



Media convergence & new media- A boon or a bane

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Abstract

Growing technological advancement meant that Indian media too has evolved into the aspect of digitalizing the content, moving over from traditional media like print and electronic media. Content, communication and computing are the basic building blocks of media, which has led to a media convergence. Social Media has today broken the rigid and static pedagogical realm of education and teaching and made it dynamic, learner-centred and flexible. It has evolved its own language and syntax, thereby creating an avenue for a collaborative and hybrid learning environment. On the other hand, it has also damaged language acquisition skills. While giving a voice to the voiceless, New or social media sometimes goes overboard, with other vested interests and preventing honest and unbiased reporting. There are advantages and disadvantages of social media. The primary objective of this research paper is to find out whether traditional media is still relevant in today's age. The secondary objective is to find out whether New Media promotes or pulls down talent, if there is an overall media convergence with spread of New Media, and whether this convergence, if at all, is good or bad for the society.

Keywords: New media, convergence, voiceless, boon, social media

Introduction

Everyone is busy today. In today's busy life of the cities, there is rarely any time for people to meet or write to their friends or family. Letter writing or even writing by hand is probably only limited to schools. Adults have their office work, children have to study, and house wives have household work. In this busy life, social media helps us to communicate, with our friends or family, quickly and efficiently. Social Media is a platform for the people to interact with each other, spread awareness, show talent, advertise, present their opinions and convey their thoughts via virtual communities. Therefore, social media has been a boon. On the other hand, it has invaded and now controlled every aspect of our private lives to the extent we have started living virtually rather than physically. The Fear of Missing out (FOMO) is uppermost in most young adults, as we cannot sacrifice our mobiles and tabs for even an instant. While a lot of people still prefer the print or traditional media for their daily dose of news, and happenings around, in today's world of growing technological advancement, Indian media has evolved a new aspect of digitalizing the content, moving over from traditional media. Media convergence brings together the "three Cs"- computing, communications and content. Computing, with the use of Internet; Communication with the unique feature of interactivity and Content; which is young and fresh.

While social media is good for connectivity, it has started developing its own language, with short forms and syntax. The language rendered on social media, especially Facebook and Twitter is often linguistically incorrect and it deteriorates students' language acquisition skills due to the occurrences of numerous syntax and semantic violations which are used on these Social Networking Sites (SNS), which could potentially influence students' academic writing.

The media, the fourth pillar of a democratic nation, has the responsibility to safeguard the rights of the socially-economically deprived sections. Social media, has also

allowed unknown and far-flung talent to be recognized and developed. It has provided a 'voice for the voiceless', in that anyone today, could upload anything he is good at. It has enormous power to bring social equality to the people neglected in the society. While this is to be appreciated, the flip side is that there is no one to control or edit the content, as in case of traditional media. In today's world of digital media, knowledge is information and it spreads fast. Sometimes the information cannot be confirmed, which results in confusion. The mainstream media, online media in this case, with its characteristics, can play a clarifying role in information confusion. The pressure of the media industry competition, at times, however, only increases the confusion. Even though editors in the online media, especially, have professional ethics. Online media journalists, who act as gatekeepers, interpret the role of the journalist profession that has an impact on society. The verification process, as part of the journalistic routine process, is actually believed to reduce information confusion.

All this has, in turn, led to convergence of media content along with text, video, audio, or rather multimedia, which has been changing the scenario of Journalism in India.

The aim of this research would be to explore the relevance of traditional media, various dimensions of new media, its advantages and disadvantages, media convergence and if it is posing a threat to traditional media.

Hypothesis formulation

Based on the earlier studies, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Traditional media is still relevant in today's world of new media.

H2: Social media, while giving a voice to the voiceless, is at times uncontrolled, which leads to dishonest and biased reporting.

H3: It is difficult to clearly conclude whether convergence of media is a real boon or bane for the society, as a whole.

Literature review

In studying the subject, assistance has been taken from the following researchers, who have previously worked on the topic.

Print and Television journalism at India has its own history. As per Dr. Smita Vashishta and Ms Neema Negi, in *Convergence in Indian media: A new Paradigm of ICT*, while print dynamics change with increased circulation and types of printing, Television changed the people's lifestyles by broadcasting programmes, both by Doordarshan and private channels. The emergence of internet today, changes the perspective of both the mediums. There is no need of sitting at one place. Every media house has today developed a website which has evolved the technology of convergence. Media Convergence is a phenomenon that involves the interlocking of information and communication technology companies, telecommunication networks and content providers from the various media platforms like magazines, newspapers, radio, television, films and the like.

Nearly all television news channels and newspaper houses in India have significant online presence. They continue to attract most of the online traffic in India. The Times of India, the Hindu, the Tribune, Hindustan Times, NDTV, Indian Express, IBN 7, are few examples.

Mint, a business newspaper, not only does normal interviews, but also does weekly shows on topics, even giving a wrap up of the top business news of the day, just like a TV station. Similarly, Tehelka, a weekly news magazine, has taken convergence to the next level. They already produce videos which are put up on YouTube, which are then linked to their websites.

With specific reference to convergence and Indian media, Vashishta and Negi have mentioned that 'Many Voices, One World' or the 'MacBride Report', as popularly known, was a result of a world-wide research conducted by UNESCO, to address the disparity of communication between the 'First world' and the 'Third world' countries or the developed and under-developed or developing Nations. This tended to marginalize the developing world, through disparity and imbalances in communication, which included India. A Balance of Payments crisis in 1991, which brought India to the brink of bankruptcy, ushered in the age of economic reforms. One of the biggest beneficiaries of these reforms was the Telecommunications and the Information Technology sector.

With the growing technological advancement, Indian media has evolved a new aspect of digitalizing the content today.

From the world point of view, John O'Sullivan and Leopoldina Fortunati in 'Media convergence -expanding perspectives beyond the digital' show the long-standing independence of media convergence from digital technology, illustrating processes of combination and adaptation in pre-digital media. Through examples of historical cases of newspaper supplementation, add-ons, changing form of the serialized novel, relationship between telephone and broadcast media to demonstrate the extent, variety, and dynamism of change, they bring into focus processes of remediation that have long pertained in analogue media.

As per Malissa Maria Mahmud in 'Social media: A boon or a bane', the prevalence of social media leads to potential of language deterioration, and positive attribution towards social media may increase the tendency to overlook the

implications it has on students' language acquisition; semantically and syntactically.

Social media sites have offered numerous avenues for educators to enhance English language learning in the context of blended learning environment. Research done by proved that academicians and educators agree that hybrid or blended learning approach has proven beneficial. However, positive feedback and perception that students have upon social media, changes their language acquisition. Social media such as 9gags and Tumblr have become a globalized phenomenon, not to forget Facebook and Twitter.

As the medium for people to reach out evolves, so does the language used. In the context of language, globalization takes place in terms of the evolution of an abbreviated, short forms of English language used in chat groups, social sites for instance "b4" for "before" and "RUOK" for "are you okay?". Also, the length of sentence becomes shorter and there are certain types of structures that are intentionally avoided such as relative clauses within Internet communication.

This is a cause for worry, due to the numerous violations in grammar and vocabulary which will eventually influence students' academic writing.

Dr. Samrendra Sharma in 'Social Media: A boon or A bane for society and individuals', published in 2019 JETIR January 2019, concludes that social media is a boon to people all around the world. The main advantage is connectivity. With a rapidly changing world, social media is continually providing us with new processes and advances for businesses to grow and various ways for easier communication among individuals. Social media helps us to communicate, with friends or family, quickly and efficiently. It provides a platform for the people to interact with each other, spread awareness, show talent, advertise, present their opinions and convey their thoughts via virtual communities

Venkateswarlu and IT Rao in 'Social media gives voice to voiceless dalits in India: An analysis' conclude that the media, has the responsibility to safeguard the rights of the socially-economically deprived sections including the Dalits, being the fourth pillar of a democratic nation. It has power to bring social equality to the people neglected in the society. Internet has been widely used by the people living on the margin of the society as an alternative to the mainstream media. In India, Dalits comprise of more than 200 million. However, their socio, political and economic issues, are noticed by miniscule numbers in mainstream media. Thus, there is a need for the educated Dalit population to find an alternative media through which they can express and respond with outside world. In this scenario, social media has proved to be a boon and avenue for educated Dalits. This paper analyses in detail about how social media platform such as Dalit websites, social media such as blogs are an alternative media to verbalize the issues of Dalits in India, thus providing a 'voice to the voiceless.'

In the same breath, in 'The role of online media gatekeeper in the ERA of digital Media' Rusdi and Rusdi say that online media journalists, who act as gatekeepers, interpret the role of the journalist profession, that has an impact on society. The verification process, as a journalistic routine process, is actually believed to reduce information confusion.

Methodology

This research paper followed the methodology of both primary data and secondary data for research.

In case of primary data, a sample survey questionnaire of 10 questions was formulated and circulated over the internet, on Google Form. The responses of the sample size of 70 respondents were recorded. The respondents were a cross section of society, all professionals from various fields of study, primarily from Army, with minimum qualification of being a graduate.

The secondary data was collected with the help of second-hand information, from statistical inputs from various research papers and government and non-government sites. Various internet sites were also visited. Same have been listed in references.

Data collection and data analysis

The primary data survey report, which was collected on internet, was analysed by means of a pie chart for the sample size of 70 respondents. The online questionnaire with inputs and feedback was obtained from various parts of India.

For secondary data, various previous research papers on the subject were studied and information from statistical inputs from various research papers and government and non-government sites was taken.

The research survey, with objective answers from all over India, was based on the questionnaire framed from the hypothesis of the paper. The response was as follows: -

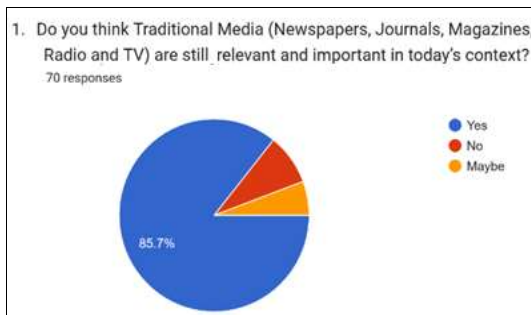


Fig 1

Out of the 70 respondents in the sample survey, 60 of them (85.7%) felt that Traditional media is still valid in today's context, whereas 6 of them (8.6%) felt that they are not valid. About 5.7% (4 respondents) were non-committal.

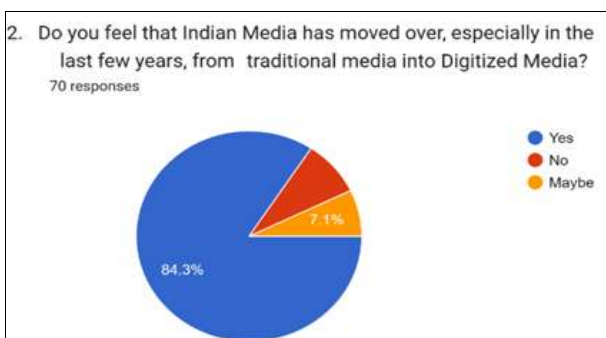


Fig 2

To the query that Indian Media has moved over to the digitized mode, an overwhelming majority (84.3%) or, 59 respondents said YES. 6 said NO and 5 could not decide.

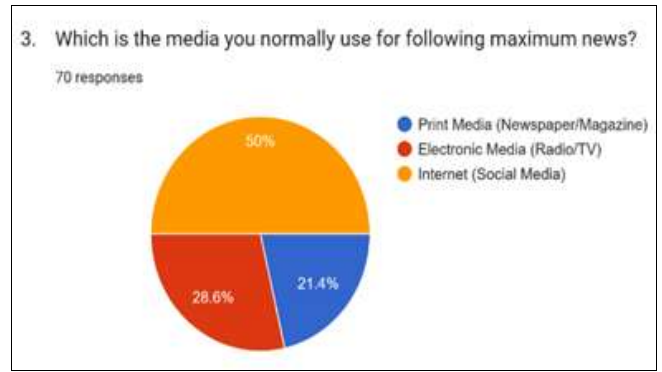


Fig 3

Exactly 50% of the respondents (35 in number) use Internet for their news following while 20 of them (28.6%) use Electronic Media (namely Radio and TV), whereas 15 respondents (21.4%) rely on Print Media for their daily news requirements. Contrast this with the fact that in Question No 1, almost 86% felt that Print Media is still relevant.

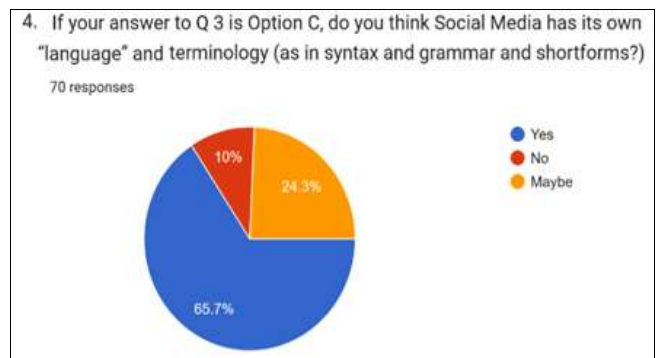


Fig 4

An overwhelming nearly two-thirds majority (65.7%) of those who used Internet for their daily news requirements, felt that Internet had developed its own language and terminology (to include short forms, grammar and syntax). 7 respondents (10%) felt that Internet did not have its own terminology, while 17 (24.3%) could not decide and remained non-committal.

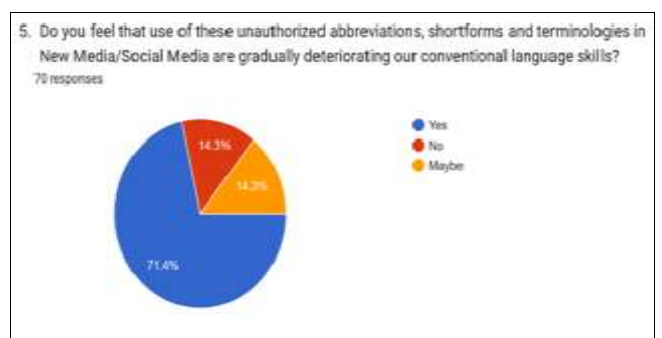


Fig 5

The use of these unauthorized abbreviations and short forms, does have an impact on conventional language skills, which most likely deteriorates, as told by 50 of the respondents (71.4%). 10 respondents said it did not deteriorate the language skills and balance 10 were non-committal.

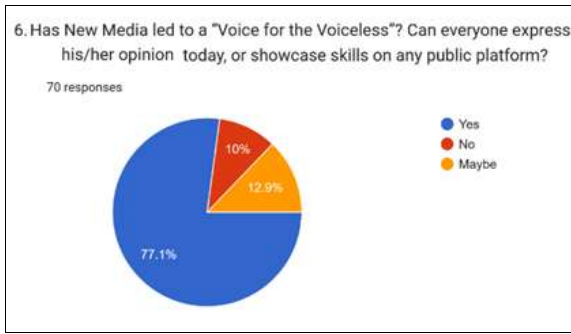


Fig 6

54 of the respondents (77.1%) felt that New Media had indeed provided a “Voice for the Voiceless” and allowed people from all strata to share and showcase their skills in the public domain. No one could be stopped. 7 respondents felt the opposite while 9 could not decide.

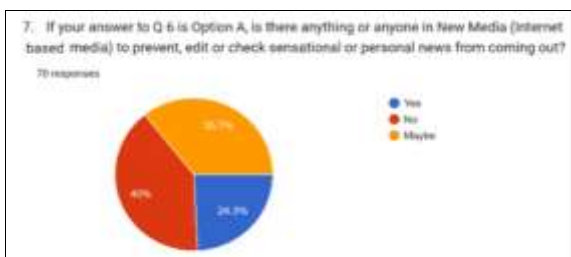


Fig 7

28 respondents (40%) felt that, though New Media has provided a “Voice for the Voiceless” there is no one intermediary (or a gatekeeper) to keep a check on what is being projected. 17 respondents (24.3%) felt that there was a gatekeeper, who sifts the inputs whereas 25 respondents were non-committal.

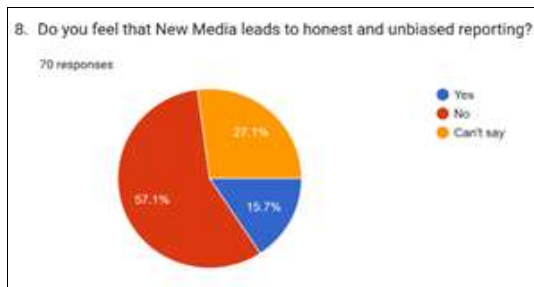


Fig 8

40 respondents (57.1%) felt that New Media does not report in an honest and unbiased manner. There are various other considerations that limit the honest and unbiased reporting. 11 respondents (15.7%) felt that New Media reports honestly, whereas 27.1% could not decide.

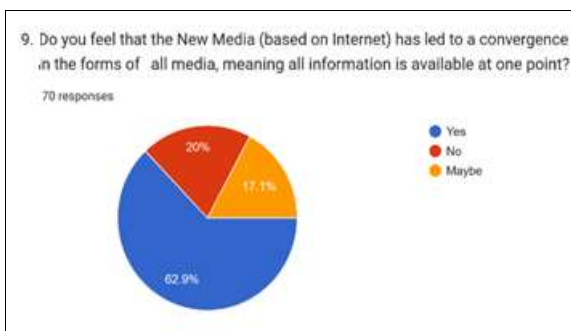


Fig 9

44 respondents did feel that New Media has led to a convergence in all the forms of media, in that all information is available at one point. 14 respondents (20%) felt this was not so whereas, 12 respondents (17.1%) were non-committal.

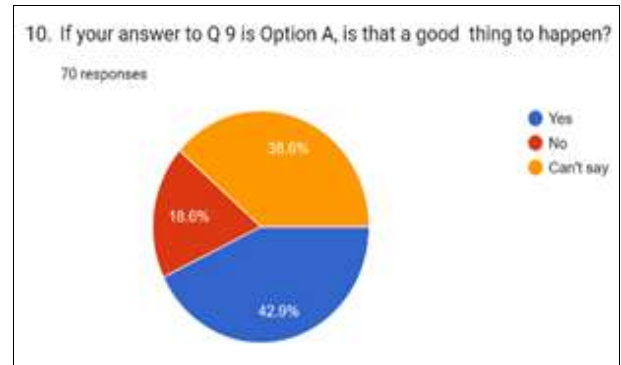


Fig 10

Out of the 70 respondents, 30 of them felt that New Media (and its convergence) is a good thing to happen overall. 13 respondents (18.6%) felt it was not a good thing, whereas 27 respondents (38.6%) were non-committal.

Discussion and results

As can be seen from the results of the questionnaire and the study papers, certain conclusions have emerged. Traditional media still is relevant, as per 85% of respondents. So H1 hypothesis is true.

50% people still use traditional media for their daily news consumption. Internet has, although taken over in a big way, with its own terminology, which may not be good for students. Though majority felt that new media provides a voice for the voiceless, opinion is divided over whether there is a check on the news being reported, but there is a majority opinion that it leads to sometimes biased and dishonest reporting. So, the H2 hypothesis is also validated. Though almost 63% respondents felt that new media has led to a convergence of media, opinion is divided as to whether this is a good or bad thing to happen. So H3 hypothesis does not have a clear conclusion and is therefore again true.

Conclusion

In conclusion it may be said that traditional media still has its place under the sun, even though modern media has nearly threatened to eat it up. New media, though it helps connectivity, suffers from some pitfalls; namely growing consumerism, materialism and greed. This hampers honest and unbiased functioning.

Present day social media prevents language development syntactically and semantically too.

Media is a boon, if it is socially responsible, unbiased, non-political, informative and educative to the masses but not to one class alone. It is also a curse, if it carries information or coverage to sensationalize, create curiosity among the public, misrepresentation of facts at the cost of someone’s reputation and resorts to yellow journalism.

For long-term solutions, a middle path will have to be found. The educational institutions need to educate, train, groom and prepare the youth to be more discerning viewers

rather than passive spectators or participants in order to avoid any irresponsible influence or working of the media.

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