

Readership Habits of News Website: A Case Study Based on Big Data Analysis

Amit Sharma¹, Amitabh Srivastava², Narendra Kaushik³ and Ashutosh Kumar Pandey⁴

¹Assistant Professor, ⁴Research Scholar,

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

²Director, School of Media & Communication, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

³Dean, School of Mass Communication, JECRC University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Email: jmcamit@gmail.com, amitaabh2001@gmail.com, asianews.kaushik@gmail.com, jmcashutosh@gmail.com

(Received 15 April 2022; Revised 28 April 2022; Accepted 12 May 2022; Available online 20 May 2022)

Abstract - Digitalization is the buzz word for the modern generation. Considering the purchasing power & demographic dividend of this group, News organizations are eager to alter their strategy and make it millennials friendly. But, the population of youth is not homogeneous. It is yet to be studied, 'who' wants 'what'. For this, a research paper conducted a case study based on big data analysis of traditional newspaper Rajasthan Patrika. The paper is an attempt to analyze the aspiration on youth with news websites. It deals with the question of how age affects the use of news portals. It answers some vital queries like how the global reach of the website affects the target groups of a traditional newspaper? It quenches the question of what sort of content is expected by its very users.

Keywords: Rajasthan Patrika, News Portal, Webcasting, News Media, and News Consumption

I. INTRODUCTION

Cambridge dictionary describes 'habit' as something that you do often and regularly, sometimes without knowing that you are doing it. Habit is something one finds hard to give up. But it may be cultivated. For Centuries, reading is considered a good habit with parents and teachers exhorting the young generation to make it a life-long habit.

From the very beginning of civilization, traditional media (folk arts – dance, music, and theatre etc.) served the very purpose to disseminate important information amongst the desired target group. Newspapers made an entry into India in 1780 when James Augustus Hicky, an Irishman, launched Bengal Gazette from Kolkata. Though his publication lasted only for over two years, it became a precursor for English and vernacular newspapers in India. Newspapers continued to be the only vehicle of news dispersion for a century and four decades until the first radio (the 1920s) and then television (1959) made an entry.

The Internet arrived in India in 1995 when the Indian government opened it for private use. Mobile phones also made an entry in the same year. The Hindu was among the first few newspapers that cloned themselves online. In 1998, 48 newspapers were available online, a number that ascended to 116 by 2006 (Thakur, 2007).

Rediff.com became a pioneer for news websites when it was launched in 1996. India Today did the same in the early 2000s when it published the country's first major e-newspaper. A few years later, there was a proliferation of news portals. These, however, proved to be short-lived as they lacked a viable economic model. With the advent of android smartphones and social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter in the 21st century, the news websites have returned with around a dozen newspaper publications, former news channel heads, and international news and opinion sites making a splash in India with thequint.com, theprint.in, catchnews.com, www.huffingtonpost.in, thewire.in, qz.com/india/, and blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/. A number of Hindi newspapers have resorted to producing bilingual web portals (www.inextlive.com of Jagran) or publishing bilingual supplements (Rashtradoot of Rajasthan).

In the last few years, mobiles have become the mainstay of news consumption with almost every publication, television channel and radio worth its salt offering Android and iOS apps to reach their viewers, readers and listeners. Suddenly the internet, television and newspapers have become secondary with mobile enjoying the top honours.

The generation next is relying on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram to get their daily dose of news and information. In a survey carried out by research scholars for the Reuters Institute in 2018, 68 percent of the respondents identified smartphones as their main device for online news. The survey found out that Facebook and WhatsApp are particularly widely used, with 75 percent of respondents using Facebook (and 52 percent saying they get news there), and 82 percent using WhatsApp (with 52 percent getting news there). Other social media widely used for news include Instagram (26 percent), Twitter (18 percent), and Facebook Messenger (16 percent). (Aneez and others, 2019) The use of digital media for news has added another dimension to the fourth estate. Now a combination of multimedia – news reports, video clips, embedded audio – provides information to a consumer who is reader, viewer, and listener - all rolled into one. An example of this is Indian Express' virtual avatar where along with the news

reports and photographs, you can also watch interviews of cinema stars and political leaders. This research paper aims at analyzing the readership habits of digital news consumers. It is an attempt to find out whether the new generation is looking for personalized mobile news alerts and more online news video and would agree to support news organisations through donations or fees for online news. The researchers will rely on content analysis to find out what the mobile-first and mobile-only media market means for visual, audio, print media and the world of hard-bound and paper-bound books.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a study “Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption”, Flaxman, Goel and Rao (2016) analyzed the recent trends of online publishing and its effects. The finding indicates that social networks are making an ideological distance between people. People used to visit only such websites’ home page which is according to their interest.

In a study “Checking, sharing, clicking and linking: Changing patterns of news use between 2004 and 2014”, Costera Meijer & Groot Kormelink (2015) examined the changes of people’s news consumption. Results indicate that many changes have been observed in the time gap between 2005 and 2011. Most of the changes found on the base of media technology and news user practices. New mobile-based news practices now become a major part of news consumption.

In a study “Personalizing news websites attract young readers”, Chen, Chock, Gozigian, Rogers, Sen, Schweisberger and Wang (2011) examined the content which attracts the reader. The result indicates that people want to read such content which is according to their feeling or attitude. Young adults want to read only those website which is according to their interest.

In a study “Impact of the Internet on Changing Patterns of Newspaper Access and News-reading Habits in India”, Bamezai, Kesharvani, Yumnam, Goswami, Pradhan, Roy and Ambade (2011) examined the use of internet in news and information sharing. The result indicates that internet news consumers are increasingly faster than newspaper readership. Internet availability becomes the main factor for this significant growth. Few internet users use the web for news reading only.

In a conference “What the Web News Readers Wants: An Analysis of smh.com.au readership story preference”, Van Heekeren (2005) studied the ‘top five’ accessed stories on the Sydney Morning Herald website [http://smh.com.au] over 12 weeks from August 16 to November 12, 2004. The result indicates that an average daily user of smh.com.au is around 46,500. People want to read news based on Australian Federal Election more than others. This was the major changed in the news consumption of web users.

In the study “What do Americans really want to know? Tracking the behaviour of newsreaders on the Internet”, Tewksbury (2003) find out the new pattern of news consumption. The result indicates that widespread use of the internet has changed the news reading habits. Now, the web providing more control over news selection and consumption. It was not available during the traditional media. Online news audiences choose and read public affairs related news in a very preferred manner.

In research conducted by the Nielsen Norman Group, it was found that most often online content is read om F-Pattern. Findings of the study state that the usually readers' eyes follow a pattern that resembles an uppercase letter ‘F’. Users read Headline or first a few lines completely, then they leave some lines and then scan a few more lines but not that much in that much-focused manner.

There is an emphasis on making the text conform to F-pattern (reading in horizontal movement across the upper portion of web text, reading in second horizontal movement (shorter than the first movement) and scanning the left side of a page’s web copy in vertical movement). It is also stressed to make the text scannable and use subheads and subtitles that are relevant to users. What gets you, readers, listeners or viewers is not how you write or speak but keyword optimization. After all search engines have beaten all other media because they bring to the point information at a touch.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research work is an attempt to know the media consumption habits of Hindi News Portal Rajasthan Patrika. The objectives are given below.

1. RO_1 : To know the device used in news consumption.
2. RO_2 : To know the demographic profile of news users in the relation of news consumption.
3. RO_3 : To know the geographic spread of web news users.
4. RO_4 : To know the content related interest of users.

A. Research Questions

- R.Q.1. What sort of devices are used to access news websites?
- R.Q.2 What is the gender-wise demography of news portal users?
- R.Q.3 How age affects the use of news web sites?
- R.Q.4 How global reach affects in terms of users?
- R.Q.5 What sort of content is preferred by news web site users?

B. Research Design

The present study is analytical in nature, which analyzes the secondary data related to Rajasthan Patrika News website. The case study method is applied to know the media

consumption habits of web users. All web newsreaders of the world constitute the universe for the study. All web news readers of Hindi news web portals are considered as sampling element. Web news readers of *Rajasthan Patrika*

news portal are the sampling units of the present study. Data is collected with the help of Google Analytics technique. Web news reader's behaviour is collected in the month of March 2020.

IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A. News Consumption on Various Devices

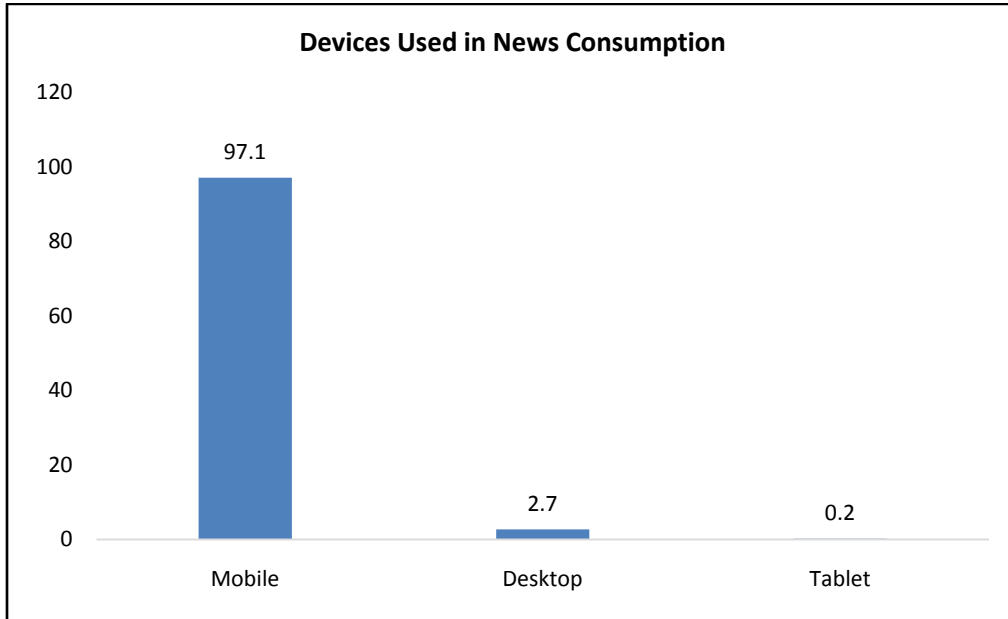


Fig. 1 Devices used in news consumption

After the analysis of data, it is found that 97.1% of total web user of Rajasthan Patrika use mobile phones to access the news content. Only 2.7% of total web users use Desktop to access news from the web portal of Rajasthan Patrika.

Remaining 0.2% of total newsreader reads news by a tablet device. It means mobile phones are the main tool to access the news portal.

B. News Consumption on the Gender Basis

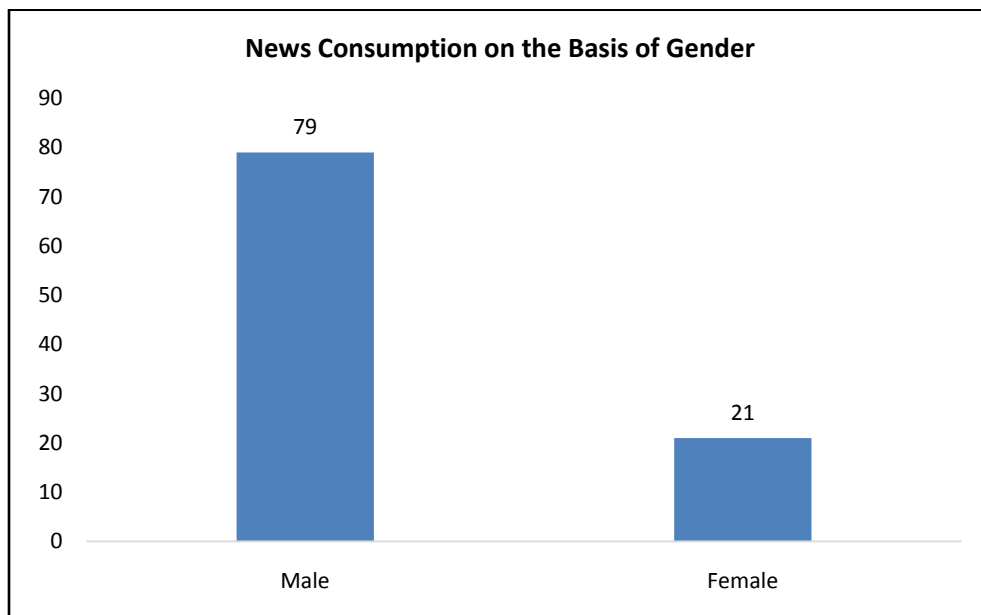


Fig. 2 News Consumption on the Basis of gender

After the analysis of data of web users of Rajasthan Patrika, it is found that 79% of total newsreaders are men while only

21% of total news consumers are female. It means most of news consumer are men.

C. News Consumption on the Basis of Age

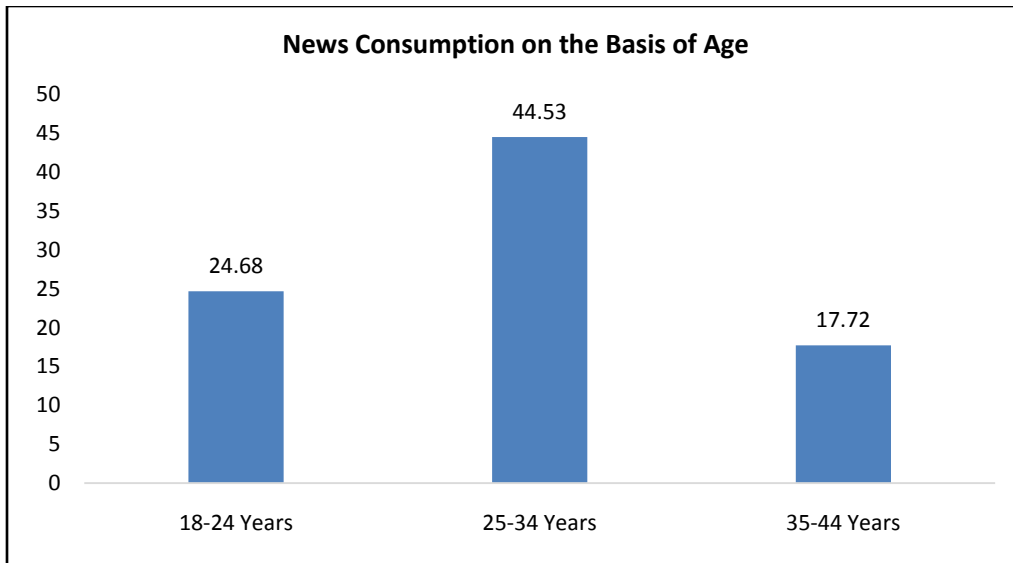


Fig. 3 New Consumption on the Basis of Age

After the analysis, it is found that 44.53% of total web news consumers are of 25 to 34 years age group. Another 24.68% of total web news readers fall under the age group of 18 to

24 years age group. Rest 17.72% of total web users are of 35 to 44 age groups. It means young people use Rajasthan Patrika website for news consumption.

D. News Consumption in Globe

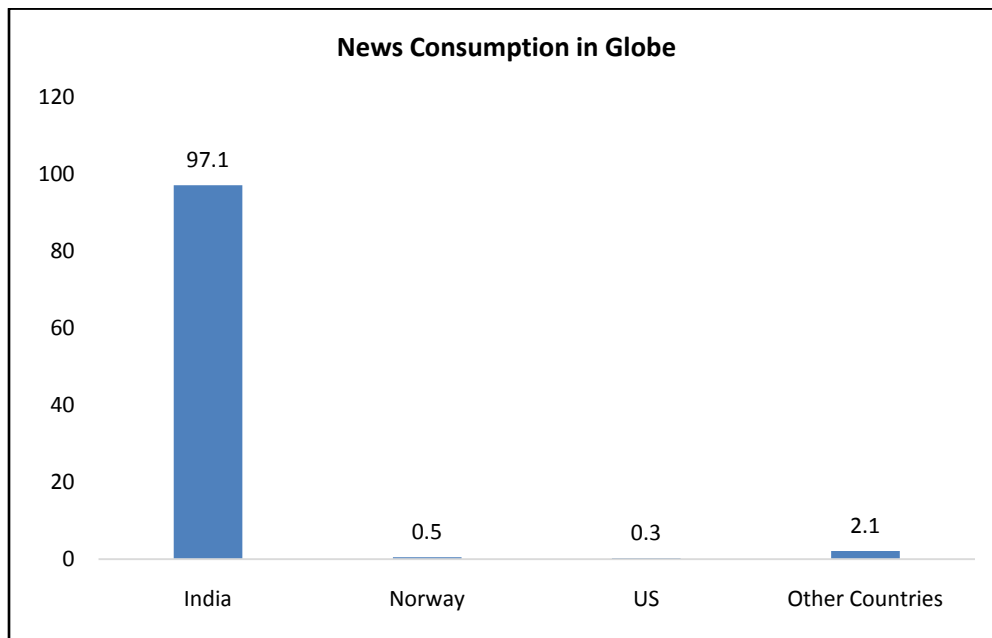


Fig. 4 New Consumption in Globe

Rajasthan Patrika is a Hindi news portal. Analysis indicates that India, Norway and the US are the three main countries where Rajasthan Patrika news portal is popular. Rajasthan Patrika news portal gets 97.1% of its total traffic from India.

On the other hand, 0.5% of the total reader are in Norway and 0.3% of total web newsreaders are from the United States.

E. Most Clicked/Read Stories on the Web

It is considered that only crime, cricket, cinema and political news are the most popular segments of news but analysis indicate that some offbeat news is more prominent or reader-friendly than the above segment. The news “Dharmendra Food outlet Heman sealed by Karnal Municipal Corporation”, got 1.3 Million page views or readers with is the highest for any news in the month during which the study carried out. On the other hand, the news “Why did Laxmi Agarwal and Alok Dixit broke up” got 1.2 Million page view of readers. This is the second popular or most read news of the month. “Marriage invitation in Sanskrit Language” got 0.64 Million page view during the study period, which is an offbeat story.

V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Amidst various choices news website of this traditional newspaper is accessed through mobile-only. More importantly, all other devices even collectively are unable to stand against it. (ratio 97:3). Probably the portability of mobile goes in its favour. It indicates that there is a need to design the content, compatible with mobile.
2. Women are quite less interested in the news website. Further study is required to analyze the reason.
3. Despite having the Indian Diaspora, across the globe the Hindi content is mostly read in India only. Further research is required, that this fact is true only for Rajasthan Patrika only or other news website is having the same trend.
4. Research finds age group between 25-34 is most interested in the news portal. Age group, lesser and higher than it is less interested in the news website.
5. Offbeat news and news related to any celebrity are most popular on the website. Specially, content related to the cinema is very popular amongst the youth.

VI. CONCLUSION

It was found that most of netizens are accessing news via mobile phone. It is a result of availability of mobile phones in the country and technological advancement. Netizens are now giving more importance to small and easy-to-handle mobile phones as a tool to access information instead of using bulky technology like computers. During the research, it was found that women did not appear much dependent on digital news media for news etc. There is a need to find out the possible reasons behind this and make women aware about news consumption. A strong society is not possible without the contribution of women. Women are the backbone of the society and they need to be motivated to access news and to be informed properly. During research it was found that news content written in Hindi is read all over

the world, not only in India. Although its readership in India is relatively high. In this way, development of Hindi and Hindi communication mediums is possible with only a little effort. Young people read more news on digital media. The reason behind this is that the digital medium is a new medium, mobile and other gadgets can be used by the youth more smoothly. The new communication technology has not yet become more familiar among older people. The reason behind this is technical complexity. A trend was also seen on the Internet that news related to film and celebrity has been read more than the general news. The reason behind this is that online mass media works under the ‘pull’ process. The type of content people read, the news medium generally starts providing them with the same type of content. In such a situation, news of celebrities etc. is liked more according to the interest of the people.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aneez Z., Ahmed N. T., Kalogeropoulos A., & Kleis N. R., (2019). India Digital News Report, Reuters Institute.
- [2] Bamezai, G., Kesharvani, P., Yunnam, B., Goswami, S., Pradhan, A., Roy, A., & Ambade, B. N. (2011). Impact of Internet on Changing Patterns of Newspaper Access and News-reading Habits in India. *Media Asia*, 38(2).
- [3] Billsus, D., Brunk, C. A., Evans, C., Gladish, B., & Pazzani, M. (2002). Adaptive interfaces for ubiquitous web access. *Communications of the ACM*, 45(5), 34-38.
- [4] Chen, G. M., Chock, T. M., Gozigan, H., Rogers, R., Sen, A., Schweisberger, V. N. & Wang, Y. (2011). Personalizing news websites attracts young readers. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 32(4), 22-38.
- [5] Costera Meijer, I., & Groot Kormelink, T. (2015). Checking, sharing, clicking and linking: Changing patterns of news use between 2004 and 2014. *Digital Journalism*, 3(5), 664-679.
- [6] Flaxman, S., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption. *Public opinion quarterly*, 80(S1), 298-320.
- [7] Kumar, S., Sharma, A., & Verma, V. (2021). Social Media a Tool for Social and Political Inclusion among Youth: A Study of Indian University's Students, *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 04(1), 82-89.
- [8] Sharma, A. (2013). *Missing Objectivity: Media Persons turn to shadowy politician*. Relevant Derive.
- [9] Sharma, A., & Goyal, A. (2018). Tweet, Truth and Fake News: A Study of BJP's Official Tweeter Handle. *Journal of Content, Community & Communication*, 8(4), 22-28.
- [10] Tewksbury, D. (2003). What do Americans really want to know? Tracking the behavior of news readers on the Internet. *Journal of communication*, 53(4), 694-710.
- [11] Thakur, K. (2007). Online Journalism in India: An exploratory study of Indian newspapers on the Net, Indo-Russia Conference, Moscow, December 07-08.
- [12] Van Heekeren, M. (2005, July). What The Web News Reader Wants: An analysis of smh.com. au readership story preference. In Australian and New Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA) Annual Conference (pp. 1-12). ANZCA and University of Canterbury.
- [13] Widiantoro, D. H., Ioerger, T. R., & Yen, J. (1999, November). An adaptive algorithm for learning changes in user interests. In *Proceedings of the eighth international conference on Information and knowledge management*, 405-412.