used to oppose certain messages irrelevant or contrary to the campaign messages. They help in creating a positive climate for campaign messages to influence the public.

Social marketing tools: The use of social

marketing tools for the designing of effective messages can also be beneficial (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437). These tools can be used to target the messages to the intended audience members.

NovaCorcoran(2007)in his book 'Communicating Health Strategies for Health Promotion' also stated some guidelines to be followed during the designing of written material (p.86):

- Pre-testing the readability skills among the target audience so that campaign designers can devise the message material according to people's convenience.
- Remove jargons and difficult words from the message for its clarity.
- Use of we/our rather than you to show the collaborative and united nature of the campaign.
- Use of simple and easy to understand tables and diagrams for better understanding among the at risk group.
- Use of the glossary of complex items.
- Re-conduct readability and conduct pilot study of the messages developed to check any loopholes left out in the message material.

Along with all these features, there are other factors which are responsible for an effective mass media message designing. The messages, their themes, images and wordings need to be selected according to the target audience (Swoden & Albaster, 2006, p.1–30) keeping in mind their socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, pre-testing of the campaigns or interventions is required (Tan, Bigman, Nagler, Minsky & Viswanath, 2017, p. 1143–1155.). Also the use of low preaching style, dramatic content, novel formats, suspense, tension factors, motivational introductions of campaign advertisements and strong emotional appeals have proved to be effective in provoking the audience's desired behaviours and involvement in the process. Although it is not rigidly marked that a campaign message designer should consider each and every characteristic mentioned above. But, more of these characteristics or factors will be considered more effective will be the messages, resulting in successful campaign (Donohew *et al.*, 1989).

Proper outreach and targeting

After the successful designing of campaign messages using various formal features, the next daunting task is the proper exposure and targeting of these messages to the audience. Many times the ignorance of this principle of proper outreach and targeting lead to failure of the communication campaigns (Hornik, 2001, p.75–100).

To target the segmented audience integrated

media should be used. The message environment of the campaign can be supplemented with various other strategies which have been proved to be very effective like joining hands with community education strategies, public relation approaches like workshops, talks, press conferences, using advocacy strategies, combining unpaid and paid media outlets for message distribution and many more. With the appropriate use of media, small media can be effectively used to gain proper outreach (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437).

The audience for the campaign needs to be reached rigorously to have maximum influence. The intensity of exposures can be increased by using appropriate media channels, buying space and time in the media or through donation of free space and time by the media houses to the campaign messages. To reach more and more people, campaign designers and promoters can make efficient use of entertainment education, distribution of education materials (Hornik, 2001, p.75–100), use of public service advertisements, soap operas and so on (Noar, 2006, p.30; Singhal & Rogers, 2001).

Various literature reviews of health campaigns suggested that the use of brand factor is effective in persuading the audience. Aschemann-Witzel *et al.* (2012), from the view of commercial marketing pointed out that the endorsements can be effectively used in maximising message effects (p.5–11). Endorsements are used to create credibility and trust among the audience regarding the campaign. The use of public figures aids campaign exposure to the intended audience as people relate themselves with the public figures. Vertical and horizontal endorsements both come into play at various situations alone as well as together. Vertical endorsements are the ones when celebrities, role models or public heroes are used in the marketing of messages to influence audience, while horizontal endorsements are those where peer to peer network is used to influence people. Opinion leaders can be the flag holders of campaign messages to persuade large number of people towards particular behaviour, attitude or action thus aids in campaign success (Aldoory & Bonzo, 2005, p.260–263; Hwang, 2012, p.120–141). It has also viewed that the use of both the voices can enhance message exposure and will be beneficial for the message as well as the success of the campaign.

Thus, the campaigns with greater reach and exposure compounds for greater effects and hence contribute for the success of the campaigns (Farrelly *et al.*, 2003, p.35–47).

Channel selection

The mass media channels are widely used to disseminate the health messages to the target audience. Television, radio, print and internet all are the media channels through which messages can be exposed to the target group (Noar, 2006, p.21–42; Robinson *et al.*, 2014, p. 360–371). The use of multiple and diverse mass media channels to disseminate the campaign messages and their appropriate selection to place the messages are extremely important. The channels which are widely viewed by the audience need to be considered for the desired outcomes (Kammer *et al.*, 2016, p.1–18).

The media channels selected for the awareness and reaching campaign audience can be supplemented with the use of other media-rich channels. A good combination of media for the message dissemination and communication activities is very crucial. A lesson which can be learnt from commercial marketing campaigns in health communication campaigns is the 360 degree approach of mass media. It means to target the audience or consumers by different media channels and outlets in repetition from all the angles (Aschemann-Witzel *et al.*, 2012, p.5–11).

The use of numerous channels like mass media and interpersonal communication to inform the people about the campaign objectives and messages is beneficial (Putte, *et al.*, 2011; Kammer *et al.*, 2016, p.1–18). Mass media channels along with print when used jointly leads to positive publicity of the messages (Aldoory & Bonzo, 2005, p.260–263 and Anker *et al.*, 2016, p.439–456). Now-a-days electronic media is in trend for its advantages in dissemination of messages to a large audience in less time and at low prices. New communication technologies like social media, social networking sites and various applications, are emerging out as promising channels and tools for message dissemination (Pedrana *et al.*, 2014, p.695–705; Kammer *et al.*, 2016, p.1–18).

The selection of channels should be done in accordance to the needs and preferences of the intended audiences. Audience research can be utilized to know about the media habits and other information about the at-risk group like the amount of time spent by them on television, radio, print and internet, prime time of the day, literacy rate, media literacy, access to media, social media use and internet surfing. The knowledge about the audience is in dire need while selecting the channels. Secondary channels like emails, billboards can also be used to direct the audience to campaign messages like television networks, weblogs, news stories, documentaries and public service announcements (Atkin & Freimuth, 2001, p.102–135).

Previous research suggested that the less number

of campaigns have used single media channel, most of them have used a combination of media-rich channels (Noar, 2006, p.21–42). Campaign channels can make efficient use of the educational material like pamphlets, printed brochures, flyers, posters, printed booklets, wall paintings, talks, conferences to inform the maximum audience (Aldoory & Bonzo, 2005, p.260–263).

It can be concluded that the selection of appropriate channels to create an environment of information around the target group is very important. Proper channel paves a way for the campaign's success.

Supportive environment

A supportive environment is also a prerequisite for the positive acceptance of campaign approaches by the audience members. Thus creating such an environment that can facilitate the audience in making campaign intended changes and opportunities for action is pivotal (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p. 419–437).

There may be number of constraints to proper implementation of the interventions like economical and physical barriers. The constraints which are perceived by the campaign promoters can be taken into action like false knowledge or lack of awareness, and low confidence in taking up actions. But the barriers like lack of transport facilities to the health camps and workshops, poor access to campaign materials (Lambe, *et al.*, 2019) (free condoms, pills, sanitary napkins, etc), poor road connectivity leaving people uncovered under health camps and sessions, pose a grave threat to the campaign success (p.15–16). These barriers should be taken into account efficiently (Aldoory & Bonzo, 2005, p.260–263). The structural factors countering the progress of health campaigns need to be dealt with properly, along with influencing the wider determinants of health at the policy levels.

The people should feel motivated to take actions recommended in the campaigns. According to Noar (2006), the campaign messages should spark interpersonal discussions among the groups. It can make people adapt to the campaign suggested behaviours and actions more positively (p.32, 34). Community dialogue and involvement are a must for a campaign's success (Pedrana *et al.*, 2014, p.695–705). Community participation creates a positive environment for all the individuals living in that community to join hands with the campaigns.

To achieve community mobilization, various approaches can be used. Approaches such as influencing the community leaders like members of the Gram Panchayats, ward members, local politicians and social workers who have direct contact with the

people, advisory group formations and meetings, inclusion of non-government organizations, voluntary organizations, opinion leaders, joining public-private sector bodies and professional bodies so that they further influence people, improve the availability and accessibility of health services and remove the barriers to create an environment within their community to increase the likelihood that people will adapt the recommended actions (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004, p. 419–437). The training of health practitioners and educating health care providers and intermediaries like ASHA workers, nurses can also complement the campaign environment to a greater extent. The medical practitioners and health care providers are the credible opinion leaders among the population. To influence people regarding certain behaviours they play a major role (Anker *et al.*, 2016, p.439–456; *et al.*, 2008, p. 206–212).

Supportive environment for the campaign promises the desired outcomes and hence prove to be an important principle for the success of health campaigns.

Monitoring

Monitoring the campaign process is an important component which needs to be addressed during the course of any communication campaign. It keeps a check on the smooth functioning of the campaign (Pedrana *et al.*, 2014, p.695–705; Tiozzo *et al.*, 2010, p. 1–9). Evaluation of the campaign environment during pre- and post-campaign production is necessary. When research procedures and methods are applied systematically to understand the designing, conceptualization, implementation and significance of the health campaign, it is called evaluation. Evaluation and analysis help in enhancing the information environment surrounding the functioning of the campaigns, inform how to reach and influence mass audience. They contribute in identifying the problems related to the resources, materials, their implementations and also in the end of the campaign they help assessing the success or failure of the campaign/ programme (Valente & Kwan, 2001, p.161–162).

Proper exposure, reach and frequency of the campaign messages are extremely important during the execution level of the campaign and are the main determinants for increasing the likelihood of the campaign success (Fernandez *et al.*, 2019, p.2; Plamgreen & Donohew, n.d., p.27–43). So, to assess whether the campaign is reaching the intended audience, process analysis and assessment of the message exposure during the campaign is vital. Research suggested that only few campaigns assess their exposure during the course of action (Randolph

& Viswanath, 2004, p.419–437).

Further the outcome evaluation provides us with lessons for the future about how to design an effective campaign. Just as outcome evaluation of the campaign is important to determine what worked out and what did not, same way process evaluation and monitoring are fundamental (Noar, 2006, p.21–42).

Hence, a campaign needs to be monitored during the mid-course to see any faulty design in campaign, its implementation and message exposure. It is very critical to get the information of the campaign procedures being implemented in right direction or not and whether the target population is exposed and covered under the campaign plan. Thus monitoring, process evaluation and analysis become vital factors contributing to an effective health communication campaign.

Discussion and conclusion

The study was intended first to discuss the importance of mass media health campaigns in the public health sector. Within the past and contemporary literature on public health sector, there is much emphasis on the importance of media health campaigns. Every year a huge amount of money and time is spent by the government on health campaigns. A campaign designed properly to make a health programme successful can change and save millions of lives. It has been suggested from the above review that mass media is the most promising tool for successful health campaigns and programmes. Mass media health communication campaigns have been proved to be quite successful in making people aware and informed about their health choices. When designed properly and efficiently these campaigns can help in achieving short-term as well as long-term goals in health communication sector of the nations.

Secondly, from the above campaign literature reviewed traditionally, it also becomes clear that if campaign planners follow the framework efficiently, they can bring a positive health change among the masses.

The components of the successful mass media health campaigns are interlinked with each other and somehow reflect each other's characters. Thus, from the above review we can devise a conceptual framework for effective mass media health campaigns. For a health communication campaign to be successful in achieving its goals, it needs to incorporate these effective elements as:

Formative research: It need to be done to understand the target audience and problems clearly. Before implementing any campaign, the problem, its severity, the population, demography, culture everything needs to be researched beforehand.

Use of theory: Theoretical frameworks and models are important as they guide the planning and designing of the campaign. In this review, the author has also found that many times the theoretical underpinnings have not been taken into account by the campaign planners while devising the campaigns. It sometimes leads to the failure or misfire of campaign goals.

Audience segmentation: Campaign planners can reach the target audience by segmenting the masses according to their health needs, health issues, health institutions and facilities available to them, their culture, literacy rate, and so on. Knowledge about the target audience beforehand is very important while planning any communication campaign.

Message designing: It is important as effective messages can stimulate the audience's behaviour and understanding. The message designing part is the most important component of health communication campaigns. The tone (positive/ negative), attitude, language, simplicity, creativity, and relateness all resonate with the positive impact of the messages on the audience. These messages should be tailored specifically according to the target and the behaviour that needs to be altered.

Proper outreach and targeting: The campaign messages should reach the target audience effectively and appropriately. By using various strategies to reach and influence the target audience like use of integrated media, public relation approaches, use of brand factor, collaborating with community education programmes, etc. the audience can be rigorously reached to have maximum effect.

Channel selection: Channel Selection by using various appropriate media channels. To disseminate the messages appropriate media channels are needed to be complemented with other strategies. From using print media to internet technologies, support from local leaders, eminent personalities, celebrities, and trusted voices, the messages can be disseminated to create a healthy impact on the target population.

Supportive environment: Further the review suggested that for a campaign to bring positive health changes, there should be a supportive environment for the target group to adopt those changes. Any physical, structural, or economical barrier to the adoption of desired health behaviour needs to be dealt and the target should be motivated enough to adopt the aimed healthy habits and behaviours.

Monitoring: The monitoring of the campaign process and evaluation of its outcomes is pivotal as it helps in finding any gap and provide lessons for future campaigns. Thus, it becomes very important to assess and monitor the implementation and functioning of the campaign from time to time. The results of the

campaigns should be reviewed and evaluated for future research so that any loophole in the process can be avoided and any significant landmark can be used for future designing of health communication campaigns.

Thus, this study provides an overview of the effective designing and implementation of campaigns. The campaign planners should incorporate mentioned elements during the planning and designing phase of the health campaigns.

Limitations and future scope of the study

There are several limitations to this review. There is an abundance of other literature related to the health campaigns that the author has not studied, which can be systematically reviewed in further studies. A systematic review can be done on the selected topic to tap the progress in recent times in arena of health communication campaigns. Also, there is much literature that is categorised as grey literature; non-peer reviewed papers and content on various online platforms and websites which can be studied in future reviews.

In the review, it has been found out that there is a lack of proper research in this arena. More rigorous research is needed to strengthen the evidence base for campaign effectiveness and to get a clearer picture of it. To date, there is very limited research evidence about the use of new internet technologies like m-health and web 2.0 applications in health communication campaigns and programmes. Future health communication campaigns should consider the review of the literature particularly based on campaigns using internet technology and devices.

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Factors Influencing Internet Usage in India: A Review Based on Technology Acceptance Model

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ABSTRACT

The internet has become an indispensable tool for communication, education, information and entertainment. In the past decade, the growth of the Internet has been undeniable, affecting the way people communicate, interact, enjoy and gather information (Fuchs, 2007) (Castells, 2014). Researchers have recognized the importance of studying the Internet as a communication medium (Morris, 2018), (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996), but the study of motivations and behaviours associated with Internet use has been limited. The internet has evolved as a platform for networking, shopping, pool of knowledge, and activities for people to pass their time. The Internet's development over the last decade has been undeniable, and has stretched its ambit right from the basic interaction in influencing how people connect, collaborate, and come together virtually for everyday communication. While researchers have recognized the value of surfing the Internet for various reasons, research on the causes of Internet usage is limited in a comprehensive level. Moreover, there is a dearth of literature on the factors influencing Internet usage in the context of India, as most of the studies available are conducted on different international locations. Apart from this, studies mostly focused on adolescents neglecting other age groups. This study is a systematic review on identifying factors influencing Internet usage based on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with special reference to India particularly for middle aged groups and aims to present a conceptual model to assess the pattern of internet usage and factors affecting internet usage. Lastly, this study proposes future agendas for research in this field.

Keywords: India, Internet use, Middle aged, Technology Acceptance Model, Digital media

Introduction

In recent years, the internet has facilitated daily life in many aspects and its usage has become increasingly widespread. The usage has increased in areas such as: health, shopping, education, banking, transportation and personal data investigation. It has some advantages such as the variety of knowledge presentation or the speed and convenience of information access. It has acquired a stronger position than other tools with these advantages (Ekiz, Bayam, & Ünal, 2003).

Over the years, the internet has supported many facets of everyday life and has grown in popularity. The use of internet has stretched far and wide bringing into its ambit the basic necessities such as everyday news, online shopping, making appointments for various purposes, online consultation with experts, entertainment, and so on and so forth. It has several benefits, such as a wide range of information gaining or the ease and simplicity at which information can be accessed in different areas. With these benefits,

it has gained a better status than other instruments (Ekiz, Bayam, & Ünal, 2003). When considering the internet's strong position, it can be said that it is one of the most powerful platforms for enhancing the learning ability of digital natives (Bennett, 2012). Its penetration in India has grown due to simple payment choices, quicker and more cost-effective connectivity and trustworthy applications. Emailing, e-banking, e-gaming, travel and entertainment bookings, and other internet apps have all been part of India's rising tech-savvy community. As a result, it is important to determine the main determinants of internet use. There has been very little research into internet use and the factors that influence usage intentions in India.

Most research has been conducted to investigate the causes of technological use (Mahmood *et al.*, 2001). The vast majority of studies have concentrated on the internet users in developing countries. Even though developing regions of the world have plenty to learn from the internet and IT in general, they have

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gained comparatively little research attention (Hasan & Ditsa, 1998), despite the fact that culture can affect technology use (Veiga *et al.*, 2001).

The objective of this study is to explore and review factors influencing internet usage. The factors were identified by reviewing various theoretical and empirical studies in the field of internet use. In this respect, a total of 45 articles were reviewed to identify underlying dimensions and how it affects the use of internet in terms of pattern of use. The identification of factors is based on the TAM and finally a conceptual model is presented which is the main objective of this study.

Purpose statement

The study has attempted to explore the factors that influence the use of internet taking into consideration the Indian context by reviewing existing research on internet usage while offering a conceptual model and generating relationships between the underlying factors influencing internet usage. The basic research question guiding this article is – ‘What are the general factors influencing internet usage?’ The search for literature and the resulting philosophical structure to answer the research question was motivated by two sub-questions: (a) What are the underlying factors influencing internet usage? (b) How perceptions of internet being useful and ease of use mediates between Factors and Actual Use? To address these questions, this review article looks at analytical and philosophical research that identifies the factors and studies relationship them and with perception and actual use in the light of the TAM.

Methodology

A systematic literature review was conducted by adopting a set of steps given by Kitchenham (2004). Journals were searched from different database, i.e. Google Scholar, Ebsco, Emerald and Scopus; various combinations of keywords derived from the research objectives were used for the literature search, viz. internet Use, TAM, India. Studies in the English language were only considered. To avoid publication bias, grey literature, unpublished works and conference proceedings were filtered out. The initial search found 820 articles with various keyword combinations. After reviewing title, abstract and keywords, 243 articles were found suitable for the study. After extracting the full text, 45 relevant articles were considered for the study. The search period of articles was between January 2010 to March 2021 as this phase witnessed an exponential growth in terms of internet use in India. As per the report generated by Statista in 2011 – India had close to seven hundred million users in the year 2020. This

decade also witnessed the proliferation of scholarly interest in finding definitive correlation. A datasheet was prepared to analyze the literature and based on the analysis various gaps in existing literature were identified and a conceptual model was put forward comprising of various factors influencing internet usage on the basis of TAM.

Literature review

The internet has had a significant impact on how people socialize, build and harness economic opportunities and gain information. Previous researches on measurement, on the other hand, have been limited to analyzing dimensions affecting internet use from a social and economic viewpoint, and have not taken into account the importance of individual qualities. As a result, very few studies have looked into the factors that influence and affect their inter-relationships, and their strength. Previous longitudinal surveys of individual internet use have mainly been conducted in developing countries or in metropolitan environments. These have primarily investigated socio-economic factors such as age, income, schooling, and motives to use internet. Several previous works were completed while the internet was still a phenomenon and was mainly regarded as a source of information (improving knowledge), but with advancements in social media and e-commerce, the internet is now regarded as an important means for social networking and enhancing economic benefits. As a result, such studies are required in developing countries such as India, particularly in the rural areas. Furthermore, the majority of studies have used the household as the unit of study. Recent government policy on rural internet deployments and mobile internet availability has generated a need to concentrate on the probable causes of internet use in rural India as well.

People use the internet for a number of purposes and in a variety of ways (Potosky, 2007). Since access to the internet increases opportunities for information, socializing, and entertainment, it is critical to determine the degree of inequalities and their underlying causes (Ono & Zavodny, 2007). The variations in different facets of internet use across demographic groups have become an important research topic (Yang & Tung, 2007), since demographic characteristics were discovered to affect individuals' behaviours before they partake in a specific behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Zhang, 2005). In the various other studies demographic factors like gender (Hwang, Jung, & Salvendy, 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2008; Potosky, 2007), age (Akman, Yazici, Mishra, & Arifoglu, 2005; Zhang, 2005), and income (Forsythe & Shi, 2003; Hwang *et al.*, 2006)

have been shown to be critical factors influencing internet use. According to Zhang (2005), while there are several surveys of machine and internet behaviours, the bulk of these studies use college students as samples. Zhang (2005) has found that the widespread use of the internet necessitates a survey of the general public’s internet use.

Internet users in India

India has now been listed as the world’s second largest online market in 2019, only behind China. The number of internet users is expected to rise in both urban and rural areas, reflecting a dynamic increase in internet usage. Despite the country’s vast number of internet users, internet penetration levels took longer to equalize. At the same time, women have far lower internet connectivity than men in the region, and the disparity is much more pronounced in rural India. Similarly, internet penetration among older adults in the country is lower due to a lack of internet literacy and technical know-how.

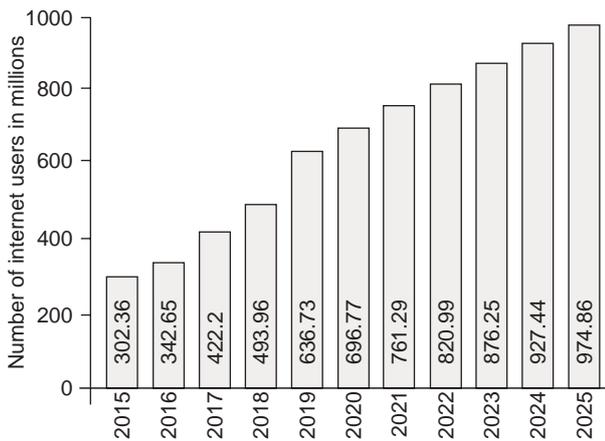


Fig. 1: internet users in India
 Source: Statista, 2021 (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/255146/number-of-internet-users-in-india/>)

Technology Acceptance Model: A theoretical basis

Fred Davis developed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in 1989. It is a philosophy of information management that describes how people

come to understand and use technologies. The real device usage is the stage at which people interact with technology. People adopt apps because of their behavioural intentions. Because of its robustness, parsimony, and persuasive capacity, is thought to be the most powerful paradigm for interpreting technological acceptance (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003). TAM has proven to be very effective in understanding technology acceptance behaviour and has been used by many academicians to better understand the internet use. However, investigations to understand the actual intention to use internet are still minimal in Indian context.

TAM (Fig. 2) gives a general overview of the factors influencing adoption of technology, capable of demonstrating consumer behaviour through a wide variety of end-user computing applications and user demographics (Davis *et al.*, 1989). TAM is based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which proposes that an individual’s social activity is guided by mood and desire. This suggests that, under the constraints of time and circumstance, individuals’ behaviour varies in relation to their intentions. According to TAM, perceived utility and perceived ease of use are the two main antecedent factors deciding attitude to follow an information system (LaCaille, 2013).

TAM describes the causal relationships that exist between device design characteristics, perceived utility, perceived ease of use, attitude toward using, and real use behaviour. TAM, in general, offers an insightful depiction of the processes that affect consumer adoption by design choices. As a result, it aids in predicting and assessing consumer awareness of technology-related goods and services. Scholars (Apuke, 2018) (Zhong, 2021) have used the frameworks of perceived utility, perceived ease-of-use, and subjective trend to describe technology usage/acceptance across a variety of information systems, including online shopping.

On the basis of the TAM model, this study proposes the conceptual framework on factors influencing internet usage in Indian context in terms

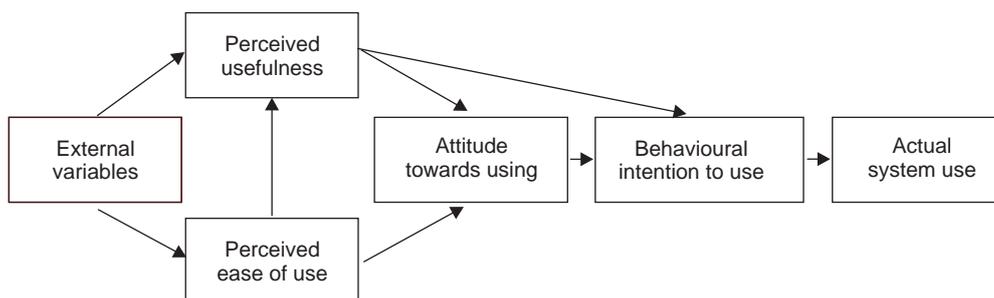


Fig. 2: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

of individual and social factors. With the help of thorough literature review of the identified articles on the theme 'Factors Influencing internet usage', various factors have been identified influencing the use of internet at different age groups and locations worldwide is classified into two categories, i.e. individual level factors and social factors.

Although most of the articles reviewed belongs to studies conducted in different countries except India, which suggests that there is dearth of literature in context to India in terms of factors influencing internet usage. Moreover, most of the studies have been conducted so far on adolescents specifically on students and very few studies are conducted on old age, where as no studies are found on middle aged category of people.

Individual factors influencing internet use

Previous literature on individual internet use has mainly been conducted in developing countries or in metropolitan environments. These have primarily investigated socio-economic factors such as age, incomes, schooling, and internet access in driving acceptance and use. Several previous works were completed while the internet was still a phenomenon and was mainly regarded as a source of information (improving knowledge), but with advancements in social media and e-commerce, the internet is now regarded as an important means for social networking and enhancing economic benefits.

Age, race, gender, income, education, communications need, media habits, technology friendliness, interest, and so on have been identified as the most important factors in internet adoption at the individual level (Dwivedi & Lal, 2007). As a result, based on previous research, the driving variables at the individual level found are personality, psychological well-being, motivations, and demographic.

Personality

In recent years, there has arisen a small but growing body of research on personality characteristics and internet use (Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000). Personality precedes all of the other factors that can and have been observed in relation to the internet, including behaviours toward the internet (Lavin, Marvin, McLarney, Nola & Scott, 1999), computing skills (Blair, O Neil & Price, 1999), computer preparation (Rozell & Gardner, 1999), and time management (Brenner, 1997), social support (Shaw & Gant, 2002), lifestyle characteristics (Ho & Lee, 2001), advertising beliefs (Korgaonkar, Silverblatt, & OLeary, 2001), tutoring systems (Wheeler & Regian, 1999), information support (Scull, 1999), collaborative knowledge (Chung, ONeil & Herl,

1999), innovation adoption factors (Shelley, 1998), and computer anxiety (Chua, Chen & Wong, 1999) and other computer-related affective states (Coffin & MacIntyre, 1999).

The new ideas of research also explore into the digital footprint of the users in determining their personality (Hinds, 2019).

In order to build a useful information base in this field, it is necessary to first determine whether personality traits account for variance in internet use and which traits are comparatively more significant. It would then be necessary to determine which factors explain additional variation in internet use that is not explained by personality characteristics. Shyness was linked to various modes of internet use, according to Scealy *et al.* (2002).

According to Leung (2002), isolation was not substantially linked to the use of an online instant messaging service. Armstrong, Phillips and Saling (2000) discovered a connection between low self-esteem and excessive internet use. Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2000) found that extraversion and neuroticism were related to different types of internet usage. Specific personality traits have also been associated with internet use disorder having a negative impact on its users, especially in relation to the use of smartphones (Peterka-Bonetta, 2019).

Psychological well-being

Davis (2001) argued that one of the distal antecedents of excessive internet use were psychosocial conditions such as isolation and depression. Individuals who are alone or sad tend to enjoy online networking. Another point of view is that isolation is a result of internet use rather than the source of it. Loneliness should result from negative life outcomes because such consequences (e.g., skipping job, class, or social engagements) entail isolating oneself from offline social classes. Additionally, the long-term effects of withdrawing from offline social interaction (e.g., failing a school, losing a career or a relationship) are stressors that trigger dysphoria.

Motives

The argument by Kubey *et al.* (2001) that obsessive internet users use the internet to reach others emphasises the importance of investigating networking motivations for using the internet. Peele's (1985) argument that individuals addicted to advertising use it to maintain control of their lives and boost self-esteem shows the value of understanding motivations when investigating predictors of internet addiction. For the last 30 years or so, User and Gratification has been one of the

dominant scientific methods used to research the role of media consumption motivations on media impact.

According to researchers, people use the internet for a number of interpersonal (love, inclusion, social interaction) and media-related purposes (amusement, intelligence seeking, passing time, escape) (Charney & Greenberg, 2002; Kaye & Johnson, 2004). As a result, we evaluated a variety of those motivations that people might have for using the internet.

Some researchers have considered the influence of motives for using the internet on both internet dependency (authors, *in press*) and internet addiction (Chou & Hsiao, 2000; LaRose, Lin & Eastin, 2003). However, there is little research truly exploring possible links between a range of motives individuals may have for internet addiction. This is a significant gap in the research, because prior media use research suggests that motives impact effects (Rubin, 2002). Specifically, it has been suggested that more purposive and instrumental use (e.g., information seeking, control, caring others, etc.) may inhibit negative outcomes and that more habitual use (e.g., habitual entertainment, escape) enhances the likelihood of unintended, and potentially negative outcomes of use (Song, LaRose, Eastin & Lin, 2004). We wanted to see if this was the case for internet addiction.

Demographic

When a new technology arrives, there are usually gaps between those who use it right away and those who wait until it is well known before using it. Early adopters of emerging technology are more likely to be young, male, well educated, more wealthy, urban, and not part of a racial or ethnic minority community than the general population (Rogers, 1995; Norris, 2001). Gender is a commonly mentioned dimension of disparity of internet connectivity and use. Several surveys have shown that women are less likely than men to use the internet, particularly after it first became available to the general population in the mid-1990s. Gender disparities in adoption rates can occur because men and women have different socio economic status, which affects computer and internet connectivity and usage (Bimber, 2000).

Males on an average, are more interested in technology than women, which contributes to gender disparities in internet usage (Shashaani, 1997). Others speculate that since technology is a result of social interactions, the diffusion of technologies benefits specific social classes, such as men (Edwards, 1995; Wajcman, 1995). When a technology spreads, those intergroup gaps begin to lessen, but not necessarily vanish entirely (Compaine, 2001b).

Li and Kirkup (2007), Fang and Yen (2006), and Hills and Argyle (2003) all found that internet use is

linked to gender in their research. These surveys show male superiority and opposition to female inclusion on the internet. Punamaki, Wallenius, Nygard, Saarni, and Rimpela (2007) discovered that while boys were more likely than girls to play sports, use the machine for writing and e-mailing, and browse the internet, girls were more likely to use cell phones in Finland. Further study has shown that the amount of internet use is closely related to factors such as age and salary. Hills and Argyle (2003), for example, discovered that older people use the internet less than younger people. According to Herring, Johnson, and Dibenedetto (1995) and Fang and Yen (2006), the older the internet user is, the less proficient he is in internet usage, while younger users tend to find it easier to browse the net.

Internet retailing is more common among the educated and higher-income groups than among the less educated and lower-income groups (Cunningham, 2021). People who are well educated make excellent innovators and early adopters of modern technologies (Dillon & Reif, 2004). Less trained individuals have a greater level of computer fear when it comes to computer technology (Parasuram & Igarria, 1990). As a result, their aversion to electronic retailing as a direct means of retailing is unavoidable.

Societal factors influencing internet use

Social factors represent another important set of influences on internet use. Specifically, these are the effects of people and groups influencing one another through culture, reference groups, and family environment.

Culture

Since the dawn of time, there has been a connection between culture and technology (Maynard, Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2005). Technological techniques also altered human behaviour and thereby interfered in their society (Tikhomirov, 1974). In the case of computers, such a relationship first appeared in the 1970s (Horowitz, Morgan & Shaw, 1972; Uretzky, 1973), with the first manifestations of an understanding of the effect computers could have on civilization (Horowitz, Morgan & Shaw, 1972; Uretzky, 1973). With the introduction of personal computers in the 1980s, this awareness grew.

Culture is a common collection of principles that consists of objective and subjective realities that include socialized predispositions and attitudes that direct individuals' views of perceived activities and personal experiences, as well as the selection of suitable responses in internal circumstances (Johansson, 1997). Individualism-collectivism, control gap, ambiguity avoidance, masculinity-

femininity, and long-term versus short-term orientations are the five cultural aspects defined by Hofstede's typology of society (Hofstede, 1984, 1991). Culture is characterized as the mutual mental conditioning that separates members of one community or category of people from others (Hofstede 1991). Several marketing researchers (la Ferle, Edwards & Yutaka, 2002; de Mooij, 2000, 2004; Müller & Gelbrich, 2004) have shown that societies with low Uncertainty Avoidance are more receptive to technologies such as the internet as a digital means of communication; that is, they appear to be early adopters with a high diffusion rate.

Individualism and collectivism dimension refers to the relationship between a person and a group. Individuals from individualistic backgrounds are more likely to value individuality and distinction (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997). The degree to which members of a population consider unfair power distribution is referred to as power gap (Hofstede, 1991). Cultures with a wide power gap are expected to be less creative (Herbig & Miller, 1991). The degree to which populations can accept confusion and ambiguity is referred to as uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1991).

Cultures with a low tolerance for ambiguity appear to be more creative due to a higher tolerance for risk (Yeniyurt & Townsend, 2003). Masculinity-femininity refers to how closely a culture is linked to gender roles (Hofstede, 2001). Masculinity is often associated with the diffusion of technical product advances, whereas femininity is often associated with the diffusion of cosmetics and clothing (Steenkamp *et al.*, 1999). Long-term and short-term orientation assesses people's outlook on the future (Hofstede, 2001). Despite the fact that Veiga *et al.* (2001) recognized culture as a significant impact on information technology usage and adoption, they did not suggest any modifications to the basic TAM to account for cultural factors. Rather, they concentrated on culturally variable antecedents of perceived utility and ease of use.

Reference groups

Reference groups are described generally as "actual or fictitious institutions, persons, or groups conceived to have substantial relevance on an individual's assessments, goals, or behavior" (Lessig & Park, 1975). They have been divided into direct membership groups (reference groups to which an individual belongs) and indirect aspiration groups (reference groups to which an individual aspires to belong) based on membership status (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Kelley (1947) distinguished two forms of reference group influence: normative

referents (e.g., parents, teachers, and peers) provide the person with norms, attitudes, and beliefs, and comparative referents provide the individual with values, attitudes, and norms. (e.g. sports heroes and entertainment figures) provide standards of achievement (Childers & Rao, 1992).

According to the Social Identity Theory, members of an organization aim to gain a meaningful social identity as a result of their membership (Ellemers *et al.*, 1999). This proposition is generalized by claiming that the usefulness of groups (the degree to which they meet essential needs of their members) shapes their members' social affiliation with these groups (Dholakia *et al.*, 2004). It is also understood that mutual values lead to expectations of similarities and contribute to individual attraction (Byrne, 1971). Existing empirical findings support such motivational antecedents of social identity with virtual communities as purpose value (desire to receive knowledge, compromise, solve problems, and so on) and entertainment value (desire to play, relax, pass the time, and so on) (Dholakia *et al.*, 2004).

Family environment

The family environment includes various factors namely the family type, the family economic status, the effect of parental care, the level of parental control, the amount of parental monitoring, the quality of communication, and the time spent together. All these factors affect the use of internet to larger extent in terms of pattern of usage, i.e. duration of use in a typical day and the time of use in a day.

Many researches have been done to recognize the causes of family environment and how they influence the frequency of internet usage in various age groups, such as Sela *et al.* (2019) in their report. Family environment and problematic internet use among adolescents accepted the idea that a family environment marked by poor expressiveness, low harmony, and extreme disagreements is often correlated with problematic internet use among adolescents.

Likewise, Faltýnková *et al.* (2020) in their study of 'Associations between Family-Related Factors and Excessive Internet Use in Adolescents' found that parental supervision of the adolescents' behaviours (e.g., learning about peers, knowing how they spent free time) was the most protective influence, accompanied by parental treatment (e.g., emotional warmth, overall support within the family environment). On the other hand, parental overprotection (e.g., parental behavior that reduces teenagers' independence) was the main risk factor associated with a higher EIU score, accompanied by a greater spending of time together and lower family

socioeconomic status.

It is identified that most of the studies related to family environment conducted in relation to problematic internet use or excessive internet use among adolescents whereby other age groups have not been considered so far to check the effects of family environment even in normal or healthy internet use. Moreover, such studies are lacking in Indian context.

Perception

The basic TAM model included and tested two specific beliefs for internet usage: Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use.

Perceived Usefulness is defined as the potential user's subjective likelihood that the use of a certain system (single platform E-payment System) will improve his/her action. It refers to the degree to which a person believes that using the new technology will improve his or her performance or productivity (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989 & 1985).

Perceived Ease of Use refers to the degree to which the potential user expects the target system to be effortless (Davis, 1989). It indicates how the users perceive the ease of using the technology. It is defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989).

Pattern of internet use

Uses and Gratifications (U&G), the theoretical framework guiding this study, suggests that exposure to a medium is an important antecedent to media effects. U&G also suggests that media use can be related to unintended consequences of use, such as internet addiction. In fact, Widyanto and McMurrin (2004) found that the higher the amount of time spent online, the greater the extent of symptoms of internet addiction. Leung (2004) also suggested that hours spent on the internet per day was a positive predictor of internet addiction. Similarly, Horvath (2004) found that those who measured higher than their counterparts on a measure of television addiction tended to be heavier television viewers. The results of these studies indicate that amount of internet use and internet addiction have been treated as distinct but related concepts in prior internet addiction research. If, as prior research suggest, heavier users of a medium are likely to be more prone to be addicted to the medium, the amount of use is an important variable to consider.

Conceptual model

Based on the above discussion on identified factors on the basis of through literature review,

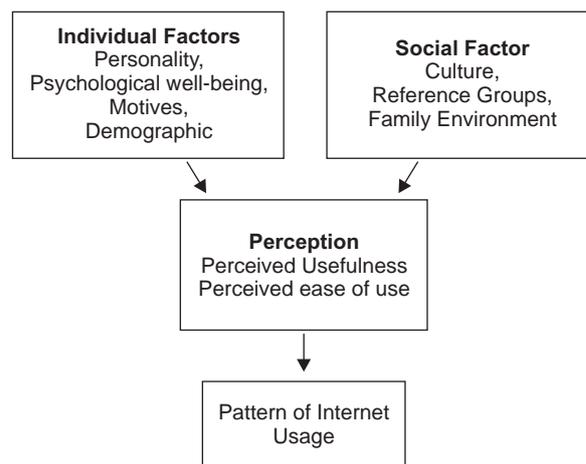


Fig. 3: Conceptual model of factors influencing internet usage

following conceptual model is suggested which defines all the probable reasons of internet use, which may be applicable on any age groups for any type of setting.

Conclusion

India's internet user base has expanded exponentially in recent years, fueled by the lower cost and increased availability of smartphones and high-speed broadband, and it is now one of the world's largest. With over 500 million internet users, India is one of the largest and fastest growing markets for digital customers, with both the public and private sectors contributing to the rapid growth. Lower-income states in India are closing the digital gap, and the region has the ability to be a fully wired nation by 2025. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct studies related to identifying the probable reasons of using internet, so that the result of the studies may help marketers and internet service providers to formulate their strategies in order to tap bigger market and have large base of customers and users. Moreover, it is also important to conduct studies related to effects of internet uses, which will again justify its reasons of use.

Hence, this study has identified various factors pertaining to individual and social factors influencing internet usage based on TAM. Understating the dynamics of influencing nature of the identified factors may have implications on practitioners depending on how they want to utilize this information of internet usage among a particular group. By knowing the purposes of internet usage and being able to categorize them based on particular groups with particular purposes, practitioners will be able to utilize the right factor to influence the general public be it the youngsters, adolescents, middle or old aged either

male or female categorized as students, working professionals, retired person, house wives etc. The purpose of using internet may be manifold like for the purpose of education, information, entertainment, communication, shopping, etc. This study shows that the factors affecting the purpose of internet usage is the pattern of internet usage, i.e. duration of use and the time of use, i.e. day or night.

Limitations and further scope of study

Further research should look into the empirical testing of the identified factors of this study on various categories of respondents and age groups. Moreover, internet usage for social networking and online games can be studied separately both theoretically and empirically as it has altogether different reasons and implications as compared to usual surfing of internet. Other studies can be conducted on problematic internet use and its consequences. The recommendations for future research should be contextualized in Indian settings since most of the studies cited were conducted in international settings in various countries, but studies in Indian context are largely absent, which can be addressed.

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Local Governance and Social Media Utilisation for Community Awareness and Facilitation of Covid-19 Vaccination Strategies and Related Services

ANUPRIYA ROY¹

ABSTRACT

In the age of the Internet, social media has facilitated a communicative linkage between the Government, health care service providers and the Community to disseminate health messages with the intention of awareness generation and promoting health-seeking behaviour. In the past, for several years, to combat diseases such as TB, Polio, HIV-AIDS, iodine deficiency, etc., media campaigns using traditional media and advertisements were launched to create awareness among people about prevention and cure. This was followed by a phase when health communication intended to generate health-seeking behaviour among people. In recent years, with the phenomenal penetration of smart phones and growth of Internet users in India, social media has emerged as more efficient tool for health communication. Since 2020, the world has witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a major health crisis due to fear of disease and vulnerability, lack of access to health facilities, and above all, lack of information and assistance during the lockdown. For this study, the case study approach was used to investigate the intervention strategies of the Municipal Ward Councillors in the district of Gurugram, Haryana, in communicating useful messages to the communities they represent by using social media. WhatsApp and Facebook were engaged as community media tools for empathetic communication, for educating users on prevention, and providing assistance during the lockdown. The findings are based on the data collected through primary and secondary sources by the author and not necessarily those of any other organisation mentioned in this publication.

Keywords: Awareness, Councillors, Local governance, Pandemic, Social media, Covid-19 strategy, Vaccination.

Introduction

In India, once COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic and a public health emergency, the central Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and state governments sprang into action to inform citizens about multiple restrictive measures to restrict the spread of the virus. Dr. Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative to India, praised the country's response to the pandemic, describing it as "timely, comprehensive and robust" with the authorities taking the "whole-of-government" approach advocated by WHO ("COVID-19: Lockdown across India, in Line with WHO Guidance," 2020).

Information pertaining to the pandemic comprised of WHO guidelines on safety and health measures, statistics on cases, orders and circulars on strengthening surveillance, contact tracing, risk communications, containment, lockdown, and

closure of schools and other educational institutions, shut down of non-essential businesses, protocols on isolation of the COVID-19 infected, etc. On 22nd March 2020, PM Narendra Modi declared that the lockdown would apply to "every district, every lane, every village" (Gettleman & Schultz, 2020). Thereafter, municipalities were placed under quarantine to contain the infection during the lockdown period in 2020 and 2021 (Ministry of Home Affairs, Order No. 40-3/2020-D, 2020).

Speaking at a press briefing in Geneva, WHO Emergencies Programme Director Mike Ryan, said that it was important for India to introduce ramped-up measures at a public health and societal level to control and suppress the disease. Media operations, that is, television channels and newspapers, exempted from shutdown, kept viewers and readers updated on the global pandemic scenario. State governments created

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dedicated websites to upload necessary information related to COVID-19 cases, testing and vaccination and about available services and facilities.

Review of literature

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for the entire world. The nature of infection, medical intervention for its cure, Standard Operating Procedures for safety and prevention, and research for developing a vaccine were among the few common challenges. Other aspects of management included issues of controlling the spread, creating healthcare infrastructure for the affected, management of relief and medical supplies, testing facilities, reporting, etc. and posed diverse and different challenges in all the countries.

In India, the seriousness of the pandemic compounded due to the majority of the population living in rural and difficult-to-reach areas, and the migrant populations living in urban areas. Statistics (Census of India, 2011) tell that rural and urban population in India in 2011 was 68.84 per cent and 31.16 per cent respectively (Business Standard, 2011). Considering these numbers, the COVID-19 combat strategies required more intensive engagement of the local governance at district, block and *Gram panchayat* levels, in creating awareness among the masses and motivating them to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Local governments operate in a limited territorial space, motivated by closeness to people and influenced by context-specificities, with direct benefits to those on the other side of the interactions, and probably passionate by a culture of reciprocity, where mutual gains can be accrued, and a “sense of belonging” and “togetherness” are keywords (Lameiras & Soares, 2021).

UNU-EGOV explains how local governments worldwide have been adopting specific support packages targeted at the population and framed by social protection measures (Lameiras & Soares 2021). Citizens are demanding, and need to be nurtured. Local governments’ dedication to all fringes of the population should be on top of the local agendas, particularly in times when COVID-19 dramatically affects the most vulnerable groups (Estevez & Janowski, 2013). An article highlights the importance of inter-agency articulation within governments. Clear, simple, and straightforward messages are fundamental when responding to a pandemic, and for the success of cooperation between different government levels when responding to it (Lameiras & Soares, 2021).

The message from the United Nations reinforces the “critical role local governments play as frontline

responders in crisis response, recovery, and rebuilding”, not only to address imminent risks and needs but also to try to mitigate the future effects of this crisis, which have the potential to impact many sectors interchangeably.

From 1980 onwards, scores of countries around the world have undertaken reforms for decentralisation based on the belief that local governments are able to carry out many government functions better than the more distant bureaucratic institutions (Faguet, 2014).

Local governments are, quite simply, more closely connected to public and better able to navigate context-specific local conditions (Manor, 1999). In the case of Kerala, for example, robust, long-term support for local governments as a key arena for empowered local governance has turned these institutions into a formidable force for confronting the pandemic, exemplified by a strong degree of trust and collaboration between state actors and citizens (Isaac & Sadanandan, 2020). These histories of institutional support over the past two decades may be as important for COVID-19 responses as any of the policies quickly designed since the emergence of the virus (Faguet, 2014).

Social media for awareness generation during the pandemic

Television and newspapers have been the trusted sources of information for decades. However, the Internet provided a choice for people to seek information from websites, online newspapers and digital media as well. Mobile phones have further captured users with WhatsApp, which now stands parallel to any other social networking media and fulfils the day-to-day information needs of a person. Statistics indicate that Internet penetration rate in the country increased to 50% in 2020 due to consistent increase in Internet accessibility during the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to just five years ago when only 27% Indians had access to the Internet.

On 11th March 2020, WHO declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic. The speech of Director General, WHO mentions that “... this is not just a public health crisis, it is a crisis that will touch every sector—so every sector and every individual must be involved in the fight... communicate with your people about the risks and how they can protect themselves...” (Ducharme, 2020). These words have guided the representatives of the local governance to engage local media, social media and WhatsApp for communicating with India’s large population to increase awareness, change perceptions and encourage behaviour modification for prevention against COVID-19.

Taking advantage of the digital

Government websites, mobile apps and/or social media accounts have been used worldwide to inform citizens. UNDESA has shown national governments' growing investment to include information and guidance about COVID-19 on their portals. In the early stages of the pandemic (March, 2020), 110 of the 193 United Nations Member States had some information about COVID-19; two weeks later, 57 more countries joined this group (Embracing Digital Government during the pandemic and Beyond, 2020).

The digital presence of local governments is increasingly real. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the use of digital technologies can be regarded as promising strategies for diverse objectives. In the most basic role of information providers, (local) governments must bear in mind that they are the frontline agents tasked with guaranteeing access to accurate and complete information about COVID-19 and other related topics. Transparency and accountability are now fundamental to foster trust in public institutions.

Local governments have also been active in using technologies for different purposes. Information provision, outreach, and awareness-generation are probably on top of the list of most frequent purposes. Health mobile apps show how eclectic the response can be, namely for contagion reduction (in Buenos Aires & Vienna, for instance) or for monitoring self-isolated patients (as in São Paulo & Paris) (Lameiras & Soares, 2021).

The use of the Internet and TV news increased during the lockdown and the use of newspapers, radio, and magazine declined significantly. Anxiety due to COVID-related news through mass media was reported to be highest (27.3%) in the 40–49 years age group and lowest (14.49%) in the 20–29 age groups. About 43.18% of people between 30 and 39 years of age developed fear, and 28% in the 50–59 age group reportedly felt panic due to COVID-19 related news in the media (Dhanashree *et al.*, 2021).

Research objectives

This case study aims to highlight the use of Facebook and WhatsApp as communication tools to build linkages with the residents of Gurugram, Haryana with the purpose of providing information about initiatives for managing the spread of COVID-19, vaccination plans and for monitoring compliance of instructions on management of COVID-19 services and activities at the ground level.

The case study specifically studies the following:

- The social media presence of Councillors on

Facebook for awareness creation.

- The utilisation of WhatsApp for community awareness and mobilisation.
- The nature of social media content on COVID-19 in general and vaccination in specific.
- Community level strategy and initiatives towards COVID-19 relief measures and vaccination.

Research questions

- What were the methods and communication channels chosen and used by the Local government/ Elected representatives/ Councillors for creating awareness on:
 - (a) COVID-19 pandemic safety protocol
 - (b) Government orders and directives/ safety measures
 - (c) Availability of vaccines and schedules
- What were the strategies and nature of relief and rehabilitation extended to residents during the COVID-19 lockdown periods?
- What information and messages were disseminated to residents in general, and residents in quarantine in specific?
- What were the services that were communicated to the residents?
- What communication channels were used by the Ward Councillors to mobilise residents?

Research methodology

Criteria for selection of state and district

In India, the vaccination drive was first launched on 16th January 2021. For the purpose of selection for this study and rationale for selection, the turn out for vaccination during first week (16–22 January 2021) in three adjoining districts of South West Delhi and Gurugram and NOIDA (Gautam Budh Nagar) in Delhi NCR were listed. As per the data, in the first week, a highest of 7,040 doses were administered in Gurugram compared to 2,266 in the district of South Delhi and 1,825 in NOIDA. Gurugram recorded the highest number of vaccinations among all districts in Haryana. Further, among northern states of the country, Haryana set few examples. As per MoHFW data, by 9th September 2021, 64.4% of the population in Haryana was vaccinated, a greater number compared to the adjoining states of Delhi, Rajasthan and Punjab (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 2021a).

On 1st May, 2021, the country recorded the highest of 4,14,188 COVID-19 positive new cases in one day. Among the four adjoining states (Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana), Haryana recorded the lowest of 14,840 new cases and contributed the least of 4.58% to the national figure (MoHF&W, 2021).

Table 1: Criteria for selection of state

State	Total vaccinations on September 9, 2021	Estimated state population, 2021	Estimated % contribution
Delhi	1,45,85,577	4,11,81,476	46.7
Haryana	1,76,07,642	2,74,88,088	64.4
Rajasthan	4,82,04,186	7,82,40,816	61.6
Punjab	1,54,10,956	4,04,90,000	50.5

Source: MoHFW, as per Aadhaar statistics.

Table 2: Other reasons for selection of state

Criteria	State		
	Haryana	Uttar Pradesh	Rajasthan
Per day % share of COVID positive	4.58%	6.42	4.24
Testing	48.1%	29.4%	16.84%
Vaccination (at least one dose)	44.7%	19.4%	44.4%

Source: <https://www.covid19india.org/state/DL>.

As per COWIN data, Gurugram was the only district in Haryana which recorded higher vaccination in urban areas than in rural, compared to other districts in other states. It is therefore, that Gurugram was chosen as the site for the study.

Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon (MCG)

The MCG consists of 35 wards with a total population of 8,86,519 (Census, 2011) and an estimated population of 2,82,04,692 as per Aadhaar registrations (2020). Each ward consists of both urban and semi-urban localities, the development of which is the responsibility of the elected representative—the ‘Councillor’ or ‘Corporator’. As per Government sources, among the several administrative roles of a Councillor, establishing leadership within the community, acting as an advocate in resolving concerns or grievances, communicating with local people and answering queries about decisions that affect them, communicating about opportunities in the community, identifying the interests of the local community and effectively representing the interests of the Ward and its constituents were most focussed on and acted upon during the pandemic.

Roles and responsibilities of elected representatives of MCG

Even though in current times, interactive websites, social media handles and helpline numbers provide windows for the residents to express their views and complaints, the elected representative’s role is crucial in establishing a link between the residents and the corporation. It was observed that a few Councillors had established interpersonal connect with the

residents during the pandemic and were proactive on social media to keep the residents of their respective wards ‘informed’. Some showed humanitarianism and extended support to them in the period of crisis. The nature of support provided is described in later in this study.

Councillors are also expected to render certain civic and welfare services to the city dwellers. The principal function of the councillor under civic and a welfare service is to formulate as well as implement policies in respect to obligatory and optional functions of the municipality. The councillors are bound by statute to discharge the obligatory functions, also known as the public utility services of the municipality, such as public health and sanitation, public works, education, public safety, etc. (Misra, 1986).

As a part of local self-governance, and in addition to the legislative and administrative powers, the Ward councillors can give priority treatment to any work, which they think necessary in the general interest of the inhabitants of the municipality (Banerjee, 2020).

Data collection

A mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to gather data from primary and secondary sources. In-depth interviews were conducted with the Ward Councillors and the staff. Information from secondary sources assisted in understanding their role and nature of engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination for COVID-19. Facebook posts on pages maintained by the Councillors in several wards in Gurugram were collected between March 2020 and August 2021. These posts were categorised into: Year of post/ upload and theme/topic of COVID-19 specific information provided. COVID-19 related statistical data were retrieved from several sources: MoHFW website, COWIN dashboard, Worldometer (Ritchie *et al.*, 2020), and Reuters COVID-19 global tracker, which provided the base for selection of districts and analysis.

Findings and discussion

Social media presence of ward councillors in Gurugram

Social media comprising of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide plenty of online space for people to express, post and upload content of their choice. Facebook was explored to find the social media presence of less than 50% of the 46 MCG Ward Councillors elected in 2017. The Facebook pages of 10 Ward Councillors were randomly selected to check for recent COVID-19 related activity in 2021 (Names not disclosed to maintain confidentiality). A

pool of 120 Facebook activities related to COVID-19 management (including testing and vaccinations) posted during March 2020 and August 2021 were retrieved for assessment. The councillors used their Facebook page with the overall aim of creating awareness about COVID-19 related instructions, services, and facilities available to the community. The content uploaded on Facebook pages were summarised into themes and sub-themes to reflect their role and responsibility during crisis.

The first wave of the pandemic in 2020 generated curiosity and uncertainties as COVID-19 cases and fatalities were on the rise worldwide, cure was

Vaccination	Personal messages: wellness of residents & advice on safely measures	
	Appeal to the help needy: distribution of dry ration and cooked food	Honour to Cronoa warriors
COVID- Test	Sanitis..	Oxygen/ Ambul... garbage collecti.. from covid... Observe of janta curfew/ lamp lighting

Fig. 1: Themes of Facebook posts (The size of cells suggest the proportions)

uncertain and vaccines were on trial and had not rolled out. The second wave in 2021 added fear and despair. The extraordinary situation with heightened curiosity was realised and the councillors pumped in efforts towards creating Whatsapp groups and activated their respective Facebook pages with posts to create awareness.

In addition to their existing responsibilities as directed by the government. Due to mobility restrictions during the countrywide lockdown, local government bodies relied on social media and

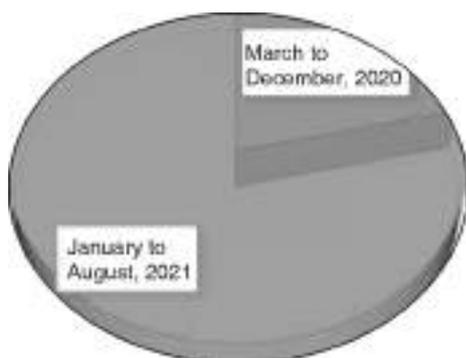


Fig. 2: Extent of social media engagement on social media (N=120)

WhatsApp to create awareness about the nature and seriousness of COVID-19, extending relief measures to migrant workers and later for information on testing and vaccination schedules.

Posters uploaded by the Councillors indicate that the information by the Government was designed with the added elements of advice, caution, and support. The intention was not limited to creating awareness about the COVID-19 support system in respective Wards, but also to bring in a sense of security among residents and urging them to help fellow citizens.

Social media messages that effectively frame risk have the potential to reduce panic and increase adoption of preventive measures by conveying what behaviours and decisions put a person at increased risk of developing COVID-19 (Hauer & Sood, 2020).

Communicating and sharing government actions on COVID-19

Several orders and circulars that were issued by the District Administration, Gurugram, pertained to Government initiatives to contain the spread of COVID-19, compliance of safety measures and other administrative actions. As per the website, 119 order/circulars/ advisories were issued between March 2020 and August 2021 (Efforts towards containment of covid-19 district administration gurugram, 2021).

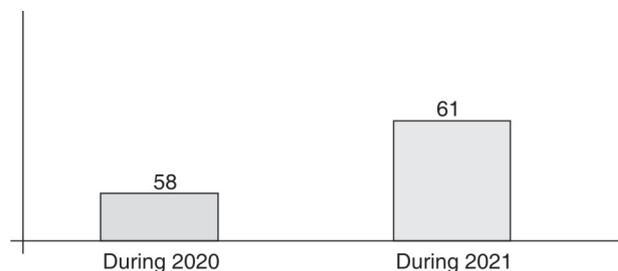


Fig. 3: Order/Circulars/Advisories (N=119) Source: <https://gurugram.gov.in/orders-and-advisories/>

Initiatives by the municipalities aimed to apprise people of Government actions, providing consultations and responding to queries raised by citizens. Such initiatives aimed to not only build awareness but also to imbibe confidence among citizens and understand what the Government was doing to safeguard them from COVID-19. The Ward councillors engaged RWAs, community representatives and volunteers during the pandemic, which led to more tangible results. The overall aim was to create openness in discussions and reporting challenges and fears.

Out of the listed 119, several circulars/ orders/ advisories/ guidelines indicated the need for community awareness and community support such as advisories issued for RWAs and facility managers of gated colonies and condominiums, for

wearing face masks, about night curfew, closure of and restrictions pertaining to opening of educational institutions, shops, malls, parks, cabs, etc., online services, lockdown/ extension of lockdown, and containment zones. At the community level, the responsibility of the elected representatives was imminent, who diverted their efforts to support the community that elected them. These orders were shared by the councillors with community members on Facebook and WhatsApp to convey why compliance of orders was necessary to contain the spread of the virus and how the residents could protect themselves.

Alleviating people's fear and perceptions using social media

In May 2021, India remained on the top of the countries' list of confirmed COVID-19 positive cases (COVID-19 Data Explorer). The somewhat unknown nature of the coronavirus and mode of infection kept people in fear and constant threat till vaccines arrived. The threat caused people to even stop receiving newspaper copies at home and depend more on the television news for COVID-19 updates.

A major shift in preference for media for source of information was seen among all sections. Social media comprising of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp became crucial communication tools for information generation, dissemination and consumption.

A study on the usage of social media during the pandemic revealed that during the COVID outbreak, many social media friends have shared their experiences of social distancing and taking care of this virus on social media account(s) (Saud *et al.*, 2020). This indicates that social media support in a pandemic is useful, keeping and sharing people experience the same feeling as others with the disasters. 41.7% people are exercising and getting information about social distancing through social media platforms. It is also helpful for the people to be guided by their social media friends on how to boost the body immune system. Out of several online social media platforms, 39.7% people sought COVID-19 pandemic related information on WhatsApp and stated that their online friends are sending some materials, which indicate how to keep their immune system strong (Jawhara, 2020).

Table 3: Sharing of information on government action on social media

Subject of Circulars
<p>Circulars that required action by Respective Departments</p> <p>Action plan for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Door to door screening/ thermal screening of each person in HH in containment zone/ stock of PPE an necessary equipment in control room/ Deployment of Ambulances and para-medical staff – Transport for health teams – Listing demand for essential goods/commodities – Regular power supply in containment zones- Action by DHBVN – Regular safe drinking water <p>Circulars Shared on Facebook WhatsApp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Bulletins on COVID-19 dated 4.5.2020 by Health department, Gurugram Integrated Disease Surveillance Program • Containment of Areas by DM, GGN under “The Haryana Epidemic Disease, COVID-19 Regulations, 2020” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sanitisation of Containment Zones – Movement of essential services and emergencies, restricted movement of public in containment areas, necessary barricading – Setting up containment/ isolation/COVID hospital – Ensure 100% coverage of AarogyaSetu App among the residents of Containment Zones with the help of respective RWAs • Designating containment/ buffer zones and sealing of containment areas for isolation of cases/ Dos and Dont's for containment zones • Extension of Lockdown period (24.4.2020 to 4.5.2020) • Authorised providers for essential supplies in GGN • Lockdown 4.0- Ready Reckoner • Facilities for registration of persons stranded in cities due to lockdown (online portal, Jan Sahayak help me app, helpline numbers • Overseas support to Indian students abroad wanting to reach Gurugram • Vaccination Schedules and sites / Mobile Van vaccination sites/ Walk-in Vaccination sites • Activities/ Services allowed in Containment/ Green/ Range/ Red designated zones

Emerging infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, almost always result in increased usage and consumption of media of all forms for information by the general public (Freberg & Palenchar 2013). Therefore, social media has a crucial role in people's perception of disease exposure, resultant decision-making, and risk behaviours (Giustini, 2018). Social media platforms constitute a powerful means of communication that can be used to elevate public awareness about infectious diseases, particularly about new ones in terms of outbreak dates and spread (Freberg, 2013).

Vaccination

The Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) in India began in 1985–86 in a phased manner and it took five years to cover all districts. For the success of UIP, a specially designed policy of information, education, and communication (IEC) was adopted in order to reach the unreachable, and communication on social mobilisation was adopted for sustainability of the programme (Mani, 2000). Within IEC, instead of devising a generalised communication package, the strategy aimed to customise and design the content and information to suit the target audiences. Social mobilisation on the other hand, depended heavily on interpersonal communication with the health staff and opinion leaders for information as well as for commitment. While the development of COVID-19 vaccines has been an extraordinary success, vaccinating most of the global population

has been an enormous challenge, one for which gaining and maintaining public trust in vaccination was as essential as the vaccine itself (Al-Dmour, 2020).

Creating visibility for vaccination on WhatsApp

Today, the entire realm of communication has changed due to the Internet and mobile phones, and the process of social mobilisation now gets more weightage. Amidst varied perceptions about the disease, efficacy of the vaccines and their manufacturers, interpersonal communication with the community members, family and friends on phone, in particular on WhatsApp, played a major role in creating commitment for vaccination.

Apart from awareness about vaccination through mass media, information flow on WhatsApp created by the RWA facilitated member residents in Gurugram in reaching the scheduled sites and venues for vaccination. Since the target population was segmented by age group and phases in vaccination, the schedules for free vaccination which were shared by the councillors on WhatsApp provided full details of the targeted age group, name of vaccine, number of doses available, documents required, venue, date and time.

To understand the role and extent of engagement of Elected Representatives in fulfilment of the vaccination strategy, the activity of the Councillors in two Wards (Ward 40 and 29) out of 45 Residents' WhatsApp groups were compiled, which helped

Table 4: Subject/ theme of WhatsApp communication

Major WhatsApp Activity (Period: 27 th February to 31 st August, 2021)	
<i>Source:</i> RWA Group I	<i>Source:</i> Two RWA WhatsApp Groups
Organising Free Vaccination Camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sharing of Orders/ Circulars and Advisories – Sharing information on services on isolations centres/ oxygen cylinders and refill/ambulances/ vaccine slot finder apps/ free doctors consultations – Sharing of vaccination schedules (Issued by District Collector and Health Department, Gurugram)
Notifying members about Vaccination Camps (Date, time, vaccines available, 1 st , 2 nd or both doses, number of doses available, venue, location maps, registration, documents etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sharing of photos of Notices on Vaccination drives – Sharing of Excel sheets of vaccination sites and dates – Posting reminders created for the above
Answering queries raised by group members Posting photos and reports of camps organised on same day or next day	
Venue for Vaccination Camps	Vaccination Sites listed by District Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Councillor's office (Ward 30) – RWA office – School – Community Centre – Police station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government Primary Health centres (UPHC/ PHC) – Schools (both Government and Private) – Hospitals/ Poly clinics (both Government and Private)

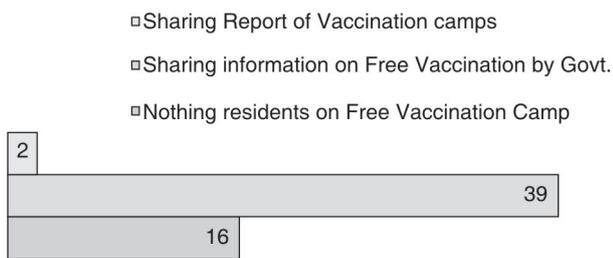


Fig. 4: Proportion and Content of Posts in WhatsApp group I (Includes Excel sheet on vaccination sites/ Consultation with CMO and Vaccination for pregnant women, Children with special needs, Mega vaccination Drive-TIKA UTSAV and Rapid antigen and RTPCR testing)

in understanding the commitment of both the Councillors and the residents, nature of activity and regularity in sharing information on vaccination.

In Gurugram, 222 centres were designated as centres for vaccination, out of which 182 were Government health centres and 40 were private clinics and hospitals, which were paid centres. The venues chosen for vaccination camps organised by the Councillor were within the areas listed in Ward 30 for ease of accessibility. Choosing venues for residents’ convenience also suggested the collaborative efforts and the level of cooperation received from other departments, RWA and volunteers in fulfilment of the immunisation strategy.

According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2021), the government’s ability in building trust in vaccination and successfully implementing a vaccination strategy depends on several factors. Besides the confidence in the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines and competence and reliability of the institutions that deliver them, the principles and processes that guide government decisions and actions in vaccine procurement, distribution, prioritisation,

100 covid vaccination done today. in last one month around 3,000 vaccination done in our Ward-30. 1,300 covid testing. thanks to entire team and health department.
Regards
Mahesh Dayma
councillor ward 30

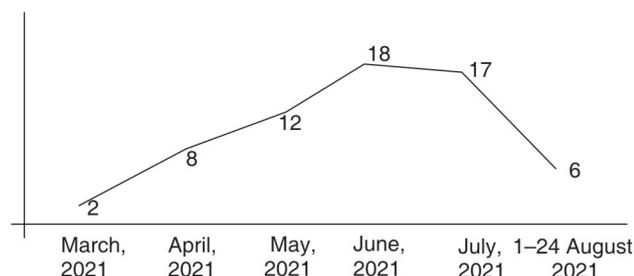


Fig. 5: Trend in WhatsApp messages on vaccination (Source: Councillor Office, Ward 30, GGN)

and administration, the capacity and effectiveness of regulatory agencies, and public engagement and communications at the ground level by way of partner and support community organisations emerge as most important considerations for successful vaccination campaigns.

Regularity in providing information

Creating visibility added with regularity/continuity in sharing schedules and reports of the previous vaccination camps incremented the footfall. The reports posted by the Councillor of Ward 30, indicated the fulfilment of immunisation strategy. It may be presumed that greater visibility of information on vaccination camps and drives may have helped people in reducing their resistance towards the vaccines.

Strengthening community with social media

During the first wave of the pandemic, fear and uncertainty gripped the entire society. People were clueless of the outcome of the pandemic and were dependent on television for information about what was going on in the country. The pandemic situation



Fig. 6: Broad assessment of Councillors activities

in the neighbourhood and surrounding areas were assessed through interpersonal communication with friends on mobile phones and WhatsApp chats, which helped in building confidence in safeguarding oneself from getting infected. In such crisis, the Councillors emerged as a ray of hope for people who were quarantined/ isolated and needed immediate assistance with food, medical supplies, transport, and moral support (District Administration, Gurugram, 2020).

Awareness creation on closed WhatsApp groups

More than 35 WhatsApp groups comprising of RWA officials and residents received and read the messages posted by the Councillors office (Ward 30). The activities in one of the groups was closely observed to obtain the level of Councillors’

engagement in creating awareness on COVID-19 and related issues of relief and safety measures, vaccination, testing facilities and more. Circulating messages on the requirement of blood/plasma and donors was also encouraged.

The WhatsApp groups revealed the activities of two Ward Councillors (Ward 40 and Ward 30). The Councillor in Ward 40 of MCG elaborated the strategies adopted in COVID-19 management during both waves of the pandemic. Ward 40 has a population

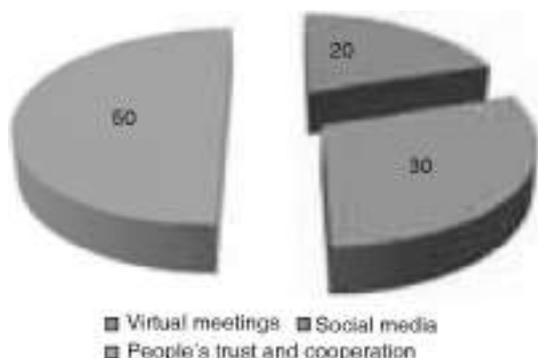


Fig. 7: Factors contributing in COVID-19 management (Source: Councillor, Ward-30, GGN)

On whatApp, I did my best to give moral support in addition to the logistic support of food, supplies, medicines, bill payments etc. to the COVID affected families and motivated others to help each other councillor, Ward-30

Table 5: Information shared on vaccination

Subjects of Information Shared in two WhatsApp posts (verbatim) on Vaccination Group 1 (116 resident members) and Group 2 (214 resident members)

- Sharing of Order/ Circular/ Advisories
- Vaccination Schedules (Health Department)
- Vaccination Sites (Excel Sheet)
- Vaccination for young adults with special needs
- Free vaccination camp for pregnant women
- Free vaccination camp
- Reports of Vaccination camps
- Drive thru' COVID vaccination camp
- Collaboration with NGO for vaccination

Table 6: Inquiries by residents (Extracted from WhatsApp groups managed by Councillors)

- Any vaccine schedule for tomorrow
- Is there a way to ensure that vaccines are not being misused...?
- Want info about the availability of covaxin 2nd doze vaccine anywhere
- Anyone know if and where Covishield vaccine is being administered in Gurgaon/ Delhi
- Kindly arrange a camp for coveshield vaccine also, for those requiring second dose

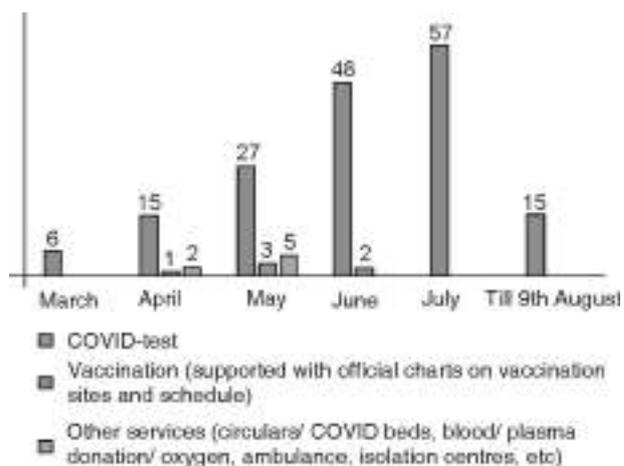


Fig. 8: Messages in Residents WhatsApp Groups (Source: Councillor's Office, Ward 30)

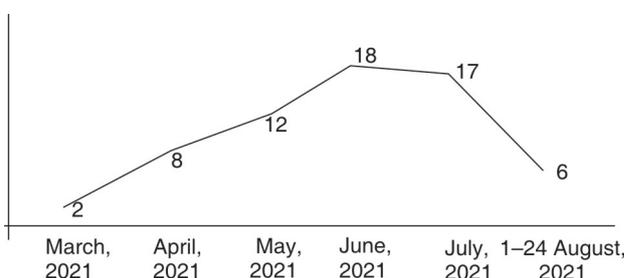


Fig. 9: Regularity in awareness creation on vaccination schedule and Sites on WhatsApp (N= 64) (Source: Ward 30 Councillor Office)

of 28,046 with 81.2% literacy and constitutes both urban and semi-urban areas.

For example, if on an average each group had 100 members, it could be estimated that 4,500 families in Ward 30 were informed about vaccination camps and schedules. This suggests a major contribution of WhatsApp in awareness creation on vaccination alone.

The diagram illustrates the broad themes on which the Councillors actively created awareness among the Ward population. According to a press release by MoHFW, the COVID-19 vaccination drive started in India on 16th January 2021 (MoHFW, 2021).

The Government has introduced the issue of Universal Pass-cum-Certificate for fully vaccinated citizens,

This may be obtained through the link given below: <https://epassmsdma.mahait.org>

- Any centre in Gurgaon where walk-in vaccines being done for 18 + individuals
- Devender when the vaccine is coming to Haryana.

Inquiry

The WhatsApp group was an interactive group and was limited to posting activities by the Administrators in the group. Apart from information shared by the Councillor’s office, the members took the opportunity to express their opinions on an issue, share photos of community activities or of a problem. During the pandemic, members also raised several queries and complaints related to COVID-19 management and vaccination. The images of a few posts are presented here:

Strategic functioning of elected representative during COVID-19 pandemic

The onset of the first lockdown in March 2020 was followed by WHO and Government guidelines, advisories, circulars and orders, which were issued by the District Administration, Gurugram, to contain the spread of the coronavirus. These orders required immediate compliance by the officials and elected representatives of MCG.

In order to understand the modus operandi adopted in urban wards, the Councillor of Ward 30 was interviewed. He revealed the strategy that was adopted for ease in compliance with the Government directives to mitigate the crisis and safeguard the residents in his Ward.

Step 1

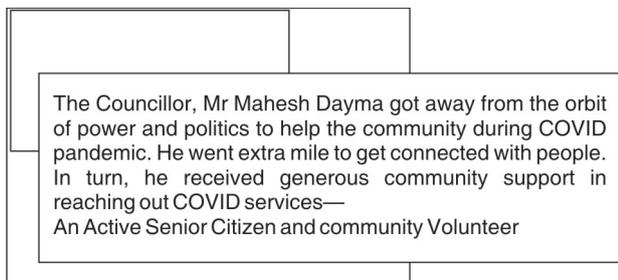


Fig. 10: Quotes from Residents

The early initiatives comprised of forming of a COVID TASK FORCE in March 2020. A team of 150 members comprised of old presidents/ secretaries and active members of RWA, NGOs engaged in providing health care, groups working on environment issues and MCG officials.

- MCG and the Councillors created a 10-person group of emergency front line workers for pick-up of garbage from COVID-19 affected homes.
- Cooperation was given from other departments: Police, CMO, PHC, health departments

Step 2

A COVID CORE TEAM of 53 members

comprising of panel of medical experts, retired Army officers, representatives of NGOs, doctors who provided free services, the Ward 30 Councillor and active resident members comprising of senior citizens, women, students and religious pundits was formed.

- The medical team ensured facilitated the provision of essential medicines and oxygen cylinders.
- Zone meeting and awareness programmes were conducted to extend moral support with the help of experts and a panel of doctors, retired Army officers and representatives of NGOs.
- The Doctors’ group created awareness among the residents on how to deal with COVID-19: The aim was to avoid panicking and rushing to hospitals.
- Several awareness generation activities were planned and executed by both teams for fellow residents and migrant colonies in Ward 40. The awareness programme focussed on:
 - Why and how to use mask.
 - Use of sanitizer, hand washing.
 - Cleaning of surroundings, area sanitisation and fogging.

Step 3

In order to execute the ground level activities, three teams of 20 members each were formed.

Team 1: Distributed masks /sanitisers free of cost for 2.5 months among dwellers in hutment areas.

Team 2: Distributed free ration and cooked food packets. The team was supported by the Police for a streamlined process.

Team 3: Facilitated residents for sanitisation programme, delivery of food to COVID-19 affected homes and delivery of medicines to quarantined and COVID-19 affected families. This team also assisted senior citizens and COVID-19 affected families with bill payments.

Team 4 & 5: Two NIGHT teams of volunteers/ residents provided medicines and all essential services. This group of volunteers spontaneously approached the Councillor of Ward 30 and offered their help, they were not asked to.

A physical support system was planned and created to provide essential services related to COVID-19. The support system was executed by the elected representative and community members

In 2020

- Arranged 100 testing camps in Ward 40 for RAT, RTPCR.
- Distributed gloves and PPE
Helped with Intercity Movement passes.

In 2021

- Set up 200 COVID-19 testing camp.
- Two isolation centres were set up in Sector 56 by the Councillor's office.
- Two isolation centres were set up by social activists of Hemkund foundation (Sikh organisation).
- Provided mini ambulances.
- Cremation services were provided: Death certificates, finding missing bodies, documentation (*The Councillors appreciated the cremation arrangement by the Government*).
- Blood donation camps were set up and arrangement for plasma donation was made
- Distributed immunity boosters, which was provided by MCG.
- AYUSH immunity kits were distributed to approximately 4,000 houses by the PHC staff in Tigra and Wazirabad wards.

Personal initiatives

The representatives reportedly felt an additional sense of social responsibility besides their official duties during the pandemic period. The Councillor personally counselled every COVID-19-affected person on phone to provide moral support and confidence and assure him/her of the support system around them. He also sponsored:

- Free distribution of ration from 9th April to 20th May 2021 during the second wave of pandemic
- Provided food/ medicines/ O₂ for isolated and quarantined persons.
- Distributed 2,000 cooked food packets.
- Documentation and billing, for quarantined residents and senior citizens– digital payments of bills– electricity, water, CNG, TV and mobile recharge, bulbs.
- A WhatsApp group of 148 women created in 2017 for safety and support to women empowerment got energised, actively rendered help and participated

Table 7: Video upload on social media on 29th April 2021
#FightWithCorona

-
- I hope everyone is taking care in such a critical situation. Times are tough and we are facing a severe crisis. We are all in this together and we will need each other's help and support to get through these testing times.
 - To help mitigate this crisis we are starting an initiative to maintain a database of all those who have oxygen cylinders, these oxygen cylinders will be refilled and maintained, those in genuine need will be able to procure them from our office.
 - Therefore, we need your help and support to come forward and provide the equipments available with you or any leads that might help our Ward 40 family. A small step will go a long way in saving lives.
-

in food and mask distribution activities.

- Due to strong interpersonal communication links among themselves, the residents did not hesitate in contribute their time and energy, without any fear in COVID-19 related activities. The residents also donated generously towards relief material and to the Prime Minister's COVID-19 relief fund.

Challenges

According to the Councillor and his team, the pandemic was full of challenges. The coronavirus, its mode of infection, protocols on isolation of affected person from their families, etc. caused fear and anxiety, which increased due to data on casualties shown on media and often the fake news and information.

During the entire pandemic period, from logistically providing relief material (food and shelter) to migrant workers to organising testing facilities, shortage of medical supplies and oxygen cylinders, medicine hoarding, delay in getting COVID-19 test reports, shortage of beds, and many more challenges were encountered. Overcoming these challenges required coordination with different departments and agencies.

The other form of challenge faced was taking care of senior citizens who were COVID-19 positive and were alone at home. During the lockdown and for the patients who were quarantined, dealing with their anxiety and curiosity regarding the door-step facilities was a major issue. Collection and disposal of garbage from COVID-19 affected homes also posed challenges.

In rare circumstances, the Councillor's office also helped the affected residents with death certificates of the deceased family member.

According to the Councillor, self-volunteerism of the community members who had lend their time and patience in systemising collection and distribution of food and relief material with active support of the Police department and law enforcement personnel, was commendable. The interpersonal communication with the residents, and the cooperation received from the active residents in immunisation strategy motivated most of the Ward Councillors, who went an extra mile to provide relief to the residents in their respective Wards.

Conclusion

The statistics on COVID-19 vaccinations done in India stood highest at 1,41,20,467 as on 31st August 2021. According to the UIDAI Annual report, which states a total of 125.79 crore Aadhaar registrations in 2019–2020, it is roughly estimated that vaccination of 1,25,77,58,79,544 people registered with Aadhaar

Table 8: Visibility and Poster Content posted on Social media: Facebook

Personal messages from Councillor on Facebook page

(SOP for Holi, Lamp Lighting, Janta Curfew, Advice on Vaccination, A Word of caution seeking welfare and how to be mentally and emotionally strong appeal to respect the Corona Warriors)

- कोरोना को मद्देनजर एवं हरियाणा सरकार द्वारा जारी आदेश को ध्यान में रखते हुए होली का पावन पर्व मनाए।
- Encouraging residents to light lamps on 5th April, 2020
- Encouraging residents to follow Janta curfew on 22 March, 2020 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. #IndiaFightsCorona
- कोविड वैक्सीन का पूरा लाभ दोनों डोज लगने के बाद ही मिलता है। तभी बनी रहेगी कोरोना से दूरी।
- Importance of vaccination
- Navigation for CO-WIN online registration, Arogyasetu
- How to book vaccination slot
- Motivating people to get vaccinated
- Alert against fake calls for COVID registration for vaccination
- Beware of Fake news
- हर आयु के वर्ग के लोग इससे संक्रमित हो सकते हैं, बीमार और बुजुर्गों को संक्रमण का खतरा अधिक रहता है।
- सकारात्मक रहे और अपने काम और जीवन में संतुलन बनाकर रखें।
- अपनों के संपर्क न रहें और अपनी भावनाओं को साँझा करें।
- योग और ध्यान करें, पर्याप्त नींद लें।
- मदद के लिए पुकार, यही है सही व्यवहार।
- हम सभी को सावधानी बरतने के साथ साथ दूसरों को भी समझाना है। जो लापरवाह हैं उन्हें रोके., जिसने मास्क नहीं पहना है उनको समझाए व कोरोना प्रोटोकॉल का पालन करें, तभी संक्रमण की चेन टूटेगी।
- समाज और देश के सुख में पूर्ण कर्तव्य निष्ठा के साथ कार्यरत और आवश्यक सेवाएं प्रदान करने वाले कोरोना योद्धाओं के अथक परिश्रम का सम्मान करें। उनके साथ दुर्व्यहार न करें।

MCG house meeting with Ward Councillors talks

- Creating database of those owning O₂ cylinders maintain a database of all those who have oxygen cylinders
- These oxygen cylinders will be refilled and maintained by councillors
- Inform the needy to procure them from our office
- Sanitisation and fogging
- Help the needy—Distribution of dry ration
- Cooked food distribution for stranded migrant workers, poor and needy
- Sharing of mobile numbers of those who want to distribute cooked food

COVID-19 Test– Information

- Inform about venue, date, time, documents required for test, Report collection
- Support with leads from where to seek help for test
- Venue from where token can be collected
- Documents required to collect token
- Drive thru, walk-in

Vaccination– Information

- Sponsors (Medanta) of free vaccination camp
- Date, time, list of venues, name of vaccine, for whom, number of doses, documents required. Walk-in/ online registration

COVID– medical facilities and Services

(COVID Bed Hospitals, Oxygen, Oxygen- Token System, Oxygen Concentrators, Ambulance, Jan Sahayak Help Me App)

- Contribution of private hospitals (Medanta): 100 bed hospital, 80 oxygen beds
- CSR and Contribution of NGOs (Hero Motocorp & doctors for you): inauguration of 100 bed temporary hospital for COVID-19 affected
- Isolation centres
- Oxygen beds
- Blood donation camps
- Number of Counters open for token, venue, process of collecting token, whom to contact after token is collected, number of token given in a day, and
- Documents required to collect token
- Partnership of Gurugram administration with private companies for oxygen concentrators
- Fixing of rates for ambulances

(Table 8: ...)

-
- Helpline number of calling ambulance
 - Request for Helpline number connect to all private and government contractors who run ambulances
 - How to download Jan Sahayak help me App from Google play store

Recognition

(World Nurses Day, Doctors Day, Corona Warrior Certificates)

- Expressing gratitude
- Honour to doctors
- Online recognition given to councilors for their efforts in COVID management

Video Uploads

(MCG House Meeting with Ward Councillors, Talks with Doctors, Seeking welfare and advice)

- Waste collection of Corona Positive patients and infrastructure development
 - Aware the Commissioner of MCG of the ground level problems in COVID management and prepare customised plans and solutions
 - BJP Haryana zoom meeting on COVID
 - Live talk on corona with doctors
 - Talk on treatment of corona
-

was yet to be achieved at the time of this study.

The Ward Councillors have contributed immensely in public health awareness generation in general and specifically in creating awareness on COVID-19 risks, safety issues and vaccination. The utilisation of social media and the interpersonal initiative of the Councillors at the community level were instrumental in achieving vaccination strategy. Previous studies too have highlighted the importance of awareness creation in immunisation programme. With the use of Internet and mobile phone penetration in both urban and rural areas, the Councillors in urban wards provided a key linkage between the government and the people in all states. They motivated people and coupled their responsibilities with activities that aimed to get as many people in their respective areas get mobilised in extending relief to the COVID-affected, and in energising the vaccination strategies. The Councillors set an example of utilising WhatsApp groups comprising of RWAs, targeted age groups for the purpose of area development and welfare and updates on COVID-19 and vaccinations. In future, in rural areas, the Sarpanch and Pradhan can mobilise the community members for motivating others for vaccination using WhatsApp as well. Recognitions such as COVID-19 warrior certificates may be awarded to Councillors. For optimal functioning of local governance, awareness, mobilisation and participation of community is essential to achieve vaccination targets.

Acknowledgement

For development and sustainability, it is required that any efforts to achieve these goals are brought to notice for awareness and learning. During all phases

of COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges have been dealt differently with an aim to overcome the crisis at any level.

For an overview of the activities undertaken in urban wards in district of Gurugram, I thank Mahesh Dayma, Councillor of Ward-30, MCG, who expressed his views on the need for community awareness and mobilisation to meet the challenges in safeguarding the health of community members. He also expressed his gratitude towards the residents in providing support in planning and execution of community level activities during the pandemic period and for fulfillment of Immunisation. Sri Devender and his staff have helped immensely in providing facts and information on strategy planned for relief measures, vaccination and awareness activities.

I also express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Shashwati Goswami, Head of the Communication Research Department for her encouragement, and my colleague Dr Ananya Roy, Senior Consultant, for her guidance in shaping this study to its final form.

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Development of New Models in Public Relations: A Review of Literature

ANSHUL GARG¹ & ANSHU BHATI²

ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to review the literature of different models introduced in public relations over the period. For the review, all the publications related to the development of public relations models were considered. An extensive literature search was undertaken using indexing services available at the authors' institution library. The keywords used for the search were public relations models, conceptual models of public relations, new models of public relations. Electronic databases like Science Direct, JSTOR, Proquest, EbscoHost, and Google Scholar were used for the search. These electronic databases were searched for full-text papers published in the English language. After initial search and eliminating articles not related to the review's objective, eight studies were selected for the review purpose. Four models of public relations were found to be one of the first conceptualized frames of work in the domain of public relations. Three models of public relations were found to be more culture and country-specific, and one industry-specific model of public relations was developed. One model presented a mixed approach to view public relations practices. Another model described seven framing in public relations. It was concluded that there is a need to do more conceptual and empirical research in public relations to develop more contemporary models specific to context, culture, and industries.

Keywords: Public relations, Public relations models, Review of literature, Grunig

Introduction

Public relations is becoming one of the most critical tools practiced by organizations to manage and maintain their image in the eyes of important stakeholders. From being one of the promotional tools employed by marketing managers for better visibility in media, public relations (PR) has evolved into a strategic tool undertaken by organizations for reputation management. Many organizations have a dedicated Public Relations Department and hire experts to manage PR-related activities. Philip Kotler has defined Public Relations as a set of various programs designed to promote and/or protect a company's image or its individual products (Kotler, 1967). Grunig and Hunt (1984) describes public relations as "management of communication between an organization and its publics" in their book *Managing Public Relations*.

The role of a public relations officer is to become a facilitator between an organization and its public like employees, shareholders, government, media, customers, suppliers, distributors, community,

and other collaborators. They are responsible for strategizing public relations activities, aligning them with organizational goals, and successfully executing public relations plans. Thus, public relations have been the area of interest for many scholars and researchers. Researchers have tried to study public relations practices, roles, and their effectiveness in the organization. The public relations domain is comparatively new; few published scientific research could be found in late 1940s by public relations professionals like Edward L. Bernays (Bernays, 1947). In the early research days the primary focus was on understanding the meaning and scope of public relations. It was only in the 1980s that researchers started looking at the scientific applicability of public relations through models. Hence, all the models studied in the paper can be considered new models of public relations. The models provide a guideline for understanding and assessing the public relations practices of the organization. These models offer a base for developing research in the area of public relations. In public relations, many researchers have

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identified the presence of models in the ways public relations is practiced in different geographies. The initial focus was primarily on Western countries (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Later, researchers from different geographies like India and Greece tested public relations models in the public relations scenario of their countries and added new models (Sriramesh, 1991; Lyra, 1991). Thus, the focus of models has always been on how professionals practice public relations. A public relations model can be defined as a portrayal of public relations activities that assists professionals with understanding how it functions or will function in the given scenario; the models will permit them to comprehend and carry out public relations ideas for effective outcomes.

A review of PR models developed in various countries, cultures, and contexts can become a basis for understanding the viewpoint of researchers and practitioners. Also, it can provide a guideline for future researchers that a particular view governs PR practices in a setting. The present paper aims to review the models of public relations developed by researchers over the period. Hence, papers related to the introduction of new models of public relations were selected for the study. Other papers analysing the applicability or effectiveness of pre-existing public relations models were excluded from the study. This review gives an understanding of various public relations models in the arena of public relations.

Methodology

An extensive literature search in Science Direct, JSTOR, ProQuest, EBSCOHost, and Google Scholar was performed from December 2020 to April 2021 for peer-reviewed, original/empirical research, and review papers, articles, and other publications. The research papers selected for the review were related to the introduction of public relations models, irrespective of their time of publication.

No specific period was considered for the paper selection. Hence, the date of the oldest and latest research article published by default became the publication time frame for the search. Articles published in the English language were selected for review. Publications based on marketing-related models, the effectiveness of public relations models, critical analysis of the public relations models, applicability of pre-developed public relations models in a different culture, context, or in the respective industries were excluded from the review.

The main purpose of the present work was to review articles related to the introduction of new models in the arena of public relations, thus there was no specific geography considered for the literature search in the initial phase. The quorum flowchart of

the review process (Fig. 1) shows the initial number of identified articles (346), the assessment of eligible articles (according to the exclusion criteria), and the final number (8) of included articles for review process.

Initially, 346 publications were identified by searching keywords from electronic databases like EBSCOHost, Science Direct, JSTOR, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. These papers were screened by title and abstract. Ninety-four papers were selected after the initial screening of the title and abstract. In the third stage, 41 studies were excluded for various reasons like non-original research and the inaccessibility of full research paper/ review articles.

Finally, 53 papers were selected for full-text reading. Later, 46 papers were excluded from the review as they were not related to the introduction of new models of public relations; the majority of the papers were related to the applicability of pre-existing PR models in different contexts. Another primary reason for eliminating papers was that instead of introducing an original model for public relations, many researchers borrowed models from other streams and tested their applicability in the public relations area. Overall, eight articles related to the introduction of public relations models were included in the review. These papers were introduced in the United States, India, South Africa, Greece and Turkey between 1979 and 2010. An overview of the models, listed according to authorship and year of publication, and a description of public relations Models in the selected papers is provided in Table 1.

Review of literature

Initial Model of Public Relations by James E. Grunig

Grunig conducted a study to understand the variation in public relations activities concerning the environment and structure of the organization. At the beginning of the research, Grunig assumes that there are two models of public relations, a two-way informative communication model and a one-way manipulative model. He termed them as 'diachronic' and 'synchronic;' the terms are taken from Thayer's (1968) two models of 'intercommunication'. Synchronic public relations was an asymmetric communication, influencing the public to adjust their behaviour as per the organization. Whereas in diachronic communications, the effort in public relations was to achieve a 'state of affair' which was more acceptable to both parties—the organization and its publics. Hence, it was considered more symmetric in nature. Grunig used factor analysis to group public relations activities as synchronic

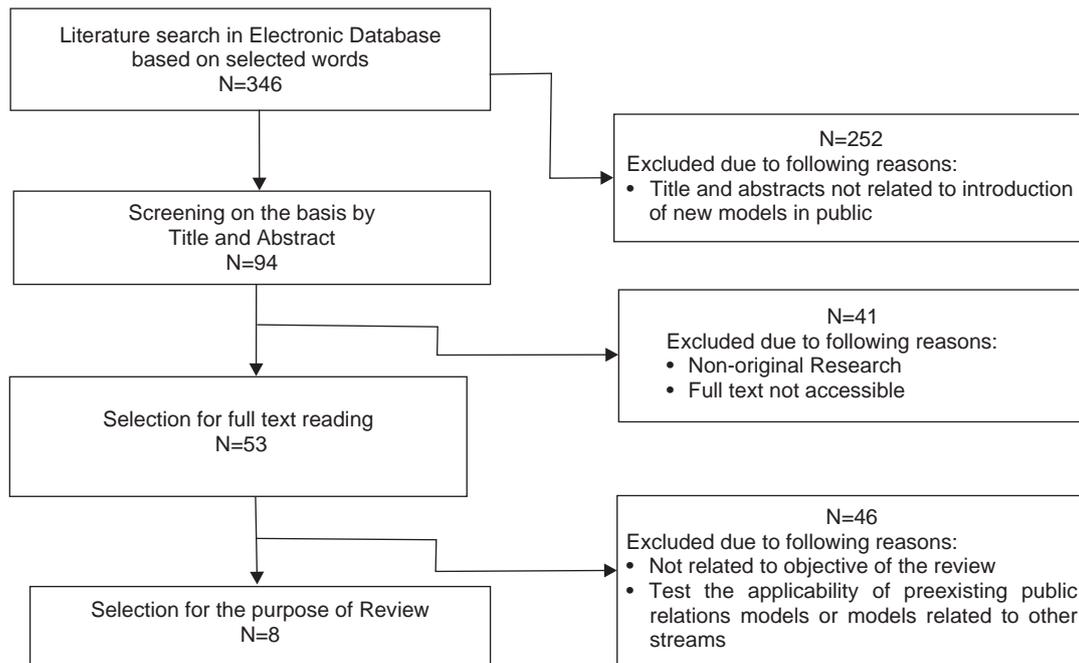


Fig. 1: Quorum flowchart of publications identified, screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the review

and diachronic. He also identified two types of the organization and termed them as 'problem solving' and 'fatalistic' organisations.

Problem-solving organizations worked in a more dynamic and complex environment with decentralized, unstratified, and formalised structures. Furthermore, "fatalistic" organizations worked with less formalised and complex structures which were more static, centralised, and stratified. Grunig hypothesised that problem-solving organizations practiced diachronic public relations and fatalistic organizations practiced more synchronized public relations. The hypothesis was rejected as he found that problem-solving organizations practiced more synchronized public relations than diachronic public relations. Problem-solving organizations practiced both public relations models as compared to fatalistic organizations. Only a subgroup of problem-solving organizations practiced diachronic public relations; these were the organizations that employed professional public relations and were small, new, and less formalised in structure (Grunig, 1979).

Four Models of Public Relations by James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt

Grunig and Hunt (1984) analysed the historical development of public relations and identified the four models of public relations. The four models of public relations represented the combination of two dimensions of public relations—one way vs. two way and asymmetric vs. symmetric. The four proposed models were press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical.

Press agency/publicity was described as propagandistic public relations that seek media attention in almost any way. The public information model characterised public relations as practiced by "journalists-in-residence" who generally disseminate accurate information about the organization but do not volunteer negative information. Press agency and public information form a continuum of craft public relations and are specifically one-way communication models. The following two models are more sophisticated in their practice and include the use of research and other methods of two-way communication; they were considered professional public relations. Two-way asymmetrical public relations programs use research to identify the messages most likely to produce the support of the public without having to change the organization's behaviour. The fourth model, in contrast, has effects that are symmetrical and that a neutral observer would describe as benefiting both organization and its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Personal Influence Model of Public Relations by Krishnamurthy Sriramesh

A combination of survey research and ethnographic study was conducted to understand the public relations practices in India. The study's objective was to see to what extent Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models are applicable in India and find any other PR model practiced in Indian organizations. The researcher also attempts to understand if there is any variation in the practice of public relations models based on the characteristics of an organization

like size and ownership. For the purpose of the study, 18 organizations were selected as samples. The researcher selected a combination of small and large organizations from private, public, government, and non-profit organizations to represent all types of organizations. The study was conducted in two parts—a survey questionnaire where sixty questions based on four models of public relations were asked to test their applicability and ethnographic analysis. The researcher observed the public relations practices of the organizations, interacted with their public relations personnel, and reviewed their publicity material. The quantitative analysis result indicated that the two-way symmetrical, two-way asymmetrical, press agency and public information models were practiced in that order.

In contrast, the researcher reported that his ethnographic analysis showed that “the press agency and public information models proved excellent indicators of how the sample organizations practiced public relations.” When asked about the activities performed by public relations practitioners, it was clear that most of them extensively used the public agency model of public relations and public information model was practiced in some organizations as ethnographic study showed that none of the organizations engaged in formal research. The researcher also found that personal influence plays a key role in the practice of public relations in India, and 60% of the reason a news release gets published can be traced to personal influence and only 40% to the news value. Regardless of the size of the organization or nature of ownership, personal influence was an important aspect of public relations practices. Hence, Sriramesh introduced the Personal Influence model of public relations. According to the personal influence model, senior PR executives develop a personal rapport with important stakeholders through hospitality and friendship to get a favourable impression of the organization (Sriramesh, 2000).

Cultural Interpreter Model by Anastasia Lyra

Meta-analysis of public relations practice studies in India, Greece, and Taiwan revealed that the craft of public relations (press agency and public information models) predominates in these countries. Although practitioners ascribe to the values and goals of professional public relations, most do not have the knowledge to practice it. In addition, the research also discussed two other patterns of public relations practice—“personal influence” and “cultural interpreter” (Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, & Lyra, 1995).

The Cultural Interpreter model was introduced

by Anastasia Lyra in 1991. Lyra had researched in Greece to understand public relations practices in the country and the applicability of four models of public relations. Lyra found that press agency was the most popular model of public relations along with public information and a two-way symmetrical model. She also reported that CEOs of another country working in Greece were highly dependent on the natives for their inputs related to their politics and culture-related issues. They also actively sought the advice of native public relations officers to be more culturally appropriate in their work. She introduced this practice of involving native PROs in work by foreign CEOs as the Cultural Interpreter Model of Public Relations (Lyra, 1991).

Mixed-Motive Approach by Priscilla Murphy

Murphy (1991) criticised the four models of public relations proposed by Grunig by arguing that these models are not applicable in real-life situations and that applying pure two-way symmetrical models is impossible. According to Murphy, there is always a pure winner in asymmetrical models, and one party has to lose for the other to win. Also, finding organizations in symmetrical communication where the objective is to cooperate with other parties is rare. To overcome these shortcomings, Murphy suggested a mixed-motive model, which according to the researcher, provides a more realistic solution as it combines the elements of both asymmetrical and symmetrical models of public relations. An alternative approach to Grunig’s models of public relations was suggested in the mix motive approach. Murphy used game theory to explain how a mixed-motive approach can help organizations gain the best results. Avoiding polarization between symmetric and asymmetric models, providing a richer view about the conflict, and cooperation were few benefits highlighted by Murphy of the mixed-motive approach.

South-African Model of Public Relations by Derina R. Holtzhausen, Barbara K. Petersen and Natalie T.J. Tindall

The South African model of public relations given by Holtzhausen, Petersen and Tindall in 2009 emphasised the importance of cultural context. It also advocated the socio-economic and political context in public relations practices. The model completely rejected the normative applicability and consideration of symmetrical and or asymmetrical models of public relations and proposed new models for public relations practices in South Africa. The newly introduced context specific models of public relations were—The Western Dialogic model, the

Activist model, the Ubuntu model, and the Oral Communication model.

Western Dialogic model acknowledged the diversity in the South-African culture where many interest groups with various value systems come together. Hence, considering them as an ideal representative of postmodern society. The Western models draw heavily from the philosophy of Deetz (2001), "who referred to communication practices based on postmodern philosophy as dialogic communication." The second model was the activist model, in which the focus was on the relationship between organizations and their publics. The Ubuntu style (means collective parenthood and morality), a South African management practice focuses more on building harmony at the workplace. Moreover, in the fourth model, practitioners emphasized oral media communication. Another important finding of this study was that the public relations practitioner's demographic characteristics did not influence their style of PR practice (Holtzhausen, Petersen & Tindall, 2009).

The Seven Frames Model by Kirk Hallahan

The researcher advocated the importance of framing in academic literature and its usefulness in understanding and investigating communication-related aspects in various domains. The researcher conducted an extensive literature review across disciplines and suggested seven models of framing that can be applied to public relations. The seven frames model included framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news.

Framing of situations can describe relationships between people, describing overall situations that one faces daily, and provide a proper structure to examine communication and be used for disclosure analysis, negotiation, and other interactions. The second form of framing includes framing attributes, like the characterisation of objects, events, and people. The information is constructed based on crucial selected attributes increasing the scope of bias. In case of risky choices, individuals should access the independent options and evaluate attributes to reduce the risk associated with choices. It has been observed that people are willing to take a significant risk to avoid losses rather than gain profit. Thus, the third necessary type of framing comprises framing of risky choices. The fourth form of framing is framing of action, which focuses on the way alternatives are presented. An individual's propensity to act in accordance with desired goals depends on the positive or negative presentation of alternatives. Framing of issues are ways to examine, interpret and explain the preferred

interpretation of the social reality of different parties. Framing of responsibility consists of attributing the cause to internal or external factors based on stability and control. The last model is the framing of news, and it comprises aspects of how the media portray new stories to explain unfamiliar and complex news and information in a more culturally suitable and familiar manner. It incorporates many aspects of the other six frames as well (Hallahan, 2009).

Conceptual Model of Public Relations in Museums by Eda Gürel and Bahtışen Kavak

Another conceptual model was proposed for museums by Gürel and Kavak in 2010; according to this model, the two variables that affect the effectiveness of public relations practices are market orientation level of management and interest level of the public. The interest level of the public is an external variable and cannot be controlled. However, it can be managed upto a large extent by changing the market orientation level and adapting public relations strategies depending on the interest level of the targeted publics (Gürel & Kavak, 2010).

Summary and discussion

The present literature review encompasses eight models of public relations practices proposed by researchers across the world. The study shows that the public relations models are primarily developed by studying literature and the historical development of public relations; scholars have developed new models of public relations by critically examining the body of literature on pre-existing models of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Murphy, 1991; Gürel & Kavak, 2010; Hallahan, 2009). Models could be substantially supported by empirical research (Lyra, 1991; Sriramesh, 2000; Holtzhausen, Petersen & Tindall, 2009), these models were developed by analysing qualitative and quantitative data collected from the public relations professionals from India, Greece, and South Africa. Four models of public relations were the only theoretical models that were later tested by empirical research (Grunig, 1984; Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang & Lyra, 1995).

Grunig and Hunt's four models of public relations are one of the initial attempts to conceptualise research in the domain of public relations and four models of public relations are the first proper framework that academicians and practitioners can refer to in the area of public relations. Later, many studies have been conducted to analyse the applicability of the four models of public relations in a diverse cultural context and see if any other PR model more specific to the given cultural context emerges. Sriramesh's personal influence model and

Table 1: A Summary of studies included in the review

Public Relations Models	Developed by	Year	Description
Diachronic and Synchronic model of Public Relations	James E. Grunig	1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronic public relations: asymmetric kind of communication, influencing public to adjust their behaviour as per the organisation. • Diachronic communications: symmetric communication with an objective to achieve a “state of affair” which was more acceptable to organisation and its publics
Four models of Public Relations	James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt	1984	Four models of public relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Agency– propaganda-based approach • Public Information–disseminating factual and positive information related to organisation and avoiding negative news • Two-way asymmetrical– used research to produce public support without changing organizations behaviour • Two-way symmetrical– proposed more symbiotic changes in the behaviour of publics and organization benefiting both parties
Personal Influence model	Krishnamurthy Sriramesh	1991	Developing personal relations and friendship with key stakeholders to influence their behaviour in favour of organization
Cultural Interpreter model	Anastasia Lyra	1991	Foreign CEO consulting native public relations practitioners regarding cultural and political decisions
Mixed-Motive model	Priscilla Murphy	1991	Combines the elements of both asymmetrical and symmetrical models of public relations
South African model of Public Relations	Derina R. Holtzhausen, Barbara K. Petersen & Natalie T.J. Tindall	2003	Culture specific models - Western Dialogic model, the Activist model, the Ubuntu model, and the Oral Communication model
Seven Frames model	Kirk Hallahan	2009	Seven distinct types of framing for strategically developing and evaluating public relations practices.
Conceptual model of Public Relations	Eda Gürel, Bahtışen Kavak	2010	Effectiveness of public relations practices are based on two factors– <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market orientation level of management • Interest level of publics

Lyra’s cultural interpreter model are such examples.

Murphy’s mixed approach model is an outcome of critical analysis of symmetric and asymmetric models of public relations. South African models of public relations also emphasise that the four models are more suitable in the Western context, and there is a need for a more culturally-specific model of public relations. Models of seven frames and conceptual models of public relations in museums are developed with different approaches and do not refer to four models of public relations. Hence, it can be concluded that four models of public relations remain one of the most prominent models in the domain.

Another observation of the review is that there is more need to do empirical research and develop models of public relations, which are more relevant to the context, culture, and specific industry. Only one conceptual model for the museum was an industry-

specific; and cultural interpreter, personal influence models, and South African models of public relations were culture-specific models. There is a need to conduct more research in model development for public relations.

The majority of the models of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Lyra, 1991; Sriramesh, 1991; Holtzhausen, Petersen & Tindall, 2009) were developed keeping commercial and organisational perspectives in mind; this is only one aspect of public relations. The models of public relations should be developed keeping broader publics in mind like community and society at large, as the objective of public relations is to achieve inclusion and proper communication with all publics. There is a need to develop public relations models to cover broader and neglected public groups.

It was also observed that published research

on models of public relations is minimal. The four models were first introduced in the book "Managing Public Relations," and then Grunig and his associates authored many papers to explain and test the applicability of the models. Similarly, the cultural interpreter model was also reviewed from a meta-analysis of three studies done in Taiwan, India, and Greece. Originally, the model was introduced in an unpublished master's thesis (Lyra, 1991).

This literature review presents various gaps in the body of knowledge, which can be looked at in future research, like comparing these models and suggesting the best models specific to context and industry. As the last model was introduced in 2010, there is a need for the latest and contemporary research on developing models of public relations.

There can also be a review of the research done on the applicability of these models. The test of the applicability of the models is limited to different cultures, but no industry-specific study has been done. Hence, this also provides an opportunity to research and fill the gap in the body of knowledge.

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Awareness of Economic Reforms and their Impact on Communication among Women—A Study of Women in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Are the women aware of economic reforms and do they feel the effects of such changes in the economy in their daily lives? How do the women perceive the impact of reforms on their communication behaviour? The study was conducted in 24 districts of West Bengal, India to gauge the awareness of economic reforms and assess women's media usage patterns during economic shifts in society. The findings of the study show that awareness of the term economic reforms is largely low among females especially in rural women. There exist contradictory perceptions about the felt ramifications. The study held immense scope to understand the challenges faced by the women population and their dependence on media in the face of shifting economic conditions in society.

Keywords: Awareness, Communication, Economic reforms, Media, Society, Women

Introduction

Since India gained independence in 1947, it stands as a witness to many socio-political and economic transitions. On one hand, there is India which has made great advancements in technology and has reached the space; on the other hand, there is India which lives below the poverty line. These contradictions clearly point out the development challenges facing India and, thus, experts and policymakers are becoming aware of the role social and political factors play in shaping the society at large. Development and growth do not necessarily only mean economic growth but also freedoms and capacities that individuals can improve their social and economic standing. It corresponds to the inclusion of all sections of society in the economic and political decision-making.

India has one of the lowest rates of female labour force participation among developing countries. According to the current estimates, it is placed at approximately 24%. Most Indian women are employed in low-paying, socially insecure professions in the informal sector. If women were represented in the formal economy at the same rate as men, it is predicted that India's GDP might increase by an extra 60% by 2025, or \$2.9 trillion. ("Spotlight on India: Growing economies through gender parity," 2017)

One of the recent economic reforms which the government has implemented is demonetisation—the withdrawal of certain currency notes. The sections of society who advocate and champion the cause of economic reforms argue that there has been a great positive effect of such a policy initiative. It is considered the need of the hour, necessary to curtail the outcome of the careless policy-making of the predecessor government. In India, a vast majority of women do not enjoy easy and equitable access to resources, education, and paid employment. Compared to women in developed countries, women in developing countries trail considerably behind in terms of financial inclusion. If a family has a single account, it is often in the name of the family head, who is invariably a male. Within a family, the men are in charge of the finances. In India, housewives save covertly from home expenses, which provide them a sense of stability and authority. The changes which the policy of economic reforms has brought in the society are increasingly seen as elite-centric and confined to the benefit of a handful of people.

Review of literature

According to Kumar (2002), economic reforms are a means to bring stabilisation to the economy through structural adjustments to various external events. The ultimate goal of reforms is to hasten

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the process of economic development of the nation resulting in well being of its people. They are not formulated for the sake of reforms but for the interest of India's poor people, so that they can contribute and reap benefits from the reforms.

World Bank in its press release, 2019, stated that governments of 115 economies launched 294 reforms over the past year to pave the way for an increase in jobs, expanding commercial activity, and resulting rise in incomes in their respective nations. The ten economies where business climate improved the most were Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Togo, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, China, India, and Nigeria, the study found. Import and export are one of the areas where governments initiated reforms to make doing business easier.

Bajpai (1995) discusses economic reforms in developing countries and states currency devaluation as a measure by developing economies' governments to bring about short-term stabilisation in the economy by introducing fiscal restraint. Devaluation for correcting the balance of payment is a common practice. This measure is taken for increasing exports and decreasing imports and stabilising the economy which may prove to be both negative and positive.

One of the most highly contested concerns in the social sciences and policy-making circles over the past 10 years has been the interplay between economic development, structural change, and gender inequality. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout the world are actively and critically evaluating the implications of economic policies affecting women. Various international organisations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) are attempting to comprehend the effects of various development approaches on specific genders (International Labour Organization, 2003, p. 1).

Nolan and Bohoslavsky (2020) opine that impact assessments of economic reforms in South Africa are often carried out as standard operating practices for large projects. The assessment includes environmental, social, health, and, more recently, human rights elements. Individuals' economic choices which come under human rights are impacted due to economic policy reforms. Economic reform policies may compromise democratic self-determination and hamper the democratic participation of marginalised groups. This means that governments must implement reforms that are non-discriminatory. These reforms must also allocate the maximum available resources to the realization of the rights of all people in a country.

Mahajan and Singla (2017) in their article on impact of demonetisation on financial inclusion

in India claimed that in spite of expanded digital access to bank accounts, a very small percentage of the population has been able to operate without withdrawing cash or visiting the bank regularly in the post reform period. They observed that domestic assistance, contract labourers, daily wage employees, farmers, fishermen, micro-entrepreneurs, and other members of India's vast informal economic sector rely solely on cash.

Roy and Das (2019) claimed that majority of respondents under their study agreed that demonetisation created a positive impact on digitisation especially in banking sector. But, a negative short term impact of demonetisation in the daily life of respondents has also been reported. The authors further observed that demonetisation created a noticeable increase in using digitisation in all sectors, which is not appreciable for the old aged person. On the contrary, the young generation could easily shift from traditional banking services towards Digital Banking System. The financial inclusion was not found to be even among the population in India.

According to Bradlow (2020), governments should always assess the impact of economic reforms on citizens. The newsletter remarked this about the reforms in South Africa and their negative impacts on society at large. South African government's implementation of economic reforms led to job losses and cuts in social services. It also affected the resources available in the country and could not generate promised benefits which led to a situation of social conflict in the society.

According to Lahiri (2014), middle-class-people in Asia and other countries of the Pacific who are beyond the poverty line but not in the category of rich are the basis of strong and functional democracy and have a potential role in the global economy as they have a great share in the consumer market. The middle class, as he defines it, is beyond the poverty line but not in the category of the rich. The experience of East Asian countries and China demonstrates when millions of people start leaving poverty and joining the middle class a transformation in society happens. This drives economic activity by propelling rapid consumption growth and a decline in disposable income. This income dictates the economic growth of the society at large.

Economic policy measures in certain ways impact the human rights of women and adequate steps to mitigate the adverse effects must be taken. The policymakers thus must develop inclusive, diverse measures to reinforce gender equality and human rights. There are few elements of economic reform initiatives that have an impact on social security, housing, food, water, and health as well

as the right to work. Additionally, international financial institutions have a responsibility in dictating macroeconomic policies through their loan programmes, oversight, and technical support that may have implications for gender equality. (“Impact of economic reform policies on women’s human rights,” 2018).

Sarkar (2022) deliberates on the digital gender divide by quoting the report of The All India Debt and Investment Survey (AIDIS) that says that almost 81% of women across India had deposit accounts in banks. While the gender gap in account ownership decreased after Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (2014), the gaps in the usage of these accounts remained high. In many cases, while women own personal accounts, they often do not access them regularly. The author attributed the large gender gaps in digital access and usage for the slow adoption of digital financial services by Indian women. With only 14% of Indian women having access to smartphones, the use of digital financial services by women is substantially affected. The author mentions that considering the regional and socio-cultural disparities, a client-centered model is essential in designing financial products for women (Sarkar, 2022). This must be guided by research on women’s interactions and associations with money, financial instruments, and technology.

Iqbal *et al.* (2020) opines that working women are financially more independent than non-working women, who are homebound and usually financially illiterate and therefore more dependent on their husbands.

Research objectives

- To perceive awareness of women regarding the recent economic reforms and subsequent changes in their daily lives.
- To assess the impact of reforms on their communication behaviour.

Research questions

- Are the women aware of the term economic reforms?
- Do they feel the ramification of economic reforms in their daily life?
- Do the females find any changes in their communication behavior post implementation of recent economic reforms?

Research methodology

The survey was conducted in 23 districts of West Bengal. With multistage random sampling, using a questionnaire consisting of a mix of close-ended

questions and open-ended questions, the researchers collected the data from 186 female residents of West Bengal. The data was obtained partly through a web-based comprehensive questionnaire and partly through the face-to-face interactions on the line of the online questionnaire. Moreover, due to the Covid pandemic period during the study, researchers collected answers through telephone recordings of the respondents residing in many districts where questions were asked by post-graduate students of Mass Communication deputed by the researchers for the purpose.

The survey questionnaire is composed of mainly closed-ended questions, covering socio-demographic, geographic, and other characteristics of the respondents. It also consists of questions to understand the awareness and the perception of the respondents about economic reforms and its impact on their socio-cultural communications. The first section comprises of 9 questions on the socio-demographic and geographic characteristics of the citizens, e.g., the district of residence, type of settlement, age, gender, and family income among others. The second section asked people about their socio-cultural life as perceived by them pre and post-implementation of demonetisation. It included 15 questions on whether they are aware of the term economic reforms, which particular economic reforms can they recall, and how major economic reforms affected their consumption, expenditure, savings, communication, and even their media usage to communicate about the felt ramifications. The data, thus collected were finally analysed using certain quantitative statistical methods such as Percentage and Frequency Analysis, Graphical Representation, Contingency Coefficient Analysis, and use of Descriptive Statistics. All these statistical analysis were carried out using the SPSS.

Results and analysis

Table 1 draws the relationship between the marital status of female respondents and understanding of the term economic reforms among the respondents. The rows of the table show the understanding of the term economic reforms and were divided into—(1) Developmental initiative, (2) Politics of votes, (3) Relief package, (4) Financial strategy to stabilise the economy, and (5) Don’t know. The columns of the table represent the marital status of female respondents which were classified into—(1) Married, (2) Unmarried, and (3) Others. As indicated in the table, 22% of married women consider reforms to be a financial strategy to stabilise the economy, and 17.7% of unmarried women consider the same. 17.2% of married females believe that economic

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of marital status of women and understanding of Economic Reforms

Economic reforms	Marital status of women			Total
	Married	Others	Unmarried	
Developmental initiative	32 17.2%	1 0.5%	24 12.9%	57 30.6%
Relief package	5 2.7%	0 0.0%	3 1.6%	8 4.3%
Financial strategy to stabilise the economy	41 22.0%	0 0.0%	33 17.7%	74 39.8%
Politics of vote	26 14.0%	0 0.0%	17 9.1%	43 23.1%
Don't know	3 1.6%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	4 2.2%

reforms are a developmental initiative, while 14% of married women think of economic reforms as politics of votes, i.e., strategies to gain more votes.

Table 2 illustrates the relationship between the marital status of women respondents and the change in buying habits of respondents post currency ban. The rows of the table present the change in purchasing behaviours of participants post economic changes and the responses were classified into—(1) Yes, (2) No, and (3) Can't say. The columns of the table represent the marital status of female respondents which were classified into—(1) Married (2) Unmarried, and (3) Others. As illustrated in the table, 28.5% of married women and 21% of unmarried women agree that post implementation of currency ban, a perceptible change in buying habits were observed. On the contrary, 20.4% of married females and 11.8% of unmarried females feel no change in their buying habits. There is also the presence of 33 female respondents (17.7%) who are not sure about the impact of the economic reform on buying habits.

Table 3 denotes the relationship between the marital status of respondents and the commencement of online transactions by the

Table 2: Cross-tabulation of the marital status of women and change in buying habits post-economic reforms

Change in buying habits post-currency ban	Marital status of women			Total
	Married	Others	Unmarried	
Yes	53 28.5%	0 0.0%	39 21.0%	92 49.5%
No	38 20.4%	1 0.5%	22 11.8%	61 32.8%
Can't Say	16 8.6%	0 0.0%	17 9.1%	33 17.7%

Table 3: Cross-tabulation of the marital status of women and commencement of cashless transactions by them

Cashless transactions	Marital status			Total
	Married	Others	Unmarried	
I don't do cashless transactions	43 23.1%	0 .0%	13 7.0%	56 30.1%
I was using it even before the demonetisation	13 7.0%	0 .0%	3 1.6%	16 8.6%
In the last 2–3 years	30 16.1%	1 .5%	52 28.0%	83 44.6%
Soon after demonetisation	18 9.7%	0 .0%	10 5.4%	28 15.1%
We know about apps, but we don't know how to use	3 1.6%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 1.6%

respondents. The rows show the start of cashless transactions by the respondents which were grouped into— (1) Before the demonetisation, (2) Soon after demonetisation, (3) In the last 2–3 years, 4. Do not opt for cashless transactions, and (5) Know the digital payment applications but do not know how to use them. As presented in the table, 44.6% of female respondents (28% unmarried and 16.1% married) state that they have started doing online transactions in the last two to three years. Meanwhile, 30% of women (23.1 % married and 7% unmarried) say that they do not use online transactions at all. Moreover, 9.7% of married women and 5.4% of unmarried women say that they started cashless transactions.

Table 4 examines the relationship between the marital status of female respondents and the use of communication media for understanding economic reforms. The rows of the table denote the preferred

Table 4: Cross-tabulation of the marital status of women and media platforms used by them to understand reforms

Media to understand reforms	Marital status of women			Total
	Married	Others	Unmarried	
Television	44 23.7%	0 0%	17 9.1%	61 32.8%
Friends, Family and coworkers	20 10.8%	0 0%	17 9.1%	37 19.9%
Internet and Social Media	23 12.4%	0 0%	32 17.2%	55 29.6%
Newspapers and Magazines	18 9.7%	1 0.5%	12 6.5%	31 16.7%
All	1 0.5%	0 0%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%
None	1 0.5%	0 0%	0 0%	1 5%

communication medium of people for understanding economic reforms and the media were categorised into—(1) Newspapers and magazines, (2) Radio, (3) Television, (4) Friends, family and coworkers, (5) Internet and social media, (6) All media platforms, and (7) None. As denoted in the table, 23.7% of married ladies and 9.1% of unmarried lady respondents used television the most to understand the reforms. While 17.2% of unmarried women and 12.4% of married women said that the internet and social media was the medium that helped them the most in understanding the economic reforms. However, 19.9% of females say that talking to friends, family and co-workers helped them the most to raise their awareness of the concepts. It was observed that no female participants used radio to understand the reforms.

Table 5 shows the relationship between the marital status of women and whether economic reforms and associated terms have become a part of their daily conversation and vocabulary in the post-reform period. 34.4% of married female respondents and 29% of unmarried female respondents agree that post implementation of reforms, currency ban and associated terms have become a part of their daily conversation and vocabulary. 21% of females say that economic policies and changes did not become a topic of their everyday conversations. Meanwhile, 9.7% of married females and 5.4% unmarried females remained unsure and could not recollect whether the implementation of reforms has impacted their interpersonal communication in any way.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of the marital status of women and whether economic reforms have become a part of their daily conversation

Talk about recent economic reforms	Marital status of women			Total
	Married	Others	Unmarried	
Yes	64 34.4%	1 0.5%	54 29.0%	119 64.0%
No	25 13.4%	0 0.0%	14 7.5%	39 21.0%
Can't Say	18 9.7%	0 0.0%	10 5.4%	28 15.1%

Discussion

Even after 5 years of continuation of economic reforms, the level of awareness among the female population is observed to be low. A higher percentage of females could recall only withdrawal of currencies from economy as a recent economic reform out of all the economic policies by the government. When asked about the nature of their daily expenses huge section of participants answered that expenditure on food and nutrition constitutes the biggest share

of their daily expenses followed by expenditure on education and training-related activities. More than half of the women confirmed that economic reforms have affected their lifestyle. Digitisation of the economy is felt to be a good outcome post reforms as most of the females have started doing cashless transactions in the last 2–3 years. The percentage of unmarried women engaged in digital payments is however observed to be higher than their married counterparts. The absence of digital payments in rural women was also recorded. Although, online shopping, probably triggered by the pandemic is the main purpose of many but an equal number of people said that they opt for cashless transactions only if cash is unavailable, so females still prefer cash transactions.

A higher percentage of women used television among different communication platforms to understand various terms and implications of economic reforms. Radio was observed to get fewer users among women who were included in the sample. Internet and social media stand out as dominant media platforms for unmarried women for accessing information about the economic reforms implemented by the government of India. For the majority of women in the post-reform period, the terminologies related to economic reforms got added to their everyday conversations. Talking about the reasons, challenges and possible implications on individuals became a topic of informal discussions among friends, family, and co-workers. As denoted by the data, although women felt changes in their communication behaviour post economic policy changes; there exists apathy among women towards expressing one’s trials and tribulations in the post-reform period. There was a consensus that the new media had played a vital role to facilitate the entire process of adaptation to changes that resulted from reform implementation. But, only a few unmarried female respondents during the survey said that they used their social media profiles to communicate about the reforms and expressed their take on the economic changes. In the survey, 27.1% of females claimed that they recognize the active role of informed citizens in the formulation or betterment of economic policies. They felt that women’s participation in this economic decision-making and development of the nation is extremely vital but somewhat they were skeptical about whether their voice would be heeded by the policymakers. 32.5% of females say that they look for economic reforms in election manifestoes before the elections which affect their voting decisions too whereas 11% of females say that they could not find economic reforms mentioned in the election manifesto of political parties before elections. In

addition to this, the majority of women feel that the economic agendas and reforms promised in the manifestoes don't seem to be achievable. 28.5% of females chose not to answer about the implications of economic reforms. 11.8% of females say that the implementation of economic reforms brought rapid growth in the economy in the post-reform period whereas 8.1% of females feel that the implementation was not done with proper planning so it did not meet expectations. So, there existed contradictory perceptions about the felt ramifications.

Conclusion

While several studies have been previously conducted to study various aspects of society, polity and economy of India, this topic is far from being exhausted as a research area. New studies can always be conducted in the field of current economic transformation to analyse their impact on social, cultural, and economic practices by the citizens of specific genders. Understanding how different processes like consumption, communication, and participation of voters are influenced by economic actors and how they shape policies is indispensable. Equally noteworthy is the power of media, especially, new media in the form of citizen journalism. Social media users' content and commentary set the agenda for various socio-economic stories and dialogue in the community. The implications of the study would relate to understanding how effective various government programmes are, how economic reforms and policies are affecting the lives of people, and how informed citizens, especially women, are using media platforms to exchange information and make appropriate decisions.

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Fact-check Outlets in India: A Study of their Influence on News Consumers and Mainstream Media

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ABSTRACT

Recent surge in fake news has triggered many independent fact-check outlets in the country. After a close observation of this phenomenon, mainstream media outlets too have developed their own fact-check editorial wings. This study aims to find out the impact of fact-check outlets on people and how they are influencing mainstream news outlets' information dissemination. This study has adopted a mixed methodology. A survey has been conducted to know the opinion of the people about fact-checking outlets. To gain the insights of newsroom filtration processes and academic significance of fact-check skills, in-depth interviews of national online news outlets' editors and academicians have been conducted. The results show that people use and trust independent fact-check outlets to gain the information about facts. Mainstream news outlets too take clue from these independent fact-check outlets about fake stories, but they rely only upon their own news filtration and fact-check mechanisms to publish the content. The editors and academicians agree that fact-check skills should be taught in detail in educational institutions to increase the media literacy of the people.

Keywords: Fake news, News consumers, Factcheck, Media literacy, News consumption

Introduction

Fake news has gained speed and many avatars in the internet age of the 21st century and it is a big concern for different societies and nations around the world. According to a research by Massachusetts Institute of Technology, ("Study: On Twitter, false news travels faster than true stories," 2018), it is found that fake news propagate more rapidly on social networking site Twitter than real news and humans, not bots, are primarily responsible for this phenomenon. To curb the propagation of fake news and make people more aware of it, some enthusiast individuals in India started debunking fake news on their social media platforms. Later, these individuals started a dedicated online platforms to debunk fake news. A study shows that India has emerged as the biggest source of Corona-related fake news, and in a bunch of six fake news, one was coming out from the country itself (Poynter.org, 2022).

To curb the menace of fake news, India has witnessed many homegrown fake news debunking outlets in recent years. Alt News, Boom Live, SM Hoax Slayer, Vishvas News and PIB Fact Check are some prominent fake news debunking platforms of the country where PIB Fact Check is a wing of

the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. These fact-check outlets are usually run by individuals or group of few people using little resources.

Mainstream news outlets too started their own fact-check section in their editorial team. Today, mainstream print, online and broadcast news outlets of the country are doing regular fact-check on their platforms to educate people on fake news (Poynter.org, 2019). Fake news is doing a great harm to the society and it has caused violence, communal hatred and mob lynching in India (The New Indian Express, 2018). In this scenario, it is necessary to look into the role and importance of fact-check outlets of the country. This study explores how fact-check outlets are educating people about fake news and how people are consuming its content. This study also tries to find out what role independent fact-check outlets are playing in the selection of stories to be debunked on the mainstream news outlets' platform? Does the editorial team of mainstream news outlets take help from independent fact-check outlet's platforms to know about important debunked stories or do they pick their own story from their different sources to get fact-checked? So far, no study in the country has

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been done to understand the influence of independent fact-check outlets on people consuming its content and the editorial judgement of mainstream fact-check outlets in selecting fake news to be debunked on its platform. Also, learning fact-check skill is a big necessity in the current scenario of fake news bombardment in the society. This study aims to find out the ways and possibilities of imparting fact-check skills in the educational institutions of the country, especially in the media educational institutions.

Review of literature

Fake news consumption is now part of our day-to-day life. People consume it knowingly or unknowingly from different media platforms. To counter fake news, fact-checking started in the society by some enthusiasts. Graves (2019) tracks fact-checking mechanisms in American journalism long back from the 1920s and 1930s to maintain objectivity in their profession. He mentions that external fact-checking outlets appeared in America in the early 2000, who used to do the evidence-based verification of information. Graves (2019) explains, “Fact-checking can be effective in experimental settings, though the influence of corrections is limited by the familiar mechanisms of motivated reasoning”. A review of several researches on fact-checking literature by Nieminen and Rapeli (2018) states that major studies in this area have described fact-checking as a profession or ways to correct its methods. A report by Stencel and Luther (2020) for Duke Reporter’s Lab has revealed that the number of active fact checkers has topped 300 in the world. But, will it decrease fake news in the society? Ordway (2021) describes fake news as a phenomenon which is not going away soon.

Combating fake news and user behaviour

Ordway (2021) says that people make money and influence public perception through fake news, so it is going to stay in society. Clayton *et al.* (2019) evaluate the strategies adopted by Facebook and other social media platforms to combat fake news. It shows that when users see headlines with tags of ‘disputed’ or ‘rated false’, they perceive them as less accurate. Another study by Shin (2017) used Twitter datasets of 2012 United States Presidential Elections and found that a user selectively shares fact-checked messages which were in favour of their favourite candidate and harm their political opponents. Shin (2017) found that there was a partnership pattern in the sharing of the messages.

Influence of fact-checking on news consumers

Chan *et al.* (2017, p. 1543) conducted a research to

know the impact of fake news debunking on people. They concluded that the persistence of fake news impact was strong enough in people’s minds than the effect of debunking fake news. Nyhan and Reifler (2015) have revealed that in spite of discrediting fake news, it can have lasting influence on people’s minds. They came to the conclusion that this persistence is due to the casual inferences, which people make after consuming fake news or available information.

Walter *et al.* (2019) write that the impact of fact-checking outlets depends on various factors and gives contradictory results in their effort to counter misinformation. Graphical contents in the fact-checking messages, which are also called ‘truth scales’, are less effective compared to messages, which don’t have graphical elements. In addition, fact-checking messages were more impactful, when they addressed the entire statement, not only some parts of it.

Can fact-check influence political decisions of people? Wintersieck (2017) concludes, “I find that evaluations of the candidate’s debate performance and evaluations of the debate winner are improved by the presence of a fact-check that confirms the accuracy of a candidates’ statement and lowered by fact-checks that state that a candidate is being dishonest”(p. 310).

Gottfried *et al.* (2013) draw the conclusion that if political fact-check prevails for a longer period, then it can have an impact on voter’s perception of candidate’s stand on issues and their background information.

Nieminen and Rapeli (2018) explain that effects of fact-check measures are mixed on people. They say, “Research about the effectiveness of fact-checking offers mixed results: some find that fact-checking reduces misperceptions, others that corrections are often ineffective” (p. 297).

Perception about fact-check outlets and fact-checkers

Though the number of fact-checking outlets has increased significantly, very little is known about its perception in the minds of the general public and journalists. Brandtzaeg, Følstad, and Chaparro-Domínguez (2017) found that young journalists were either unfamiliar or ambivalent about fact-checking outlets. However, they perceive these outlets useful in their journalistic quest, but they are not ready to fully trust them.

There are apprehensions about the fact-checkers also. Uscinski and Butler (2013) say that political fact-checking involves some objectionable methodological practice. Uscinski and Butler (2013)

explains, “The examples of dubious fact-checking practices that we discuss show the untenability of the naive political epistemology at work in the fact-checking branch of journalism”.

Influence of fact-check on mainstream news outlets

Graves (2013) has pointed out that in the United States of America, a new class of political fact-checkers had emerged who wanted to reform the US news media and this fact-checking phenomenon had become a necessary feature for political news coverage. This study also discusses the role of fact-checkers in the news ecosystem at large.

Use of technology in combating fake news

Fact-checking has many aspects, and artificial intelligence as well as machine learning are the future of machine-aided fact-checking. A study by Hassan *et al.* (2015) prepared an automated tool, which can extract and arrange sentences in a way that can be helpful to identify important facts. So, the question is how far can computers and algorithms help in detecting fake news? Thorne (2018) concludes that fact-checking by humans or journalists is a complex process and, in present time, it's beyond the abilities of our computers. He suggests that research in natural language processing is the key to success of automated fact-checking.

These studies show that there is little research on the influence, credibility and perception of fact-check outlets and fact-checkers abroad, but there has been no such study in India about home-grown fact-check outlets. This study tries to understand the influence and credibility of Indian fact-check outlets. The study also explores the perception about fact-check outlets among people and journalists in the country.

Research objective

The objective of this study is to find out what role fact-check outlets are playing in the society by exposing fake news, how people are consuming their content, how they are sharing debunked stories, and how independent fact-check outlets are influencing editorial filtration and fact-check mechanisms of mainstream news outlets. The study also explores the need of imparting fact-check skills in educational institutions of the country.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study revolves around Uses and Gratification Theory. This theory states that people use and select particular media intelligently to satisfy their different needs. The main thrust of this theory is that its audience, who use media

to fulfil their requirements, rather than media, who influence its audience as described in magic bullet theory. Uses and gratification theory emphasises that the audience is not passive, but very active.

Hypothesis

Based on the objective of this study, the prime hypothesis is that fact-check outlets are playing a positive role in society by debunking fake stories and educating people on fake news. Mainstream news outlets acknowledge the presence of fact-check outlets but they are not influenced by debunked stories of fact-check outlets as they have their own editorial judgement in the newsroom for selecting stories to be debunked.

Research questions

The following research questions have been designed to meet the objective of the study.

RQ1: Do people know about fake news and which fact-check outlet they visit the most to know about debunked stories?

RQ2: Which category of fake news they see the most on fact-check outlets' platform and which category of fake news they want to be debunked?

RQ3: Do people think that fact-check outlets are credible and unbiased?

RQ4: When people see debunked stories on fact-check outlet's platform, do they stop sharing it?

RQ5: Why do people share fake stories, even after knowing that it has been debunked?

RQ6: How people access fact-check outlet's platform and have they subscribed to social media page/handle of fact-check outlets?

RQ7: If fake stories get debunked on fact-checking outlets, do people see them being covered in mainstream news outlets too?

RQ8: Do independent fact-check outlets influence the editorial filtration process of mainstream news outlets in selecting fake stories for debunking?

RQ9: Which fact-check outlet do people see as more credible?

RQ10: Does India need fact-check skill training in the educational institutions of the country?

Research methodology

The methodology of this research accommodates a quantitative as well as a qualitative approach. The study uses a survey method to explore the influence, credibility and perception of fact-check outlets on people and collect primary data. For the survey, Delhi's four different markets were selected and a detailed questionnaire was distributed as a tool to collect the data.

To understand the role and influence of fact-

check outlets on mainstream news outlets' fact-check processes, in-depth interviews of three online mainstream news outlets' editors were conducted.

This study has selected Delhi, the capital of India, to conduct the survey. The selection of Delhi is based on the premise that it represents a 'mini India' as people from all walks of life come here from different states of the country to earn employment and a better livelihood. Referring to a report in Outlook magazine, 2022, the census report of 2011 says that 6.33 million migrants live in Delhi and total population of Delhi according to the same census report is 16.8 million. So, nearly 38% population of Delhi consists of people who have come here from different states of India. This study has chosen four prominent markets of Delhi for questionnaire distribution as people from different backgrounds and demographics visit these markets for shopping and to fulfil their other needs. This gives a diverse population's opinion on this study. These four markets are Sarojini Nagar Market, Lajpat Nagar Market, Karol Bagh Market and Chandni Chowk Market, which are located at different locations of Delhi.

Sample size

This study has chosen 120 people for the survey in four different markets of Delhi. From each market, a sample of 40 people was selected randomly. As per the 2011 census, Delhi has a population of 16.8 million people and this study incorporated 120 people for the random survey, which is 0.000714% of the total population of Delhi.

Findings and discussion

All the (100%) respondents said that they use the internet daily. India has seen a rapid growth in the number of internet users recently and it has reached 70 million users in the year 2020 from 30 million users in the year 2015 (Statista, 2020). 23% respondents revealed that they use the internet 1–2 hours daily. 64% respondents said that they use it for 2–4 hours daily and 8% use it 4–6 hours daily. Only 5% of the respondents use the internet for more than 6 hours daily.

Results show that the majority of the people, 52%, use the internet to gratify their entertainment needs. A good chunk of 32% uses it to get news. Also, 5% people use the internet to access religious stuff and only 9% use it for sports stories. 62% respondents get their daily news from different platforms of social media. The results indicate that Covid-19 pandemic has given a big blow to newspapers and only 5% people read it for their daily news consumption.

The study shows that people are moving towards the online version of mainstream news outlets as

14% use it to access news. Radio has a very small percentage as only 4% use it for news; however, television is counting and 16% people view it for news.

Also, social media giant Facebook is way ahead from other social media platforms as 35% respondents use it to gratify their news consumption needs. Similarly, 16% respondents chose Instagram and 16% went for YouTube and they are the second most popular platforms to access news. Twitter is on third position with the choice of 14% respondents. LinkedIn and other platforms both got 3% share individually.

People have a good degree of awareness about fake news as 63% respondents claim that they are familiar with the word 'Fake News'. Another 21% say that they know about fake news but not in detail. Only 12% respondents are not aware about fake news. 4% respondents choose to go for the 'can't say' option. The survey reveals that 59% respondents know about fact-checking outlets in the country. It answers our RQ1 in the study. However, 23% are those who know about fact-checking outlets but don't have detailed knowledge about them.

The respondents were asked about the credibility of fact-check outlets. 34% respondents say that they prefer Alt News to know about debunking stories. Boom Live comes in second with 18%, SM Hoax Slayer occupies third position with 16% and Vishwas News, News Mobile as well as Factly get 3% share each. OpIndia Fact Check gets 5% share and ABP News' Viral Sach gets 3% share.

Language is an important part of mass communication and previous studies show that if a student is exposed to another language, other than his mother tongue, symptoms of anxiety, fear and depression erupt. Results show that 57% respondents want Hindi as their preferred language to read debunked stories. 27% respondents share English as their preferred language and 12% prefer other languages, in which they are comfortable. Only 4% respondents are unsure about their preference.

The study reveals that 54% people want to see political news being debunked on fact-checking outlets. Further, 33% say that they read communal stories being debunked. 5% see entertainment stories, 4% see stories related to economics and finance, and stories on sports as well as others occupy a share of 2% each. This answers research question two (RQ2) of the study.

This study shows that a large number of respondents (46%) want fake news having a communal angle to be debunked primarily. Second largest share got fake news having a political angle and 41% people want these types of stories to be

debunked by fact-checking outlets. Further, 2% people want fake entertainment stories, 2% fake sports stories and 5% desire finance-related stories to be debunked. 4% people opt for stories having other inclinations. This answers research question (RQ2) two of the study.

Credibility matters, especially when you are in the field of mass communication and fake news is scattered everywhere. So, the credibility of fact-checking outlets and the attitudes of people towards them are of high importance. In this study, Likert scale is used to measure people's perception and attitude about credibility of fact-checking outlets. The study asked the respondents whether fact-check outlets are credible? The majority of the respondents, 59%, say that they 'agree' with it. Another 17% say they 'strongly agree' with it. 8% respondents are undecided and 12% say that they 'disagree' with it. Only 4% say that they 'strongly disagree'. It answers RQ3 of the study.

Nyhan and Reifler (2015) found that debunking a fake news may have a lasting influence in people's mind. This study asked respondents that after seeing a debunked story, do they correct themselves and make distance from that story? Our 26% respondents say 'no', which means there is a sizeable number of people who think that simply debunking a fake story is not enough for them to correct themselves. However, the majority of the respondents, 43%, say that they correct themselves after seeing the debunked story.

A study by Shin (2017) indicates that people tend to share only those debunked stories selectively, which suits them or their beliefs and which can harm political opponents of their favourite candidate. Results of this study are somewhere near to the study of Shin (2017). This study's results reveal that 35% respondents say that sometimes they share a debunked fake story too. However, the majority of respondents, 47%, say that they won't share any fake story on social media, which is debunked. It answers research question four (RQ4) of the study.

One more important observation of the study is that people have apprehensions about the fact-checking outlet too, as 11% respondents say that they have reservations about fact-checking outlets, so they share fake stories even after knowing that they have been debunked. It answers research question five (RQ5) of the study.

The study finds that fact-checking outlets that get the maximum share of visitors enjoy credibility too. The results show that respondents of this study see Alt News as the most credible fact-checking outlet with 36% of them going for it. Boom Live is at second position with 19% respondents opting for it. Similarly, SM Hoax Slayer gets 15%, OpIndia 4%

and Vishwas News 1% respondent's choice. This answers RQ9 of this study.

The results show that people do not go for mainstream media outlets' fact-checking section with enthusiasm, as Times of India's Times Fact Check is a choice of only 5% respondents. Similarly, India Today's Fact Check and ABP Virach Sach, each gets 4% respondent's nod. This study states that a good amount of people, 48%, share debunked fake stories on their social media platforms occasionally. Only 23% respondents say that they always share such stories. However, 27% respondents are not interested in sharing such stories on their social media platform.

This study tries to find out the pattern, whether fake news debunked by fact-checking outlets are carried in other news outlets or not? Results show that such debunked fake stories find their place in other media outlets too, as 54% respondents say that such debunked stories are seen on television media too. Another 27% respondents observed that they see such stories on the online platform of mainstream media outlets. Only 4% respondents see such debunked stories in print media and 13% respondents deny that such debunked stories are not covered anywhere else. This answers RQ7 of this study.

This study tries to find out the respondent's awareness level regarding ownership and revenue generation of fact-check outlets. Results show that none of them know about it in detail. Only 3% say that they know about it, but not in detail. The largest share of respondents, 91% say that they do not know about it and 6% say that they are not interested in knowing about it.

Results show that 53% respondents access fact-check outlets through their web address or application while 46% respondents access these outlets via social media platforms. This is the answer of study's research question six (RQ6).

A study by Uscinski and Butler (2013) reveals that making friends is an essential part of social media and it greatly impacts how people engage with news there. In this context, this study asked the respondents on which social media platform, they saw more debunked stories. Results show that Facebook is ahead of all social media platforms in this regard and 30% respondents see more debunked stories there. WhatsApp comes in second and 21% people get more debunked stories in their feed. YouTube with 18% and Twitter with 17% respondent's choice comes third and fourth, respectively, and they are very close to each other in terms of showing debunked stories to our respondents. Similarly, 9% respondents chose Instagram, 3% LinkedIn and 2% other platforms.

61% respondents say that they do not have

subscribed, liked or followed fact-check outlets' social media accounts. Only 16% respondents have done it. This is the answer of study's research question six (RQ6).

A study by Nieminen and Rapeli (2018) states that fact-checked stories cause mixed effects on people. They may or may not believe in that. So, this study also tries to see the personal cognitive influence of people on fact-check stories. Results show that if a debunked story contradicts the personal belief, bias or political inclination of an individual, they occasionally believe in it as per the reply of 47% respondents. Only 13% say that they believe in fact-checked story. 23% respondents don't believe in fact-check stories, which go against their personal bias.

This study also asked respondents whether their family members or friends visit fact-checking outlets or not? In response, 68% respondents say that they are not sure about it. Only 12% say their near and dear ones always visit fact-checking outlets and 14% disclose that they often go there. Also, majority of respondents (58%) say that fact-check outlets have made it easier for them to distinguish between fake and authentic stories.

Mainstream news outlets and fact-check

The study conducted in-depth interviews with the Editors of the mainstream online news outlets. Some mainstream news outlets have started their own fact-checking section on their online news platforms, and have formed a dedicated team for fact-checking. Also, young journalists are not very acquainted with the fact-checking outlets and they have mixed feeling towards them (Brandtzaeg *et al*, 2017), so it is necessary to understand the perception of mainstream online news outlets about the task and job of independent fact-checking outlets.

Independent outlets are important

Afsar Ahmad, Senior Editor, Input, from News 18 Hindi, says that people are more aware about fake news in contemporary times. At an individual level, they go to the fact-checking outlets to find authentic information. As a journalist, we keep an eye on many news sources and platforms to get updated and fact-checking outlets are one of them. If any story or video clip is viral, then we do independent fact-check also. In fact, every newsroom has this structure from the beginning (Ahmad, 2021).

The Editor of Navbharat Times Online, Alok Kumar, agrees that fact-checking outlets are playing an important role in the era of fake news dissemination. He says, "Yes, we do take corrective measures, when we find that fact-checking outlets in India and abroad have debunked a story, we do

our own fact-check on that story and correct it. It helps us," (Kumar, 2021). Mainstream online news outlets generally keep an eye on the debunked stories as Editor of Jansatta online mainstream news outlet, Vijay Kumar Jha says, "I generally don't go to any fact-checking outlet's platform but I get fact-checked stories from them on my social media feed," (Jha, 2021). Elaborating independent fact-checking outlets' important role in the society, Ahmad says, "When I find some story which I think should be told to others too, I do share it from fact-checking platforms. We are living in an information revolution age where every second there is bombardment of thousands of new information. In this scenario, fact-checking is like a detector, which we can use to get right information in case of suspicion," (Ahmad, 2021).

This supports our hypothesis that mainstream news outlets acknowledge the presence and importance of fact-check outlets.

Independent outlets and agenda setting

The mainstream news outlets acknowledge the importance of independent fact-checking outlets but they are apprehensive about the editorial judgment of independent fact-checkers. Kumar says, "I have a mixed opinion about fact-checking outlets whether it's Alt News or Vishwas News of Dainik Jagran group. I think the main problem is that fact-checking outlets seem to be politically or ideologically aligned themselves. On Alt News, you will rarely find fact-checks of left aligned or stories related to opposition of the country. Same is the case with Vishwas News, where selection of fact-checking stories is done as per their mother organisation. The independent fact-checking outlets seem to be biased themselves" (Kumar, 2021). Ahmad opines, "I am not the right person to comment whether independent fact-checking outlets are doing their job honestly, but today agendas are pushed from social media and different channels of online media too" (Ahmad, 2021).

Kumar says that recently social media giants like Facebook have started fact-checking themselves and have tied-up with partners. So, whenever they find that any mainstream news outlet has published a fake story, they will punish that outlet and decrease their reach. The main problem lies here because if fact-checking partners of Facebook are biased or politically inclined, then objectivity is a big issue. For example, Facebook fact-checking partner, Vishwas News is a subsidiary of Dainik Jagran group, so I don't think that Vishwas News will ever fact-check fake news published by Jagran group (Kumar, 2021).

Influence on mainstream outlets

Do mainstream news outlets depend on the independent fact-checking outlets for the clue or idea of debunking fake stories? Ahmad says, “We have our own independent fact-checking mechanism, so we do not get influenced by any other fact-checking outlet. We have to be very careful in our own fact-checking process, so we need highly skilled journalists in this emerging field” (Ahmad, 2021). Kumar too insists that mainstream news outlets do not follow any fact-checking outlets. They have their own fact-checking mechanism (Kumar, 2021).

Jha emphasises that they have stringent measures in their newsroom for fact-checking. He says, “Fact-checking outlets have a narrow story selection criteria whereas being a full-fledged news outlet, our story selection criteria is very vast. So, we don’t need any story idea from fact-checking outlets. We essentially debunk a story, which is fake. We decide to debunk it as per our editorial judgement” (Jha, 2021).

From these answers, it is clear that mainstream news outlets are not influenced in selection of stories to be debunked by fact-check outlets’ debunked stories. It shows that the hypothesis of the study is right and it answers our research question (RQ8).

Challenges of independent outlets

Editorial leads in the mainstream news outlets cite lack of resources with the independent fact-checking outlets to verify the ground realities of fake content. Jha says, “fact-checking outlets are generally doing their fact-checks only with the help of online fact-checking tools. But, the stories, which are on ground and where a lot of suspicion is there, are not coming on fact-checking platforms. For example, if on the ground level, a rumour spreads that COVID-19 vaccine causes the side effects, the debunking of this information won’t be available on these fact-checking outlets unless some user or organisation writes about it and it goes viral. So, for independent fact-checking outlets, picking fake claims of stories from the ground is very important. Unfortunately, fact-checking outlets are lacking on this front (Jha, 2021).

Kumar says that fact-checking outlets don’t have their own resources to pick fake news stories or videos. Also, there is one more problem with these fact-checking outlets. Suppose an official releases a statement today and a mainstream news outlet publishes that story, after two or three days, it is realised that the official had given wrong data, so the mainstream outlet again publishes a correction on that story because data was given to us by government officials. But, due to lack of editorial experience and judgement, some fact-checking outlets publish

that old story of mainstream news outlets, which was based on statements of government officials. They have to understand that on a particular day, all mainstream news outlets had published a story citing government officials and later they corrected it too, when actual data was revealed (Kumar, 2021).

Training of fact-checking

The news industry editors agree that there should be training in fact-checking at school and university level. Ahmad says that academia should also give proper consideration to this and fact-checking should be made an essential component of mass communication curriculum at an early stage (Ahmad, 2021). Jha insists on the training of journalists too. He says, “Fact-checking is a specialised skill and every journalist should be aware of the basics of these skills. We need an infrastructure, where trainee journalists can learn and hone these skills. Mass communication universities and institutions of the country can take a lead in this regard and fact-checking skills should be made a separate paper in their syllabus (Jha, 2021). This answers the research question ten (RQ10) of this study.

Future of fact-checking

Industry experts say that instead of some limitations the future of fact-checking is bright. Ahmad says that fact-checking outlets will grow and take shape of a more organised structure in the near future (Ahmad, 2021). The speed with which fake news is increasing in the society, fact-checking news outlets are going to stay here for long (Jha, 2021). However, Kumar (2021) thinks that unless independent fact-checking outlets build a robust revenue model, their future would not be so bright. They have to find a way to generate revenue as well to sustain in the market.

Conclusion

Results of the survey show that independent fact-checking outlets are playing an important role in society. People use these outlets to know the authenticity of any fake news or viral story. They use fact-checking outlets to gratify their needs. For this, they prefer to use independent and dedicated fact-checking outlets instead of the fact-checking features of mainstream news outlets. People are primarily concerned about those fake stories, which disturb the social harmony of the society. They want such stories to be debunked on priority basis. Large number of fake news are disseminated with malafide political intention and to counter political opponents but only selected ones get their place on independent fact-checking outlets. People also observe that fake

communal stories are debunked in large numbers which is a matter of great concern.

Most of the people believe in the credibility of independent fact-checking outlets but a sizeable amount of people want solid facts and a rational method for a fake story to be debunked. The study shows that people share fake stories on their social media platform intentionally, even after knowing that it has been debunked and classified as fake. Majority of the respondents, 32%, say that they share fake stories on social media when it is related to their ideological opponents. This is very significant for fact-checking outlets as they have to adopt stringent fact-checking measures and provide a variety of facts to establish a story as fake and win the trust of the readers.

Results show that people don't subscribe to social media handles or pages of fact-checking outlets as they get fact-checked debunked stories from sharing tools or by virtue of viral stories, where social media algorithms play a big role in showing news feeds or posts. Also, independent fact-checking outlets help mainstream news outlets to track an important debunked story. However, mainstream news outlets choose only that story to be debunked and published, which suits their editorial policy after their internal fact-check mechanism. Independent fact-checking outlets are important for society and people acknowledge their contribution.

Our discussion with the editors of online mainstream news outlets indicates that independent fact-checking outlets help journalists to track the new fact-checked stories. But, the credibility and unbiased approach of independent fact-checking outlets is a big challenge. They don't trust and rely on independent fact-checking outlets and follow their own procedures of fact-checking. They also do fact-checking from the ground as they have resources but independent fact-checking outlets heavily rely on online tools and social media or individual leads to identify a fake story. Future of independent fact-checking outlets is bright and they will grow but they also have to find ways to make some revenue models to survive in the long run.

Mainstream news outlets and independent fact-checking outlets both need trained journalists, who have the expertise to debunk fake news. So fact-checking skills should be taught compulsorily in the mass communication universities and institutions of the country and it should be part of their course curriculum.

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Appendix-1

- Interview with Alok Kumar, Editor, Navbharat Times Online
- Interview with Afsar Ahmad, Senior Editor, Input, News 18 Hindi
- Interview with Vijay Kumar Jha, Editor, Jansatta Online



Airmen Recruitment in the IAF: Effective Communication to make Selection Inclusive for Tamil Nadu Youth

R. KANNAN¹ & R. RAMA PRABHA²

ABSTRACT

The Indian Air Force (IAF) primarily consists of two cadres: officers and airmen. As the strength of the airmen is considerably large, so are the job opportunities for the youth. IAF has set up an extensive recruitment process to attract youth. Recruitment happens in two modes—schedule testing and recruitment rally. The IAF releases advertisements for schedule testing throughout India via various communication channels, and interested candidates who meet the criteria apply for the same. A quantitative study was carried out to determine whether knowledge of Hindi has any impact on youth opting for a career in the IAF as an airman. A questionnaire was developed, and a pilot study was carried out with 100 candidates who participated in the recruitment rally held at Tirunelveli on December 8, 2018, exclusively for the youth of Tamil Nadu. Age, educational qualification, board of education, medium of instruction, and religion were considered independent variables. The knowledge to communicate in Hindi, and Hindi as a requirement to join the IAF were included as dependent variables. The paper seeks to study the awareness of youth in Tamil Nadu about the recruitment process of the IAF.

Keywords: Advertisement, Airmen, Hindi, Indian Air Force, Publicity campaigns, Recruitment, Tamil Nadu

Introduction

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is the air division of the Indian military forces and was officially established on October 8th, 1932, with the motto “Touch the Sky with Glory”. The IAF is ranked fourth among the air forces of the world and provides numerous job opportunities for the youth of the country. The IAF primarily consists of two cadres: officer and airmen. As the strength of the airmen is considerably large, so are the job opportunities for the youth. In order to attract the youths to join, IAF has got an extensive setup to handle the process of recruitment. It has a Central Airmen Selection Board (CASB) in New Delhi, which controls as many as 14 airmen selection centres spread across the country for undertaking the recruitment to the IAF. The recruitment is carried out in two modes: schedule testing and recruitment rally. An all-India advertisement is taken out for the conduct of the scheduled testing and desirous candidates fulfilling the criteria apply for the same. An online

exam at designated centres is conducted for such candidates. The qualifying candidates are further subjected to certain other physical and medical tests at the selection centres. In the case of the recruitment rally, the selection is primarily focused on recruiting candidates from a particular state. This is done to maintain heterogeneity in the armed forces as well as to afford employment opportunities to the youth of a particular region/state. Currently, recruitment as an airman in the IAF is limited to male candidates only. An eligible candidate belonging to the particular state can appear at the recruitment rally. He needs to report to the recruitment rally venue along with the requisite documents. Subsequent to verification, he is to undergo a physical fitness test followed by an hour-long written test. The qualifying candidates are further subjected to additional tests like group discussions and are finally cleared to undergo a medical examination. The results are declared on the same day. Once the candidate clears the examination,

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a merit list is prepared, and the selected candidate is enrolled and sent to the training centre for 'ab-initio' training. The paper seeks to study the awareness of youth in Tamil Nadu with regard to the recruitment process of the IAF. This assumes significance in the context that despite Tamil Nadu being the eleventh largest state in India by area and the sixth most populous state, only a limited number of people from the state seem to be opting to join the IAF as airmen.

Review of literature

Park *et. al.*, (2016) investigated message strategies used in US military commercials as there is little known about military advertising in spite of millions being spent. The authors conducted a content analysis of US Army advertising because the Army accounts for more than half of the military's annual advertising budgets (DOD, 2014). Furthermore, most of the Army's advertising budget is allocated to TV advertising, making TV advertising an appropriate form to evaluate. The sample consists of commercials whose original airdates ranged from 2001 to 2014.

Park and Avery (2016) investigated the influence of patriotism and celebrity endorsement on advertising effectiveness in building a positive attitude towards the military. The paper is designed to use the theoretical lens of employer branding in the military context to examine the effects of patriotism and celebrity endorsement on military advertising effectiveness. The paper selected patriotism as the core value that the military should promote as both studies and polls support the close relationship between the military and patriotism (Bowman & Rugg, 2011; Morales, 2008). As a marketing tool, celebrity endorsement was selected as another variable for examination because marketers consider celebrity endorsements an important factor to consider (Dekker & Reijmersdal, 2013). In sum, this research experimentally manipulates celebrity endorsement (congruence between a celebrity and a product) to reveal its influence on advertising effectiveness in the military context. To examine the effects of celebrity endorsements, two versions of military advertisements are used to analyse audiences' attitudes towards military advertising, and behavioural intentions are measured following exposure to the advertisements. The influence of patriotism, the core value of the military (Bowman & Rugg, 2011), on advertising effectiveness is also examined.

Merrill (2012) explores the effects of increased US military enlistment commercials on youth, the success or failure of certain taglines, advertising budgets, etc. Specific questions were asked in the survey to measure and quantify attitudes about war,

military propensity, political efficacy, and cynicism level. This research only analysed advertisements made for television and paid for by their respective US military branch, which included the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force. It exhaustively covered these US military branches and considered them all as one unit, in an effort to determine the effects of increased exposure to enlistment and advertisements on current attitudes about war and other related factors. The advertisements selected as the visual stimuli for this experiment covered the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Air Force.

Stoker and Mehay (2011) focused on recruiting, marketing, and advertising strategies, trends in each nation's recruiting environment, recruiting organisation, and strategy development process. The goal of this study was to assess the recruiting, marketing, and advertising strategies that have been adopted in nations with all-volunteer forces (AVF), namely, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the US. The study surveys an array of recruitment tools in each nation and concentrates on marketing and advertising efforts. The study seeks to address the following questions: Which recruiting market trends pose the greatest challenges to Navy recruiting? How should the Navy be branded to promote recruiting? How can the awareness of the Navy be increased? What is the impact of joint-service marketing on Navy recruiting? What marketing programs are the most cost-effective? What is the role of marketing in long-term recruiting strategies for the AVF, namely, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the US.

Kumar and Subramanian (2016) focused on identifying the major predictors of youth's intentions to join the Defence to facilitate screening the right type of youth. The objective of this study was to examine the extent to which attitudes, subjective norms, and self-efficacy predict adolescents' military career intentions. For the present study, 190 male adolescent students who are studying higher secondary education in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, were chosen. Participants were given a series of self-administered questionnaires that provided a scale or provided data on attitude towards the military, subjective norms, self-efficacy and intention to join the military.

Singh (2017) organised predictors into demographic categories of individual characteristics, routine and behaviour, and socio-economic and cultural aspects to measure their impact on the intention to enlist in 'soldiers' recruitment in South Asia. The study was designed to investigate the effects of the demographics' personal choices and actions, and social environment of the stakeholders on the intent of the sons and fathers in allowing their

sons to enlist in Gujarat. The sample was planned purposely from eight selected districts, representing four from the North, three from the Central, and one from the South Gujarat comprising 200 school-going boys and 200 fathers from rural areas.

Singh (2004), carried out his study with the following objectives in mind—(a) To identify motivational factors enchanting youngsters while opting for a career, (b) To determine the career preferences of modern-day youth and to know the place the Defence Services enjoy in the order of preference vis-à-vis other professions, and (c) To find out the degree of involvement of various individuals influencing the choice of the youth for a career. The study used a questionnaire-based survey amongst students and defence respondents. The population for the present research study comprised 225 students (75 students each from class XII, undergraduate and post-graduate students). In addition, 150 armed forces personnel from three branches, namely, Army, Navy and Air Force, were included in the sample. From amongst students, 75 class XII students, from both rural and urban areas, were covered in the study. The study found prolonged separation from families, insurgency duties, professional hazards, mismatched pay and allowances as compared to risks, and lucrative avenues in the private sector, as deterrents to joining the Armed Forces.

The researcher reviewed the above literature available from the open source and dwelled on the approach and methodology used in the said studies. These studies were conducted both in the Indian context as well as in other foreign countries. The researcher's previous studies helped him direct and focus his current study on studying the awareness of youths towards recruitment in the IAF.

Research objectives

To understand the level of awareness amongst the youth of Tamil Nadu with regard to the recruitment in the IAF and to examine whether the knowledge of Hindi has any bearing on the youths opting for a career in the IAF as an airman.

Research questions

1. Does age influence the perception that Hindi is necessary to join the IAF?
2. Does educational qualification influence the perception that Hindi is necessary to join the IAF?
3. Does the medium of instruction influence the perception that Hindi is necessary to join the IAF?
4. Does religion influence the perception that Hindi is necessary to join the IAF?
5. Does the board of education influence the perception that Hindi is necessary to join the IAF?

6. Does age have an effect on the knowledge to communicate in Hindi?
7. Does educational qualification have an effect on the knowledge to communicate in Hindi?
8. Does the board of education have an effect on the knowledge to communicate in Hindi?
9. Does the medium of instruction have an effect on the knowledge to communicate in Hindi?
10. Does religion have an effect on the knowledge to communicate in Hindi?

Methodology

A questionnaire was developed and a pilot study was carried out by administering the questionnaire to 100 candidates who had come to participate in the recruitment rally held at Tirunelveli on 8th December, 2018, exclusively for the youths belonging to Tamil Nadu. A quantitative study was carried out by the researcher through random sampling method.

Findings

The independent variables used in the present study are—age, educational qualification, board of education, medium of instruction, and religion. The dependent variables are— ‘knowledge to communicate in Hindi’, and ‘Hindi necessary to join the IAF’.

The demographic details of the respondents are as follows:

In Figure 1, amongst 100 respondents, 9% of the respondents were in the age group of 17 years, 43% of the respondents were in the age group of 18 years, 39% were aged 19 years, 8% of the respondents in the age group of 20 years and 1% were aged 21 years.

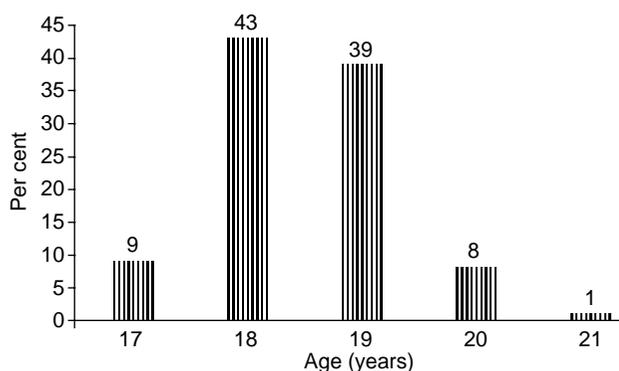


Fig. 1: Age group of respondents

In Figure 2, amongst 100 respondents, 80% of the respondents were from XII standard, 5% of the respondents were from diploma courses, 4% of the respondents were from graduate courses and 11% of the respondents gave no response.

From 100 respondents in Figure 3, 86% respondents were Hindus, 11% were Christians, 1% were Muslims, and 11% of the respondents did not specify their religion.

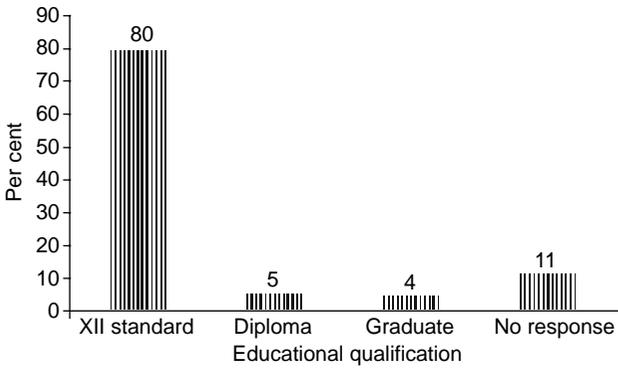


Fig. 2: Educational qualification

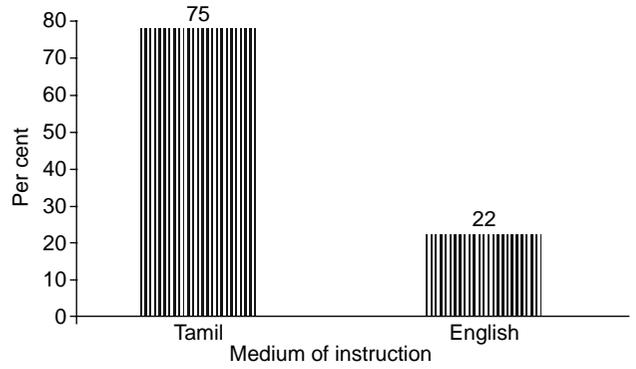


Fig. 5: Medium of instruction

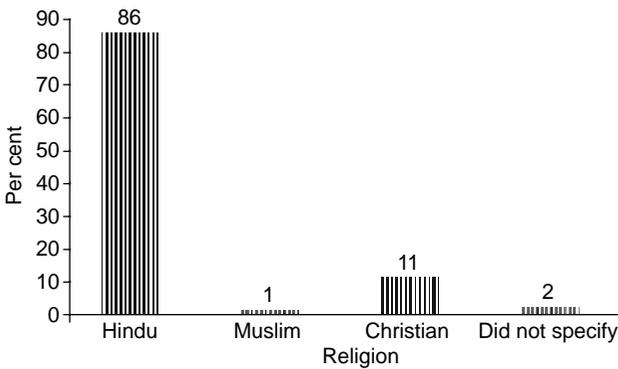


Fig. 3: Religion

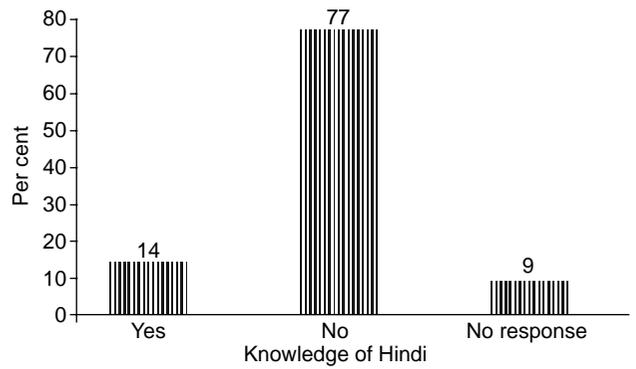


Fig. 6: Knowledge of Hindi

In Figure 4, among 100 respondents, 92% of the respondents were from the State Board, 1% of the respondents were from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Board, 1% of the respondents were from the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) Board and 6% of respondents gave no response.

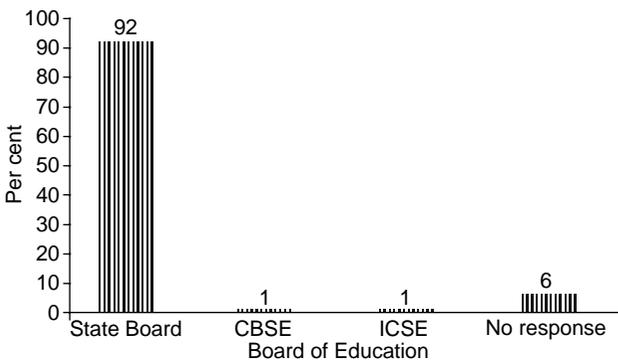


Fig. 4: Board of education

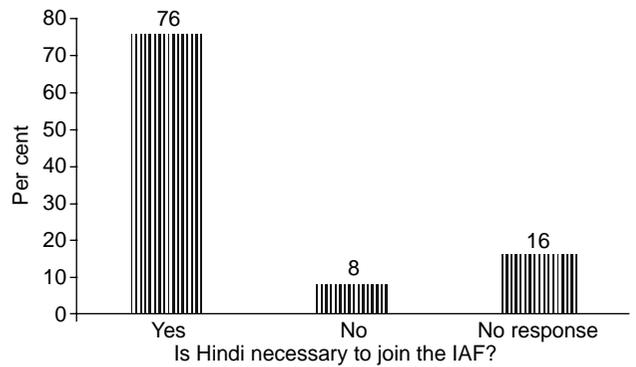


Fig. 7: Is Hindi necessary to join the Indian Air Force?

of Hindi is not necessary to join IAF and 16% of the respondents gave no response.

In Figure 8, among 100 respondents, 57% of the respondents were spending less than an hour on the internet, 30% of the respondents were spending between 1–3 hours on the internet, while only 5% of the respondents were spending beyond 3 hours on the internet and 8% of the respondents gave no response.

In Figure 5, among 100 respondents, 76% of the respondents were from Tamil medium and 22% of the respondents were from English medium.

In Figure 6, among 100 respondents, 14% of the respondents knew Hindi, 77% of the respondents didn't know Hindi and 9% of respondents gave no response.

In Figure 7, among 100 respondents, 76% of the respondents felt that knowledge of Hindi is necessary to join IAF, 8% of the respondents felt that knowledge

In Figure 9, among 100 respondents, 2% of respondents in the age group of 17 years knew Hindi, 5% of the respondents in the age group of 18 years knew Hindi, 6% of the respondents in the age group of 19 years knew Hindi, 1% of the respondents in the age group of 20 years knew Hindi and no respondents in the age group of 21 years knew Hindi. Overall age did not have much impact on the knowledge of Hindi and 77% of the respondents did not know Hindi.

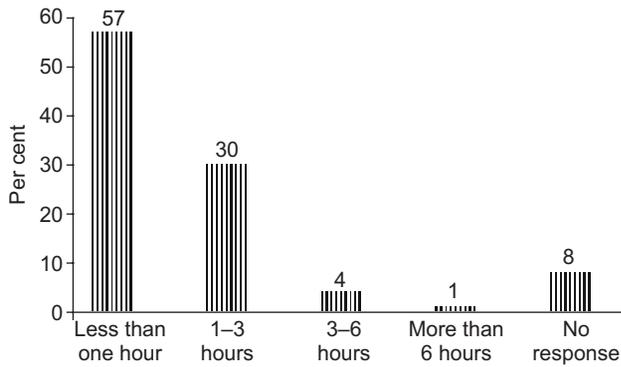


Fig. 8: How much time you spend on internet every day?

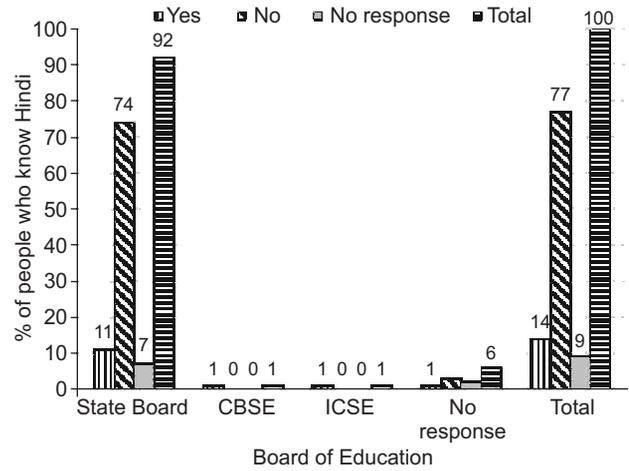


Fig. 11: Cross tabulation of board of education and knowledge of Hindi

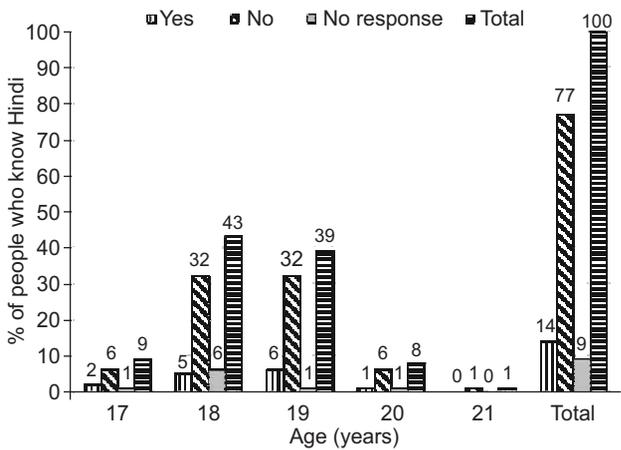


Fig. 9: Cross tabulation of people's age and their knowledge of Hindi

In Figure 10, among 100 respondents, 12% of respondents from XII standard knew Hindi, none of the diploma holder respondents knew Hindi, 1% of the respondents in the graduate category knew Hindi and 1% of the respondents gave no response.

In Figure 11, among 100 respondents, 11% of respondents from the State Board knew Hindi, and 1% of the respondents each from CBSE and ICSE, respectively, knew Hindi.

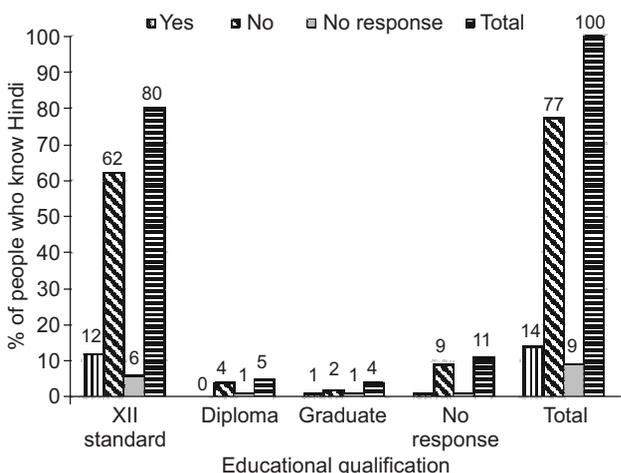


Fig. 10: Cross tabulation of educational qualification and knowledge of Hindi

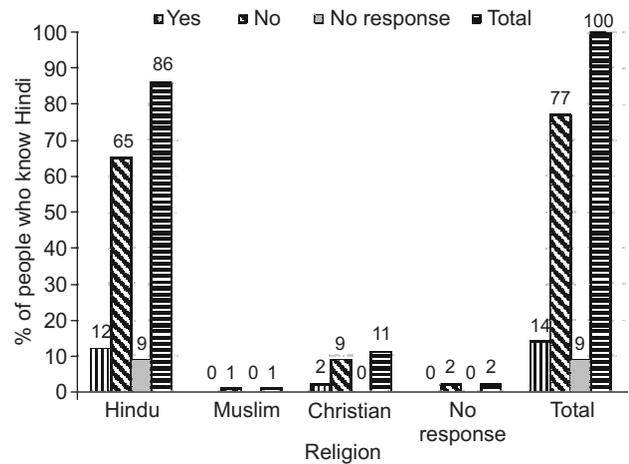


Fig. 12: Cross tabulation of people's religion and their knowledge of Hindi

In Figure 13, among 100 respondents, 61% of respondents from Tamil medium did not know Hindi

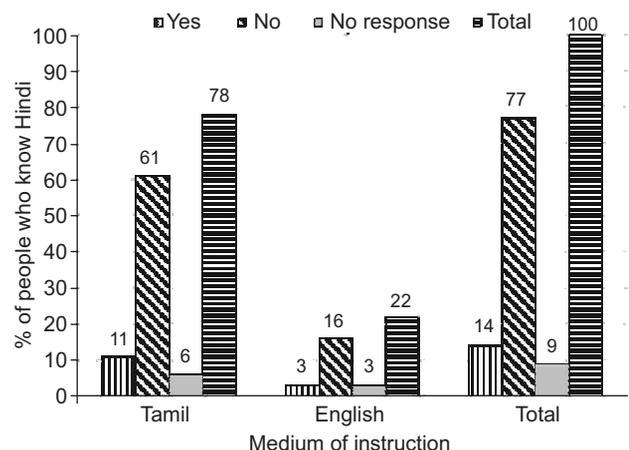


Fig. 13: Cross tabulation of medium of instruction in education and knowledge of Hindi

and 16% of the respondents from English medium knew Hindi.

In Figure 14, among 100 respondents, 7% of respondents in the age group of 17 years felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, 33% of the respondents in the age group of 18 years felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, 29% of the respondents in the age group of 19 years felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, 7% of the respondents in the age group of 20 years felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF and none of 21 years of age felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF. Overall, 76% of the respondents irrespective of age felt Hindi is necessary to join the IAF.

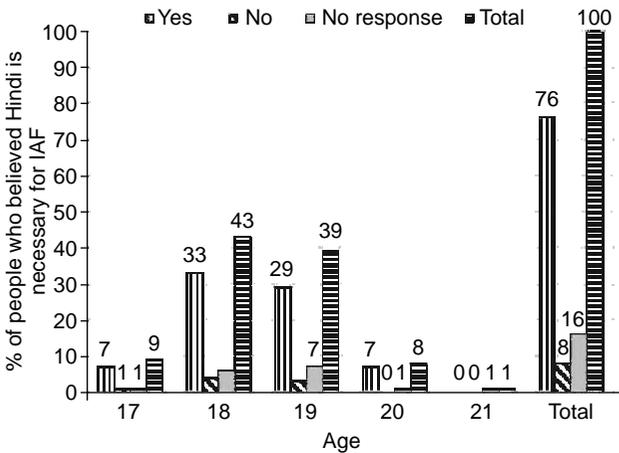


Fig. 14: Cross tabulation of people believing in necessity of knowledge of Hindi to join

In Figure 15, among 100 respondents, 62% of respondents from XII standard felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, 4% of the diploma holders felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, 3% of the graduates felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF and 7% of the respondents gave no response. Overall, 76% of the respondents felt knowledge of Hindi is necessary to join the IAF.

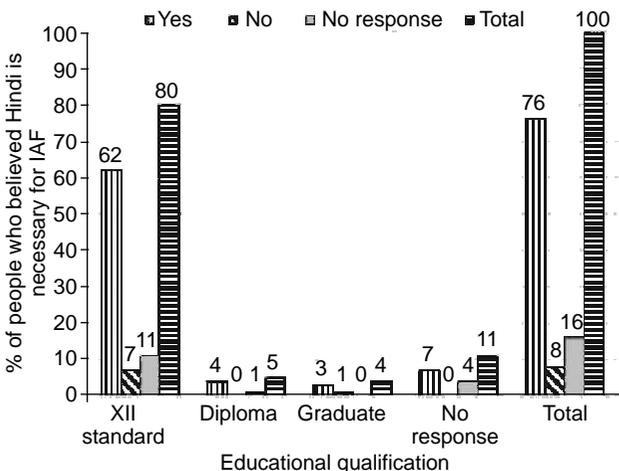


Fig. 15: Cross tabulation of educational qualification and necessity of knowledge of Hindi to join IAF

In Figure 16, among 100 respondents, 71% of respondents felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, and 1% each from CBSE and ICSE Board felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF. Overall, 76% of the respondents felt that knowledge of Hindi is necessary to join the IAF.

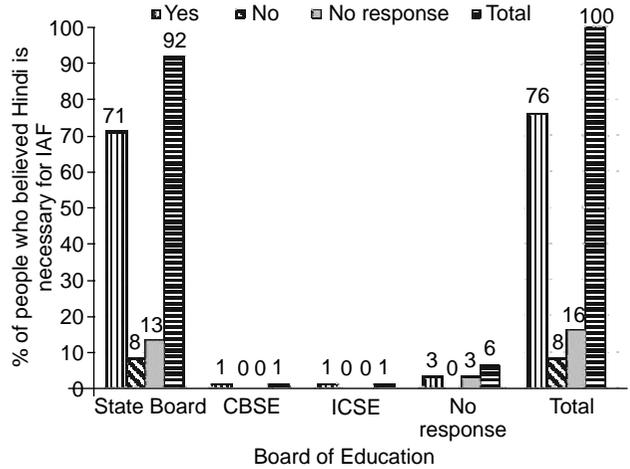


Fig. 16: Cross tabulation of board of education and necessity of knowledge of Hindi to join IAF

In Figure 17, among 100 respondents 59% of respondents from Tamil medium felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF while 17% of the respondents from English medium felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF and 16% of the respondents were not sure. Overall, 76% of the respondents irrespective of the medium of instruction felt that knowledge of Hindi is necessary to join the IAF.

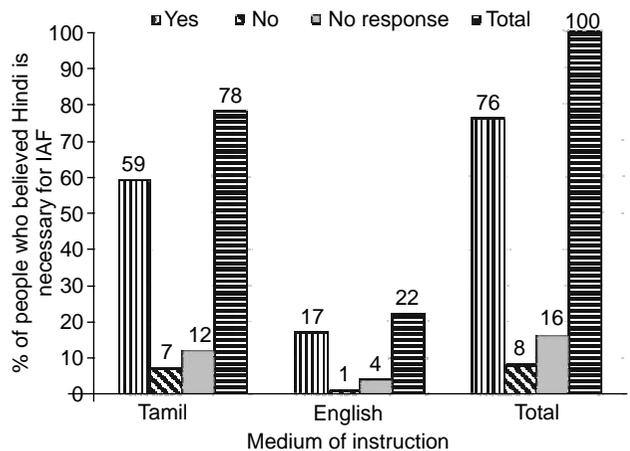


Fig. 17: Cross tabulation of medium of instruction and necessity of knowledge of Hindi to join IAF

In Figure 18, among 100 respondents, 66% from Hindu religion felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, 1% from Muslim religion felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, 7% respondents from Christian religion felt Hindi as necessary to join the IAF, and 2% were not sure. Overall, 76% of the respondent irrespective

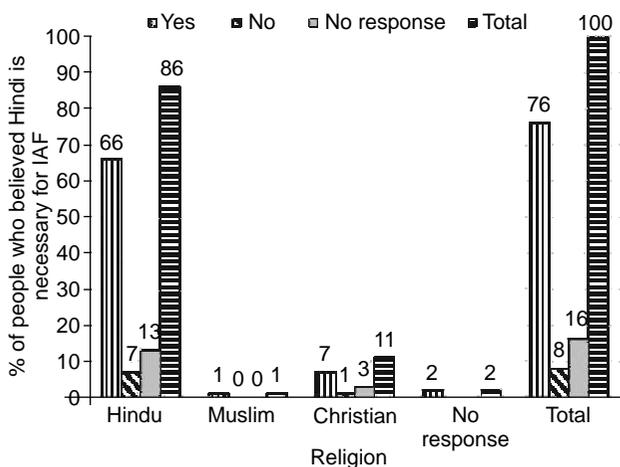


Table 18: Cross tabulation of people’s religion and necessity of knowledge of Hindi to join IAF

of religion felt that knowledge of Hindi is necessary to join the IAF.

Interpretation

The outlook of the Tamilian youths is perhaps deeply rooted in the thought that Hindi is extensively used outside the state of Tamil Nadu and this particular thought instils in them a perceived notion that Hindi is essential to join a central government job like the IAF. This perception could be a cause for anxiety/dilemma amongst the youths of Tamil Nadu that whether they would be able to cope with the selection in the IAF and thus, could be hesitant for joining the IAF as an airmen at their free will. Further, the state board education system may also be doing little to equip the students with the basics of workable knowledge of Hindi. This apart, the schools or colleges do not make the youths aware that the lack of knowledge of Hindi does not hinder their opportunities to join in any of the Central Government services and especially the Armed Forces. The IAF in their advertisements/publicity campaigns may not be highlighting this particular aspect so as to allay the fear of the potential candidates. Further, from the usage pattern of the time spent by the youth on the internet (Fig. 8), it is amply clear that a majority of respondents (57%) were using the internet for less than an hour daily and another 30% of the respondents' usage of internet was limited to less than 3 hours. This pattern indicates that though the youths spend some time using the internet, they also seem to be using other traditional sources for obtaining

the information they are keen to know. This source could be their parents, friends, relatives, school, radio, television, newspaper, magazine and the like. The IAF should focus on exploiting these sources so as to effectively communicate the employment opportunities the organisation affords.

Conclusion

Broadly concluding, there is a need for the IAF to focus on the means to establish an effective and efficient communication with the youths belonging to Tamil Nadu by highlighting the salient aspects of recruitment process in the IAF in a very simplified and unambiguous manner. The IAF on its part should endure addressing the issue by clearly advertising that the knowledge of any particular language is not a must to join IAF during their publicity drives in the state of Tamil Nadu. The remedy also lies in ensuring a vibrant system in schools and colleges to make the youth aware of the eligibility criteria and job opportunities.

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Impact of Violence in Media Reports on Social Behaviour of Youth of West Delhi

DILIP KUMAR¹ & SORABH KUMAR AGGARWAL²

ABSTRACT

We live in a world that depends hugely on the media for its consumption of all types of information, let alone news. Media also proved its worth and became a good friend to us covering every sphere. Media set the tone for youth to follow in their routine lives. But, do we realise our good friend also feeds violence through its presentation which impacts the mindset and behaviour patterns of our kids. Even in the past, we also found that media violence and related content negatively impacted youngsters (Albert Bandura's work in the 1970s). In this study, the researcher focuses on how media violence affects youngsters' behaviour to be aggressive after seeing violent content. The researcher has also referenced several other sources and collected information from various articles on the same issue. A survey questionnaire method was used to gather data from 100 respondents. A survey method was used to gather data from 100 respondents. The selected area for the study was West Delhi.

Keywords: Crime, Media, News, Society, Violence, Youth

Introduction

'Violence' is a significant problem in India and around the world. Such aggression has a massive impact on school students, eventually escalating into a deadly situation. As a result, this study aims to identify measurements and potential solutions for curbing youngsters' aggressive conduct so that they can shape a peaceful society, act as responsible citizens, and contribute to the community. Seeing is believing, as they say. The media, especially television, significantly impacts the behaviour of people, especially younger ones (Wilding *et al.*, 2018). India's situation may not be like that of other Asian or European countries; nevertheless, the severity and extent of the problem vary depending on the circumstances. Youth is considered the backbone and future of the country. The development of any nation relies on them. In our country, the estimated youth unemployment rate was 28.26% in 2021 (International Labour Organization Report, 2021). They are experiencing a transition period from fewer opportunities in office work to more encouragement in start-ups, and the advanced social and financial powers are impacting them. For the past decade, India's youth unemployment rate has been hovering around the 22% mark (International Labour Organization Report, 2021). This has become a

matter of concern for everyone, and our children are in danger of getting distracted from the real world.

Another truth highlighted by research is that females are assaulted more frequently than males. According to Bartol and Bartol (2012), violence may occur because men are more likely than women to come into contact with strangers who are criminals. Many have admitted that a single behavioural pattern does not adequately describe a mental illness or disease in the conventional sense.

On the other hand, active observation over time might reveal the indications and symptoms. Likewise, there is a dissimilarity in developing business freedoms to give helpful work to the expanding youth workforce. Strategy incited calamities, especially the positive separation in schooling and work to the more vulnerable segment of society, has been seen as expanding weight on adolescents having a place in the upper ranks and networks. The young also confront the weight of neediness, infections, and joblessness. Lately, most nations are going through significant financial, social, and political change. This change has impacted the overall mindset and has developed many different theories among youngsters. It becomes a crucial issue in characterizing subjects and points of view related to various matters of improvement and change regarding culture, political

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framework, social turn of events, and customs. As the fourth pillar of democracy, the media needs to reflect on what it presents, how it shows, and what that means to individuals.

Theoretical background

The Chapel Hill study by McCombs and Shaw (1972) established a research tradition exploring the impact of media coverage patterns on the public's perception of topics' importance. Agenda-setting theory has since become one of the most popular communication theories. The agenda-setting theory of mass media is the basis for this study. The news media is the fundamental message broker which forms the public's worldview (B.C. Cohen, 1963; Lippmann, 1946). Despite the availability of alternate sources, most people's primary source of knowledge about the outside world is still the news media (e.g., Prior, 2013; Protesse & McCombs, 2016). The news media, in particular, plays a critical role in moulding public opinion through picking and presenting news (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The idea behind agenda-setting is that the mass media sets the agenda for what people should care about. Ninkovic-Slavnic (2016) explores whether agenda-setting theory is a fruitful approach to understanding online news communication. Basic agenda setting is the core of the theory, and it refers to the issues represented by the media. The salience given to specific topics will shape public perception of the most critical issues in a society. According to the agenda-setting theory, media has much influence on the presentations and issues pointed out in the news, which changes the audience's perception. The reporters and writers are presenting a piece of specific news in such a way that the target audience is automatically forced to focus on that news instead of the other important news/issues. Also, it is the media which changes sequences of the news to influence people and control the thinking of the listeners. Media, thus, sets the priorities of the news, what is to be shown and for how long.

Review of literature

The media impacts the thinking of young people growing up in a particular society. It is an important topic to discuss as to how the media influences young people's attitudes towards violence, particularly, when it comes to violence shown on television, in movies, and in video games. According to certain studies, there is a link between media violence and real-world violence. For example, a 2010-study done by Columbia University and the Sinai Centre in New York discovered that teenagers who watch more than one hour of television daily are more aggressive. This may happen in any country, not just the United

States. India has a large population and is one of the top three technology users globally [according to a report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)]. Most of the time that children are active, they use technology and media.

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP, 2017), various socioeconomic variables might contribute to situations that result in violent behaviour among kids. These factors include difficult families situations, including single parenting, broken family, unemployment, and poverty. These socioeconomic factors influence any individual's psyche. The media along with various other factors impacts the attitude of young people in a society. Studies have found a connection between media violence and actual violence. Violence in movies, video games, or web series affects them. Their experiences with violence have influenced their mental processes and, in some ways, their decision-making abilities. In India, violence is often a component of celebration, like celebratory shooting at weddings, or after winning an election or a cricket match.

The kids enjoyed every second of it, unaware that it significantly impacted their behaviour. Openness to savagery: 60% of youth are exposed to viciousness at home, at school, or locally consistently, as indicated by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2013.

According to Paquette (2003), television violence has grown significantly. The average youngster sees over 12,000 violent TV episodes a year, mostly about murder and rape. According to over 1,000 studies, viewing violent television programmes increases aggressive behaviour, particularly among boys (Johnson *et al.*, 2002; Comstock & Strasburger, 1990; Green, 1994; Huston *et al.*, 1992). Other researches attempt to establish a link between suicide publicity on television or in newspapers, which, ironically, increases the risk of suicide among people exposed to such programmes. Children exposed to electronic media in general and television, in particular, are more at risk of experiencing violence. Many youngsters struggle with trust issues and begin to believe anyone. Their subconscious drives them as they feel good or bad as per a situation for others and involve themselves with others.

Children with intellectual difficulties are not easy to interact with and it is difficult to make them understand a particular situation. They have their own set of beliefs or ideologies, which creates a difference of opinion and this difference of view, later on, becomes the reason for their troubles. For them, violence is the way out of any situation. Children are the easiest victims of TV violence, and they start

believing it is the only remedy to their problems. They feel more powerful and equipped. They think that the world is theirs and they can rule anyone now. It gives them a sense of security also. They start believing that violence is the answer to every problem and that those who do that are real heroes (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016).

The media has started to dominate the minds and, hence, the behaviour of our youth. Before youngsters can form their opinions and beliefs, the media begins to shape their thoughts and beliefs. The over-dramatised presentation in recreating the incidence scene has impacted the thought process. The shows like Sansani, Jurm, Crime Reporter, and others are making youth more inclined towards crime and violence. The layout of the newspapers, magazines or television presentations affects the youngsters' psyche. With the images or the montage of blood baths or victims' bodies being shown in the visuals or even with the style of their writing, one could feel the aggression being started to appear in youth (Narahari & Mukherji, 2018).

Cesarone (1994) believes that violent displays in computer games may contribute more to youngsters' animosity than passively viewing bad sequels on television. According to this viewpoint, the more rough protests young people engage in, the more likely they are to engage in violent demonstrations. In most computer games, women are often represented as being pursued rather than the ones who initiate action; in the extreme, they are portrayed as casualties.

Unfortunately, violent events occur much too frequently in popular culture. In light of vigorous activities, the National Coalition on Television Violence said that there had been a constant rise in the number of computer games. These games increased in popularity from 53% in 1985 to 80% in 1988 (Cesarone, 1994). Another study conducted in 1989 on the use and content of computer games discovered that most arcade games included "introverted upsides of a sadistic sort" (Ivory, 2001).

Huesmann (2007), however, found no distinction between kids exposed to violent media and those exposed to peaceful media. The competition among media for TRPs, readership and viewership all have contributed to the mess created in the media. The trend of showing every news item as breaking news, adding the element of sensationalism, and the zeal to break the story without looking for all the facts does impact the presentation style, and the selection of words to describe the news hits hard on the minds of youngsters. The media must adapt to this paradigm of news presentation and maintain the balance between

daily news and breaking news. Also, the press should not overreact or overdo the recreation of any crime incidence, and they should be aware of the selection of visuals and language and the choice of words to be used. The violence in the media has led to the changing behaviour patterns of youngsters. They are more vulnerable to make decisions that do not serve them well.

With the changing nature of entertainment media and the presentation style used by news media, it is reasonable to believe that the youths have suffered. It's high time now that in schools and colleges, there should be mandatory media education focused on teaching students that what is shown in the media is not always true. We need to educate our children about misinformation and cultivate an understanding from an early age so that they do not act inappropriately.

Research objectives

- To find out how violence in media coverage has affected the behaviour patterns of Delhi youth.
- To study how youth reacts to stories related to crime and violence.
- To find out the impact of agenda-setting theory on the minds of youth in West Delhi.

Research questions

- Is the new style of journalism (debates, shouting, and usage of various illustrations) enticing youth to behave violently?
- The content of new versions of electronic media should be censored to stop violence among youths and in society as a whole.
- Does media shape the agenda in the minds of youngsters?

Research methodology

In this study, a descriptive research design is used. An online questionnaire tool was used. The sample consists of youth residing in West Delhi. The sample size was 100 youngsters from West Delhi. The age group of the sample was 18–25 years.

Sampling: Samples were selected from the universe using the non-probability sampling process; the snowball sampling technique was used to determine the samples for the study.

Limitations

1. The sample size used is minimal and may perhaps be somewhat higher.
2. Although the review is broad, a study of young men and women may have been considered.
3. A convenient and purposeful testing that might not be a mistake-free testing technique.

Findings and analysis

Table 1: Source of getting news

Source	Participants	Total (%)
Newspaper	34	34
Television/Radio	29	29
Social Media/Websites	37	37
Total	100	100

The data shows that 37% of youth get news from social media or websites, 34% received from newspapers and 29% get it from TV/radio. As suggested by the data, the news which the reader reads had kind of violence in terms of words or pictures. Similarly, television viewing also impacted the youth and inclined them towards violence.

Table 2: Frequency of reading or watching crime news

Frequency	Participants	Total (%)
Daily	24	24
Weekly	32	32
Biweekly	21	21
Monthly	23	23
Total	100	100

The data shows that 32% read or watched crime stories weekly and 24% on daily basis; 23% and 21% watched or read on a monthly and biweekly basis, respectively. The data suggests that the youth receives news which includes violence every day.

Table 3: Feelings associated with presentation of crime news

How do you feel	Participants	Total (%)
Feel sad	21	21
Take it as a normal news	19	19
No reaction at all	12	12
Get angry	48	48
Total	100	100

The data shows that 48% of youth got angry after reading or watching the crime news, 21% felt sad about it, 19% youngsters took it normally while 12% had no reaction at all. The data suggests that although youth are interested in reading or watching news related to violence but they feel sad about the same. Having said that, we cannot deny the fact that

Table 4: Banning of crime shows on news channels

Crime shows banned	Participants	Total (%)
YES	64	64
NO	36	36
Total	100	100

violence does impact youth, and in this, the media also plays a significant role.

The data shows that 64% of the participants wanted crime-based shows on news channels like Sansani to be banned, while 36% considered it to be fine. The data shows that a major chunk of youth believes that the crime shows do have an impact on their personalities so they wanted them to be banned. However, few of them like to watch such shows on and off which clearly indicates their inclination towards violence and crime. It attracts them; it gives them a sense of completion. Shows like Sansani and Crime Patrol are becoming their favourites in this category.

Table 5: Debates in media channels spread violence in society

Debates spread violence	Participants	Total (%)
YES	58	58
NO	33	33
Can't say	09	09
Total	100	100

The data shows that 58% of the participants believe that debate shows on television channels are the main reason for violence in society. They feel the subject of debates is not sensible enough, and thus media channels should avoid that. While 33% feel that debate would not spread any violence in society and hence media channels are doing a good job, the remaining 9% were not able to decide anything.

Table 6: Biasness in media channels spread violence in society

Biasness spreading violence	Participants	Total (%)
YES	67	67
NO	30	30
Can't say	03	03
Total	100	100

The data shows that 67% of the participants believe that bias in television channels is the main reason for violence in society. They believe the media is biased towards one agenda or group and blindly

Table 7: Other possible sources which excites youth towards violence

Sources	Participants	Total (%)
Video Games	24	24
Movies	30	30
Web Series	17	17
Unemployment	29	29
Total	100	100

follows the path which leads to violence or panic in society. 30% of the youth felt the media is not biased on issues pertaining to common man. Out of the total participants, 3% were not able to decide the role of the media.

The data shows that 29% of the participants believe that unemployment is the major reason for youth's involvement in spreading violence in society, 30% respondents believe that movies excite youngsters and thus they commit violence, 17% believe that the content of web series is actually putting youth in violent activities and 24% feels that video games are the reason behind these violent activities in society.

Table 8: Possible measures to stop violence through media

Measures	Participants	Total (%)
Improve presentation of news	17	17
Censor content of movies and web series	35	35
Ban such video games	16	16
Amend laws	22	22
Show positive stories	10	10
Total	100	100

The data shows that 35% of the participants believe that by censoring the content of movies and web series, we can curb the spread of violence in society through media. 22% believe by amending existing laws, while 17% of people believe that media needs to improve their presentation while showing crime stories, 16% believe that the government should implement a ban on such video games and 10% believe that by showing positive stories, the spread of violence can be stopped.

Conclusion

There is consensus about how violent elements in media and television affect young people's personalities. However, other researchers point out limits to the damaging long-term effects of violent media on adolescents. The fact is that parents need to pay closer attention to their children. The screen time of kids should be made minimal. In the current scenario, most parents are occupied with professional work or commitments, which do affect the kids' behaviour as the attention required by the kid gets divided. These days, raising a child is challenging enough. It is much more difficult to properly guide the child now because of the variety of things shown in the media. Does that genuinely mean violence shown in media makes kids aggressive?

The impact of media violence on the behaviour patterns of West Delhi youth has been significant as observed in this study. It not only has an instrumental

effect on the public space, but it also shapes beliefs, attitudes, and character in many ways; for example, the arrangement of the a multicultural society.

The new style of journalism, i.e., debates, shouting, and excessive usage of various illustrations, does excite the youth towards spreading violence in society. It gets the adrenaline going in their veins and pushes individuals into activities they otherwise would have avoided. The content of entertainment media (Web series) nowadays is getting very kitsch. The level of violence and sexual content usually shown in these web series makes a considerable difference and somehow encourages youth to opt for similar paths. Also, media sets the agenda for a day, which in-turn creates biases further creating panic among youth, and hence they get involved in violent activities.

The findings show there are many necessities related to social media. The foremost concern is rich content. Others were spending quality time with virtual friends and posting and updating many things related to personal life.

The role of media is to inform, entertain, educate and spread awareness among the masses. Media shapes opinions, and sets the trend for upcoming generations. Youngsters and teenagers are soft targets who get influenced easily and begin to trust everything, once that trust breaks, they behave violently. As parents and guardians, we need to keep a check on that. There is a thin line between what is good and what is wrong. We can teach values and develop an understanding in them through media literacy, which helps them to make better decisions.

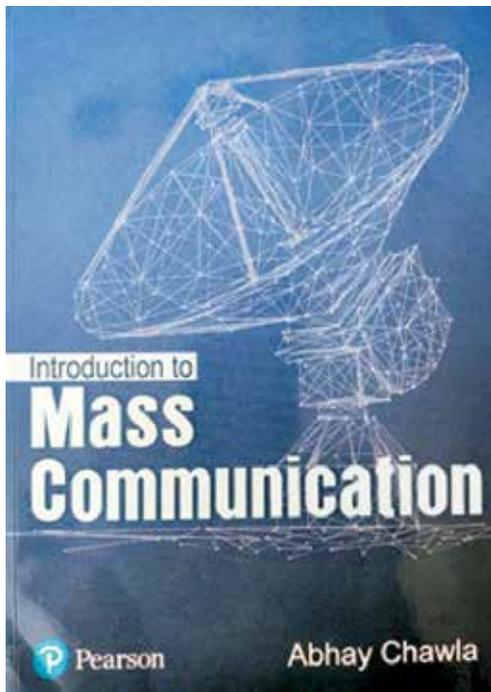
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BOOK REVIEW



Introduction to Mass Communication
Dr Abhay Chawla
Pearson India Education Services Private Limited
Pages 336
ISBN: 978-9354496073

‘Introduction to Mass Communication’ —a textbook by Dr. Abhay Chawla is a new publication by Pearson. With a plethora of material already available on mass communication, the textbook seems like just another one on the topic. It has the requisite chapters on Communication, Mass Communication, Models of Communication and the like, and appears to be just a redo of the theories and models.

The world has evolved, and so has this field. It has grown from the simple one-way communication to sender–receiver models in mass media to different kinds of influence and communication with the coming in of the digital age and social media. We are looking for and expecting some fresh inputs in this subject. The sender and his profile have

changed, and the receiver and his profile and habits are something we need to update ourselves on as there has been a sea change in this space. So, a mere content on Mass Communication Theory is not what we expect or need.

As we further delve into the book, we realise that while this book touches upon the mundane and older topics of mass communication, it also bridges the gap between yesterday and tomorrow. As we look at the usual mass communication content in the book, we realise that this inclusion helps to build up the background and foundation for introducing the students to the matters related to today and the future. The usual content is a lead-in to the recent issues that need to be discussed, which is the beauty of this textbook.

The author, who is an engineer by qualification and profession and has worked in the IT sector in the corporates before moving into academics, has very aptly used his experience and skills with students of undergraduate and postgraduate levels and his understanding of the needs of the target group to bring out this textbook. This book serves the need of the present times for an overall updated study material on Mass Communication and its contemporary issues.

The book is divided into six chapters wherein the initial ones cover the types, forms and theories of mass communication; explanation of the concept of masses; the relationship of mass media with society; the economics of mass media; and the mass media effects. This further leads on to the concept of mass audience and the effects of the media on audiences and theories related to it.

These theoretical chapters move on to the more contemporary applications of the theories and the latest developments due to the advent of New Media. An entire chapter focuses on Audiences and Theories of Media Use, which clearly applies all that we learn in the basics of mass communication. The concepts of media audiences, various audience theories of media use, and the power of the audience over the media it uses are all part of

the latest development in the understanding of mass communication and included in this chapter. Current issues and matters related to the audience and its behaviour are explained and the emerging trends that have appeared, especially in the digital media age, are well understood after reading this chapter.

Chapter 5 on Media Laws in India covers various laws related to the press, broadcast media, advertising, and the consumer. Regulations and regulatory bodies dealing with the various aspects are also discussed in detail. This information is most relevant in the present times.

The last chapter is a good input for the students. It is on Mass Media and Ethics which discusses the latest developments in the field and adds on to the understanding and knowledge bank of the student. Various case studies are used to help illustrate the discussion on topics and issues related to ethics, especially in the newer fields of broadcast media and the new/digital media. These discussions enhance the student's comprehension of mass communication and the present environment in which it exists.

The book has a wide range of illustrations, visuals, case studies, and examples which assist in explaining and applying concepts, making the book very useful for students. It also contains an extensive glossary of words and terms used in this field and has an entire list of further readings, all for

those who want to get deeper into the subject. Every chapter has illustrations, a set of questions, project work, key terms, discussion topics, and references well detailed and laid out as what a textbook should have, making it a very suitable study material for students.

Most importantly, it has a list of universities offering a Master's Degree in Mass Communication which is a much sought-after content by students despite the internet offering a plethora of this kind of information.

A section on the Development of Mass Communication is an interesting and useful addition for anyone interested in mass communication as a field which provides a timeline of events and technological developments from the start of humankind to present day. It also offers a practical overview of the field in addition to those which record and document history.

Overall, it's a useful book for students getting introduced to mass communication both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level and handles the subject in a contemporary way. It is a good read for someone who wants to delve deeper into mass communication.

Simrat Gulati

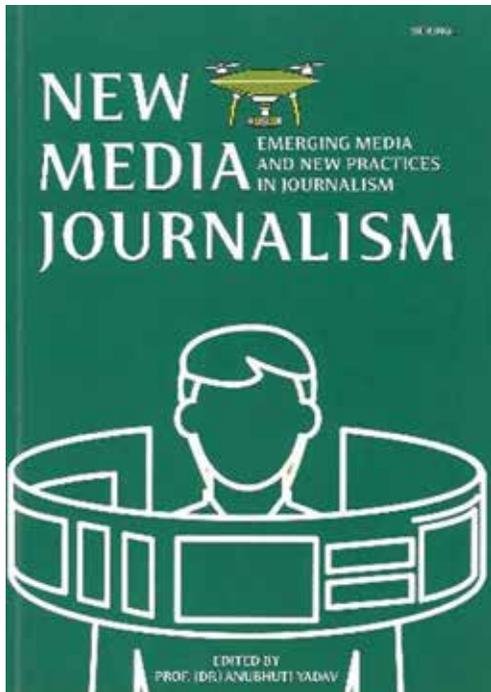
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BOOK REVIEW



New Media Journalism: Emerging Media and New Practices in Journalism

Prof. (Dr.) Anubhuti Yadav

Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd. Greater Noida, UP. INDIA

First 2022

Pages 190

Rs. 350

ISBN: 978-93-93853-07-3

The book *New Media Journalism* introduces key concepts, challenges and problem-solving strategies in the emerging new media journalism. New Media include online platforms, social media, new digital tools, and new ways of packaging and disseminating information.

This book aims to bring journalistic experiences and academic understanding of New Media together. It introduces readers to the new technologies that are used in newsrooms. It also talks about the challenges faced by the journalists while embracing these new technologies.

This multi authored book edited by Prof. Anubhuti Yadav comprises 11 chapters viz; New

Media Journalism, Cybersecurity in Journalism, Immersive Journalism, Data Journalism, Immersive Journalism, Data Journalism, social media and Journalism, social media and Journalism, Cyber Harassment and Digital Abuse, Mobile Journalism, Strengthening Journalism Using Artificial, Fake News, Misinformation and Open Resources, Digital Marketing.

Prof. Anubhuti Yadav in her chapter on New Media Journalism elaborated very lucidly that around 73 per cent of our respondents from India access news through smartphones. Social media access is high with 53 percent using WhatsApp and YouTube for news. In this chapter, the concept of New Media, its emergence, its characteristics, New Media landscape, its impact on traditional media along with the opportunities and challenges has been described. The News consumption pattern has changed tremendously in the past few years. Reading newspapers, watching the news and listening to radio bulletins - every media consumption experience has witnessed a paradigm shift. All this happened because of the emergence of new technologies. Most people have stopped consuming media the way they used to earlier. The habit of reading newspapers with a cup of tea or coffee in the morning is replaced by reading them on laptops, tablets and smartphones. Even while reading the printed text, there is always an urge to go online to watch a video using the QR code placed next to the story. While reading text online, there is always an option to listen to the story rather than read it. These new ways of consuming content are the result of integrating new technology in the newsrooms which makes it possible for the news producers to produce content in a variety of ways. These new technologies not only help in packaging the content in a variety of ways but also in publishing it in different formats and disseminating it via different platforms.

New Media, as it is termed by the experts in the industry and academia, is posing tough competition to Print and TV. People are consuming media messages not only from the television channel but also from YouTube. Radio sets in households often

lie unused as people tune into their favourite channels using smartphones. This medium has not only affected the consumption pattern but also the way media messages are produced. New technologies have impacted every function in the media house. Old ways of working on many products have been replaced by new ways of packaging information, which are influenced by new technologies.

The new technologies have not only made various tasks of journalists, advertising and public relations professionals easier but have enabled them to reach out to niche audiences with the use of the right medium. The new media has opened a new aura of job opportunities particularly in the digital media as data scientist, social editor, Manager, Advertising Analytics, and so on.

Newsrooms are also organising training programmes to upskill their employees so that they are relevant in the Digital age. The entire gamut of New Media moves around ICT, Digital Media, Online Media, Multimedia, Convergence Media and so on. A digital file can be easily manipulated, distributed and rendered by computers and mobile phones, and is easily transmitted over internet and computer networks.

While explaining the interactivity in new media, the author explained that this happens at three levels. First, when users can interact with the content. Users prepare their own pattern of consuming any story. Instead of a linear form of the story which starts with a headline, followed by the lead and then the body, in New Media stories are presented in a non-linear manner. The story starts with the headline, then there could be lead, audio, video or infographic accompanying the story.

The book also carries useful and authentic data from the media. The total number of internet users in the country has increased from 795.18 million in 2020 to 825.30 million in March 2021 according to a report from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). The growth India has seen in terms of internet penetration is unprecedented. India has become the second-largest country in the world (after China) in terms of internet users with 825 million people connected to the internet. The penetration is 60.73 according to TRAI. According

to the study 'Digitai @2025' by Kantar. Around 87% of the Indian households will have an internet connection by 2025 and there is a 21 % rise in duration of internet access through mobile since 2019.

In the chapter Data Journalism chapter authored by Prof. Anubhuti Yadav elaborate that journalists across the world have been using data to tell stories that are more interactive, engaging and meaningful. We shall also discuss some of these stories and the process followed by the journalists to cover the stories. 'Data Is the New Oil' is the catch-phrase coined in 2006 by Clive Humby, a British mathematician and data scientist. Since then, this phrase has been used innumerable times in conferences in the field of Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations, Journalism and so on. For journalists, data can come in many forms. It is not just structured data that is organised in columns and rows in a spreadsheet format - it can also be unstructured text, photos, audios or videos. Such databases can help journalists a great deal but a database alone is not journalism. It is a field of information that needs to be harvested carefully with insight and caution. It needs to be compared and augmented with observations and interviews.

The chapter on strengthening journalism using artificial intelligence authored by Rohit Gandhi is very much relevant in the present context of journalism. AI is being integrated not only into our professions but also into our everyday lives as well. When integrated into a newsroom, apart from the pros-and-cons debate of AI, there is an added dimension of ethical journalism. AI can be used to map a user's online behaviour- links clicked, time spent and so on - and customise the newsfeed accordingly so that the user returns and spends a longer time on the website.

The topics explored in this book are extremely relevant and useful for working journalists as well as for teachers and students of journalism.

Prof. (Dr.) Virender Kumar Bharti
HoD, Publications and Editor
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