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## Popularity Of Print Media As Compared To Social Media: An Exploratory Study Of The People's Perceptions On The Reliability Of News In Uttarakhand

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### Introduction

Social media has on the one hand given freedom of speech and expression (Enshrined in the Article 19 (1) a of the Indian constitution) to every citizen of India, which is in sync with what the constitution drafters had envisaged, but has also raised the question of unscrupulous 'untrained' people playing the role of journalists (citizen journalism). A large number of these people may not have the essential journalistic skills, ethics and training, whereby raising questions about the credibility of news in social media platforms.

The Hindu was the first newspaper in India to have a website which was launched in the year 1996. Foreseeing the impact that social media can have on newspapers, Indian newspapers started launching their online editions and apps. The movement was mainly spearheaded by The Times Group and followed by all English, Hindi and regional newspapers.<sup>1</sup> Another issue to be mentioned here is that these e-papers, had more takers when they were free of cost, than once subscribed.

One of the significant issues that need to be discussed here is about the legality of newspaper PDFs being circulated by third party. The Indian Newspaper Society (INS) calls its 'illegal', but there is hitherto no clarity on this.<sup>2</sup>

It was difficult for the researcher to learn the precise number of copies of The Times of India, Hindustan Times, Garhwal Post, Dainik Jagran, Amar Ujala, and Rashtriya Sahara sold in Uttarakhand each day because newspaper circulation is a closely-guarded secret of media organisations. On the reading and circulation statistics found on the RNI website, the analysis is based. News articles regarding surveys conducted by a few

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<sup>1</sup>Available at:

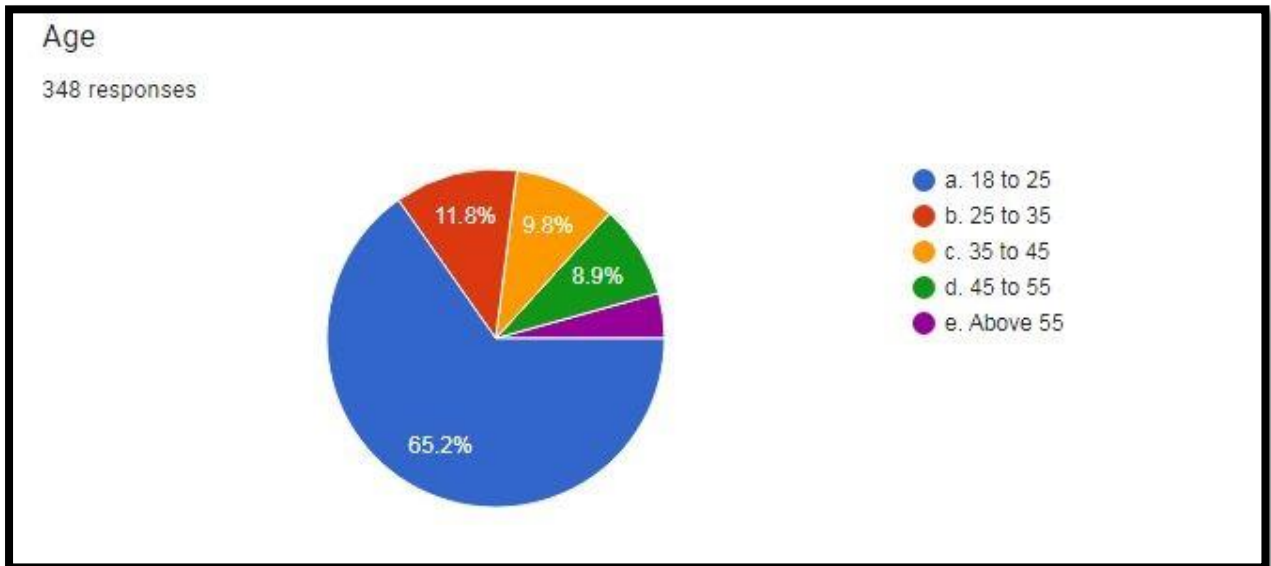
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282866887\\_Impact\\_of\\_Social\\_Media\\_Online\\_Newspaper\\_In\\_India](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282866887_Impact_of_Social_Media_Online_Newspaper_In_India)

<sup>2</sup>Available at: [https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/circulating-newspaper-pdfs-illegal-via-social-media-hurts-journalism-ins-120121101125\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/circulating-newspaper-pdfs-illegal-via-social-media-hurts-journalism-ins-120121101125_1.html)

independent organisations, however, assisted in bridging the gaps. The senior reporters and editors that made up the key informant interviewees were all based in Uttarakhand. Because the material was confidential, they were unable to answer all of the questions.

The study is based on newspapers in Uttarakhand and may not be completely replicable nor accurate in the global perspective.

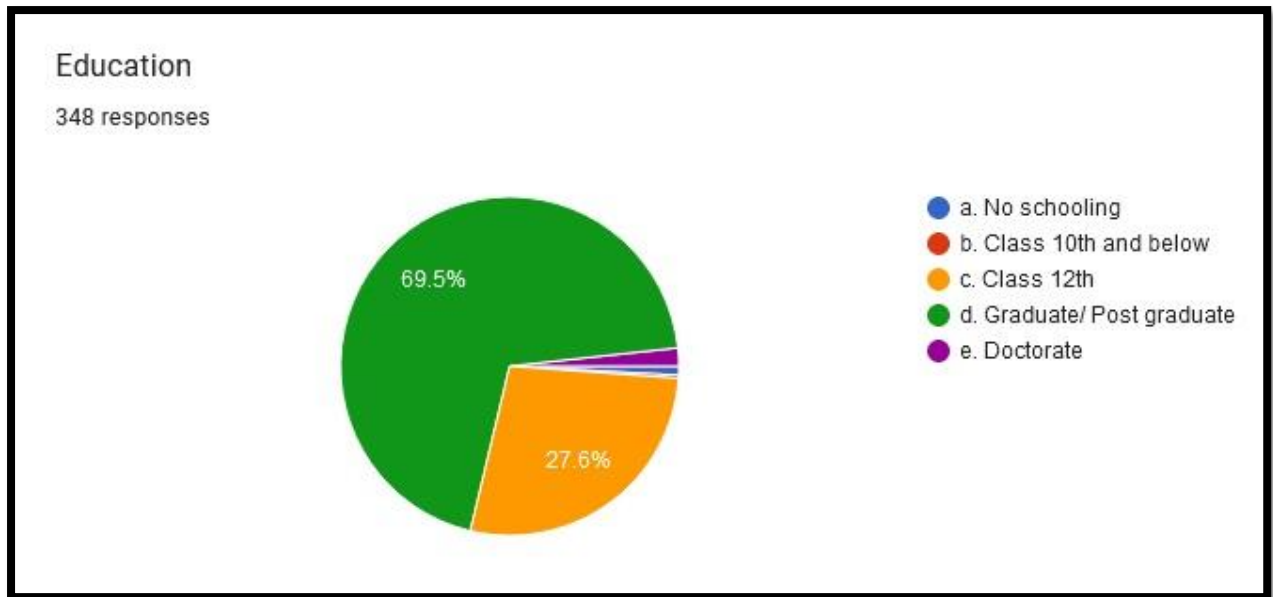
**Figure-1: Distribution of the Sample Population on the basis of Age**



The study findings showed that the maximum proportion of the respondents in the survey (65.2 %) were aged between 18 to 25 years. This was followed by those aged between 25 and 35 years and this section constituted 11.8 % of the total respondents. 9.8 % of the total respondents were aged between 35 and 45 years while those aged between 45 and 55 comprised 8.9 % of the total respondents. Respondents aged above 55 years were very less in number.

Thus, it was observed that the younger aged participants in the survey were well attuned to the value of reading newspapers and in turn accorded due respect and readership to the newsprints as a source of authentic information.

**Figure-2: Distribution of the sample population on the basis of education**

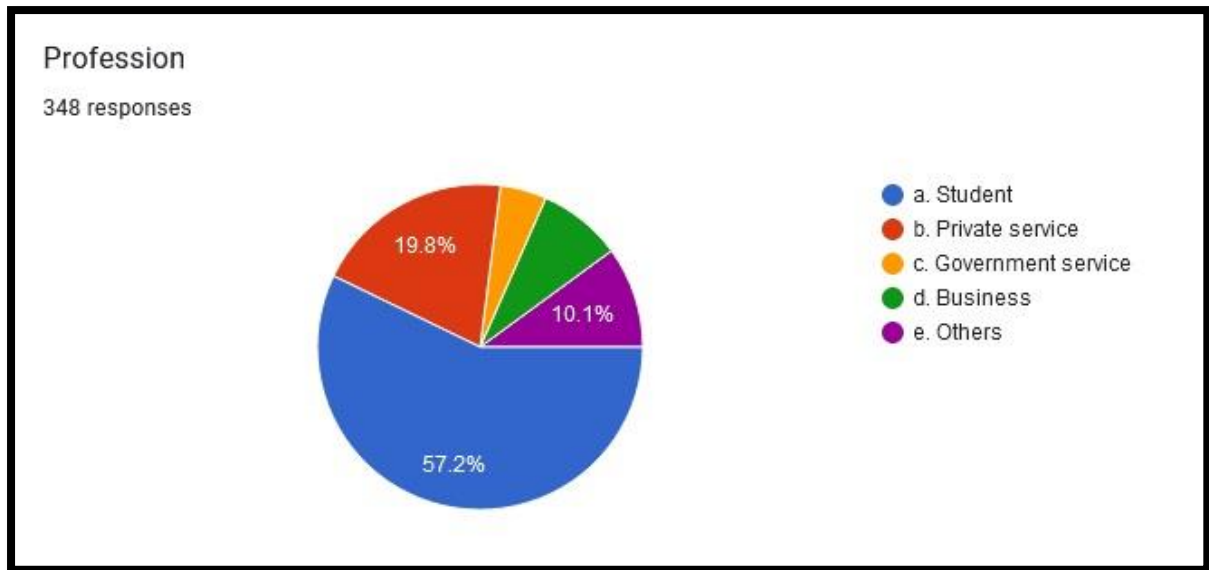


The participants in the survey were asked to enumerate the level of education they had obtained. Their responses are shown in the Figure-2. Most of the respondents (69.5 %) were either graduates of post graduates, while 27.6 % of respondents had education till class 12<sup>th</sup>. Those who had doctorate degree, schooling below class 10<sup>th</sup> or no formal schooling were very less in number.

Thus, it was observed that the larger proportion of the respondent population belonged either to the graduate of the post-graduate category. This shows that the maximum participants were educated enough to appreciate the newsworthiness of the newspapers they read on a regular basis.

They were apparently less inclined to make mistakes in stating their preference for adhering to a particular form of news carrier. The graduates and postgraduates tended to reach out for news that they relied on through the medium of specific newspapers. This shows the deep seated belief of the population which is young and educated on making an informed choice of opting for the newspapers as the source of authentic and reliable news.

**Figure -3: Distribution of the study sample on the basis of the occupation of the respondents**



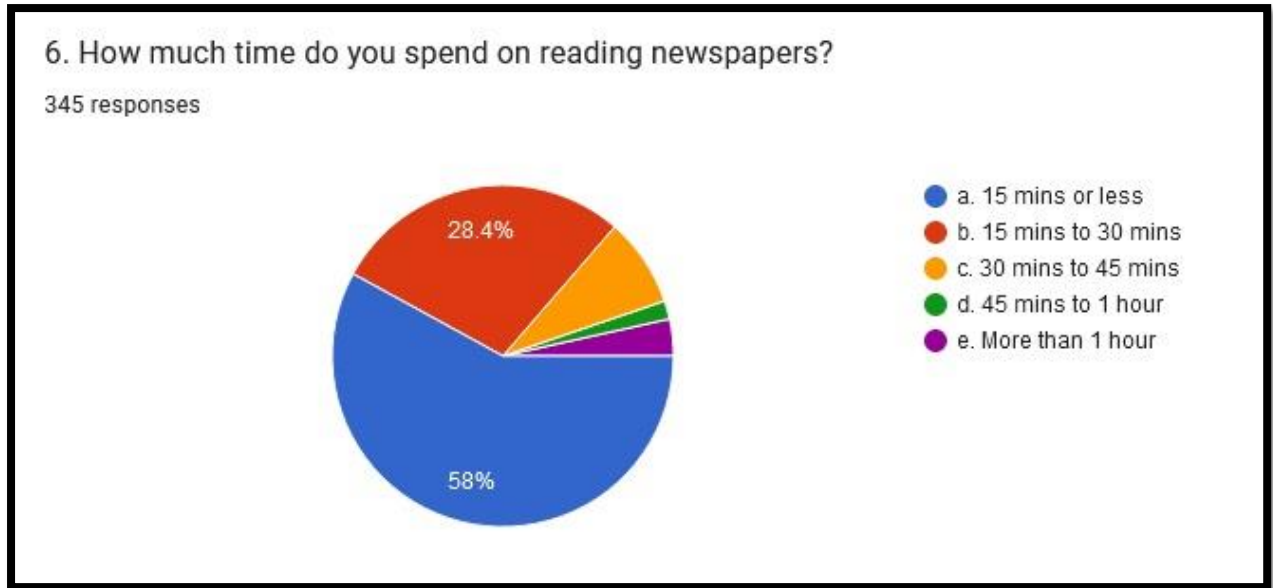
When studied on the segregated on the basis of their occupation, most of the respondents (57.2 %) were students. Those working in private sector constituted 19.8 % of the respondents, while 10.1 % were those who chose the opinion of others.

Those having some kind of business of working in government sector, were very less amongst the respondents.

Thus, it was further observed that there were very few other than students who provided maximum readership to the newspapers being loyally subscribed to in most of the areas studied to ascertain the fact of what was the most reliable for of news source being credited by the larger public popularity.

The other categories of occupations were that of government servants and independent businessmen. However, the category that had maximum presence was that of students and those two who were in the graduate and post graduate levels.

**Figure- 4: Time spent usually while studying newspapers**



When asked about the time they spend on reading newspapers daily, 58% respondents said that they give less than 15 minutes to newspapers. 28.4 % respondents said that they take out 15 to 30 minutes for newspapers. Very less respondents said that they give 30 to 45 minutes to newspapers daily and the number of those who read newspapers for more than 1 hour daily, was even less.

Thus, it was apparent that on an average the largest proportion of the respondents were spending on an average about 15 odd minutes every day to the reading of the newspaper.

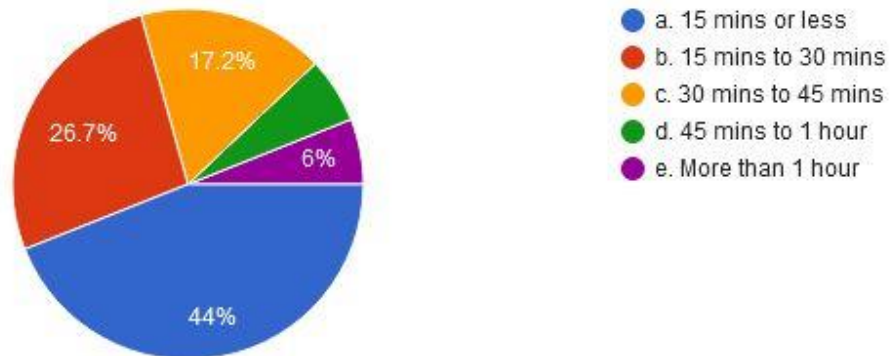
To be able to better understand the time they spend on reading newspapers today and sometime earlier the respondents were also asked to respond to the query about how much time on an average did they usually tend to spend on reading the newspaper say about five years ago.

The responses have been enumerated in Figure -5.

**Figure-5: Average time spent reading the newspaper about 5 years ago**

### 7. How much time did you spend on reading newspapers 5 years ago?

348 responses



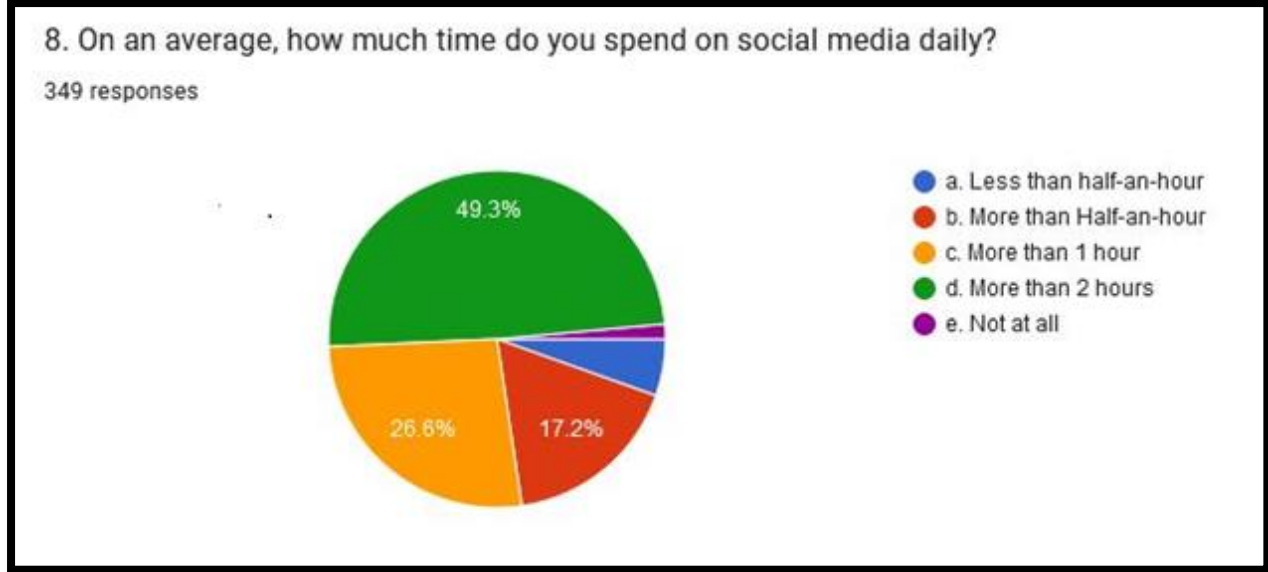
When they were asked how much time they spend on an average on reading the newspaper about five years ago the responses received were enumerated.

A total of 44 % respondents said that they used to spend 15 minutes or less daily on reading newspapers five years ago. Those who gave 15 minutes to 30 minutes to newspapers daily five years ago, constituted 26.7 % of the respondents. While 17.2 % of respondents said that they gave 30 to 45 minutes to newspapers five years ago daily, 6 % of the respondents said that five years ago they read newspapers for more than one hour daily.

Thus it was derived from the above that the respondents maintained a steady habit of reading the newspaper initially for about 15 minutes on an average. This habit had not changed with the passage of time, They spent on an average 15 minutes reading the newspaper 5 years ago and they do the same even now, five years later.

To ascertain the comparability of the time spent on newspapers and the social media the respondents were asked to inform about how much time on an average basis did they allocate to the perusal of the social media. The responses have been enumerated in Figure-6 below.

**Figure-6: Time spent on the social media on an average daily basis**



A total of 49.3 % respondents said that on an average they spend more than two hours on social media daily, while 26.6 % respondents said that the average time they spend on social media daily was more than one hour. Those who spend more than half-an-hour on social media daily, made up 17.2 % of the respondents. Very few respondents said that they spend less than half-an-hour on social media and even less number of respondents were those who said that they spend no time on social media.

Thus, while the social media was poised to take over the thought processes of the youth all over the country the situation in Uttarakhand showed that the youth were balancing their information gaining choices between the newspapers and the social media. They were exercising their ability to discern between the hyped up social media news as well as the validated or invalidated news circulating around it.

**Conceptual set up of the Media and its Facilitation by the Public in Uttarakhand**

The infrastructure of media consisted mainly of newspapers, state-owned radio networks, ad commercial film industries. This medium was used for disseminating the political views from the centre to the regions. Apart from these, print medium such as pamphlets and posters were used to propagate the political views during the Independence movement. With the increase in the audience numbers, commercialisation of television with the introduction of advertising started in 1970. The same year also saw the rise of India’s first domestic satellite programme with the launch of SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment). The rapid growth of television started in 1980s. The country’s first domestic communications satellite was INSAT-1A. With the help of this satellite, networking of all the regional Doordarshan stations was made possible. In 1982, our country hosted Asia games which were broadcasted in colour across the country. Privatisation of TV enterprises was not started during that period. Television in

those days was used for providing new information, grooming young talents and for spreading the culture. Private channels started to appear in the 20th century. As per the details furnished by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the number of private television stations and government channels as on 2016 were found to be 857 and 190 respectively (MIB, 2016).

Internet has removed several communication barriers across the nations by introducing several new diverse forms of communication. Internet medium minimises physical distances, inequalities and prejudices; thereby has a positive impact on the public issues. Wikipedia which was launched by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger in 2001 has 17 million articles and serves as the largest reference resource on the internet (Cohen-Almagor, 2011).

In 2015, India overtook China as the country with the second-largest internet market in terms of total subscribers. In 2017, there were 400 million active Internet users worldwide. The internet user base was predicted to reach 829 million users in 2021, according to networking behemoth Cisco. Only 8% of Indians used the internet between 1995 and 2010, which is a very low percentage. Afterward, between 2011 and 2015, the number increased to almost 30%. Between 2014 and 2015, there was a tremendous rise. In other words, it took 15 years to reach 100 million internet users, followed by another 3 years, 200 million, 300 million, and finally 400 million. Due to the increasing availability of mobile internet connectivity, internet usage has been rapidly expanding in recent years.

### **1.1. Reach of Print and Electronic Media in India**

The print industry in India saw a decline in its growth from 16.9% in 2008 to 8.7% in 2009. The growth rate further decreased to -0.3% in 2009. The growth of print industry in 2013 over 2012 was found to be 8.5% and is expected to be 9% in 2018. According to a report by FICCI-KPMG, the print industry continued to display retarded growth in 2016, especially in the case of English newspapers (FICCI-KPMG, 2017). Regional markets of the print industry performed well due to the steady backing by advertisers. Advertising revenues for the vernacular newspapers are covered by the local retail and advertisement agencies. Further, the growth of the local newspapers is also supported by people's affinity to consume the content in local language. The growth of vernacular language newspapers in tier II and tier III cities was projected to be 4,870 crore in 2017 (CAGR11%); whereas, the growth of English print industry was projected to be 4,150 crore in 2017 with a CAGR of 5%.

In 2015, it was discovered that the circulation figures and advertising earnings for the regional newspapers were rising. In India, the number of print media publications increased by 5.13% for the year that concluded on March 31, 2016.



According to a report titled "Press in India 2015-16," which was created by the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI) and released by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting (I&B), a total of 5,423 new publications were registered during the year, bringing the total number of registered publications to 110,851 from 105,443 in the previous year. Out of the total print media publications, 16,136 were registered as newspapers, and 94,715 were registered as periodicals. There were 105,443 print media publications in 2014–15, an increase of 5.8%. India, where paid daily circulation figures are rising annually, is one of the print market's brightest emerging markets, according to Audit Bureau of Circulation. The average number of publishing centres is expanding at a CAGR of 3.28%, while daily copies are expanding at a CAGR of 4.87%.

Maximum growth is recorded by Hindi language newspaper whose CAGR is 8.76% during the period from 2006 to 2016 (ABC, 2017). Vernacular language newspapers have contributed to the largely to the growth of print media. Among the vernacular languages, Urdu had the highest number of circulation followed by Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam. Hence, it can be seen that vernacular language newspapers are still popular among the people in Gujarat, Assam, Punjab and other places in North India (FICCIKPMG, 2016). The print industry in India is growing at a CAGR of 7.3% only next to the television industry.

## **Conclusions**

Due to the immediate nature of social media, print media must now put more of an emphasis on unique, in-depth, and well-researched material to stand out and draw readers to their publications. Newspapers stand out in the Uttarakhand media landscape because of their reputation for providing reliable and honest news and stories. The need to carve out a niche is emphasised by Webb (2017), who points out that publishers must stay on top of their problems in order to be relevant in the media as a result of competition. According to the report, social media's greatest problem is the ethical difficulties it has introduced. the challenge of authenticating and confirming content coming through social media. As they place a greater emphasis on ethics and standards to safeguard their brand from the ethical problems brought on by social media, newspapers must maintain their long-standing image as a reliable source of news. According to the survey, social media has accelerated the news cycle, which is the current trend in many print media outlets throughout the world. This is a result of the immediacy provided by social media platforms, which also help journalists by enabling them to report news and stories virtually anywhere, at any time, and to a significant extent. According to the report, social media has displaced newspapers in terms of circulation and ad revenue, just like it did with other print media businesses around the world. The younger segment of the Indian population, which prefers the participatory aspect of new media and the decreased latency with which they may receive news, is to blame for the decline in print media circulation, according to Rajendran and Thesinghraj's (2014) Pan-

India research. Because more educated people can utilise the internet to acquire any information, there is less demand for print media.

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