

## **Newspaper in the Digital Society Students and Newspaper Reading: A Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In an age of sophisticated technology, high-speed Internet, iPads, Smart phones and 5.9 billion mobile phone subscriptions it would not be wrong to say the online world has replaced the newspaper as the chief of the media landscape in many western societies. News consumption habits among young people have changed radically in recent years. Since the beginning of the 21st century, various studies have indicated a decrease in readership of printed newspapers along with a constant fall in young readers. According to sources roughly about 52 % of young adults are picking up newspapers at least once a month and at times, read the dead-tree edition of the news fourteen times a month, reports NPR "HuffingtonPost". Despite the dominance of digital media, some millennial say that they're attached to paper due to trust and ease of use, noted a separate 2011 study by TRU, a youth research group. On the other hand, the internet is playing more and more of a leading role, with special reference to social networks, in terms of news consumption amongst people aged between 16 and 30 years," as explained by Andreu Casero Ripollés. Therefore this study would look into the recent trend in newspaper reading and access among young adults studying in various colleges in Bangalore city belonging to the age group of 16-25. The Methodology used in the study was the content analysis and the survey method content was analyzed to collect secondary data while a questionnaire was administered to the mentioned age group to collect the required primary data. The data was analyzed and the inferences to the study were drawn from it to come to certain conclusions with regard to the topic.*

**Keywords:** Readership, Youth, Digitalization, Newspapers, News, Media Consumption

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the public's appetite for information and entertainment grew, technological innovations paved the way for the creation of the electronic mass media of the twentieth century. Satellite communications and the Internet are now among the products of today's Information Age, sparked by the demand for even more channels of communication that are faster, clearer and farther reaching. From the simple, crude printing techniques of yesteryear to today's sophisticated digital communications that have canvassed the globe, the mass media have continually evolved and adapted to changing demands and technological opportunities. Over the years, a greater variety of mass media forms have appeared, combining new and old forms of technology and content. In some cases, the media have become more global, local, interactive and personal. In general, the media has also grown more specialized, more competitive and become more consolidated.

The Newspaper History being 400 years old it took about 150years from the invention of the printing press in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century for a first regular publication that could be called "A Newspaper". The newspaper is the first thing that greets you every single day in the morning. You read what is happening in all parts of the world and for a while get out of the narrow circle of your personal affairs. So much is happening every day that unless you keep yourself

abreast of these changes you cannot adjust yourself to them or move with the times smoothly and easily. For a busy person, it is hardly possible to read everything that it contains. One is interested in politics, another in sports. These are matters of personal preference. But generally, it is necessary for all alike to read the progress that is being made from day to day in the affairs of your country and in the affairs to the world. Reading a newspaper makes a man fit to participate usefully in a cultivated society. Newspapers keep us informed of what is taking place around us. It tells us of political events, sensational events, etc. Even the advertisements have their value. In these days a newspaper is indispensable to life. The act of personal investigation requires self-study to be followed by self-thinking and analysis. Self-study, otherwise referred to as reading at one’s own accord, requires a habit, which is known as reading habit. Reading makes way for a better understanding of one’s own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. “Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one’s life time (Green, 2001).

**Newspapers as a Medium**

It is true of the past and the present and it is true of the future also. Neither the advent of the television nor that of the Internet could affect the importance of the newspaper. The reason for this is the width, breadth and the depth of the news provided by the newspaper, its low cost and the ease of providing the news at our leisure and comfort as many times as we desire. Today the world has become smaller with the advancement of media and the communication system has grown among countries. Communication plays a vital role in the modern civilization and the younger generation mostly the school and college going crowd that is found to be the most vulnerable to modern technology. Print being a traditional media form has proven itself of being one of the most effective forms through time. With advancements in technology it is somewhere fighting for its survival and trying to make its presence felt amidst the youth. In this contemporary time the role of newspapers is very significant in the promotion of trade, commerce, business and education. The Newspaper has undergone a metamorphosis to specially suit its younger audiences. A modern day paper has done miraculous activity in recent years and shown that even in the age of internet, news portals, radio and television; newspaper can still change life though and mind of the society. They can still help in creating a common opinion and work as a corporate social responsible tool and fight for justice if needed. They can change the government or help in punishing a criminal by simply acquiring public support and demanding justice. This is one of the major tools of democracy.

**Present Print Media Status**

**Table 1.**

<i>Print Media Market</i>	2011	2012	2013	<i>2013 Growth</i>	2014p	2015p	2016p	2017p	2018p	<i>CAGR (2013-18)</i>
Total Advertising	139	150	163	8.70%	179	199	222	248	275	11.10%
Total Circulation	69	75	81	8.10%	85	88	92	95	99	4.20%
Total Print Market	209	224	243	8.50%	264	287	313	343	374	9.00%
Total Newspaper Revenue	197	211	230	8.70%	250	273	300	329	361	9.50%
Total Magazine Revenue	12	13	14	4.50%	14	14	14	14	14	0.30%
Total Print Market	209	224	243	8.50%	264	287	313	343	374	9.00%

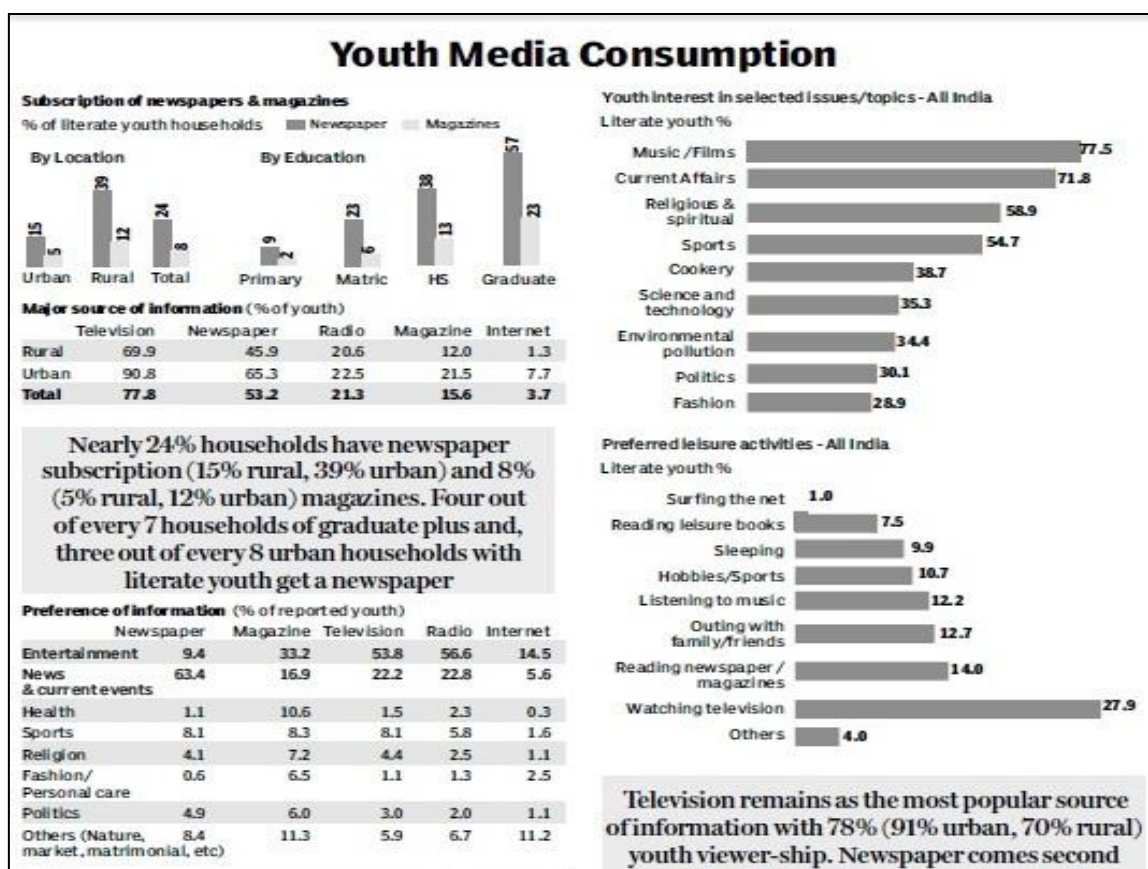
Source: KPMG Report 2014

The Print industry has grown by 8.5% from Rs 224 billion in 2012 to Rs 243 billion in 2014. The growth achieved was seen to be slightly better than the KPMG’s estimate of 7.602 per cent last year. The long-term growth in the sector looks very promising with industry players witnessing strong growth and a possible future demand in the regional market.

Even though Print media has shown steady growth in the last calendar year, the macroeconomic environment continues to be challenging. The Indian economy has witnessed a slowdown, clocking an average GDP growth rate of only 4.9% in the financial year 2013-14. Contrary to the prevailing trends in the global print media, where there is intense competition from digital media, the print sector in India is showing a strong upsurge. The print industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9% for the years 2013-18, as against an estimated 8.7% expected last year.

### Why Should Students Read The Newspapers?

Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Dadzie, 2008). This implies making meaning out of recorded information either printed or non-printed in the life of an individual. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which include for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information and for knowledge. Reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context (Palani, 2012). He believes reading is a process of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving.



Source: The Financial Express Survey

The significant role of newspapers in shaping the society has been perceived since the dawn of its history. Newspapers are historically known for offering a wide array of information and

knowledge sources. Newspaper have been the most conventional and popular medium of conveying local, regional, national and international news to the readers. Reading newspapers provides wide ranging benefits for everyone in general but especially for the students as they remain the most invaluable source of news and information, despite the onslaught of the electronic media. Reading newspapers regularly is an extremely gainful activity for the students. It is a treasure trove that renews its wealth every day before it is on our doorsteps. A quick and careful scan of the newspaper gives a clear idea of what to read and what to ignore. Reading newspaper makes a good habit and it is already become a part of the modern life setting. This habit will widen your outlook and will enrich ones knowledge. Improve one's skills; widen the scope of one's knowledge which is an integral part of education and very useful especially for student. Newspapers provide interesting things and ideas which can assist students in their learning process at school and college. Not only are the news itself that are beneficial for students, but it also develops their language skills and increases their word vocabulary. Students read newspapers to broaden their knowledge and keep abreast of the recent developments in various fields, be it in politics, economics, science, sports or art and culture. Newspaper is an important tool of the learning process for students. Reading newspapers every day is must for both students and adults for growth and enlightenment irrespective of the class or field of their life. For reading newspapers every day is highly educational, and an important informal education in that. One can ignore this important function of the life at one's own peril.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The young are increasingly moving to online media, thereby creating an environment where substantial audience segments have every day experiences with reading and using online news services (De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010). Yet, despite the many predictions of the demise of the traditional media and in particular the printed newspaper, quite large audience segments have remained on the print platform and no viable business model has been developed for the online news media. Taking into account the ongoing, large-scale processes of media change that include convergence and globalization we expect local media to *diverge and diversify* (Fagerjord and Storsul, 2007), thereby innovating genres of journalism and types of content. Further, we believe that local news will remain popular, following Norris and Inglehart (2009), who recently confirmed that national and regional differences persist and prevail despite the leveling effects of globalization.

To know about the world and its environment, a child helps himself through reading books, newspapers and other magazines. Once the child has been taught to read and has developed the love for books, he can explore for himself the wealth of human experiences and knowledge through reading. Children, who miss the opportunity of getting in touch with books in their early stages of life, find it hard to acquire good reading habits in their later years (Deavers, 2000). Reading is an intellectual action which is possible only if a man forms a habit of reading and practices these from childhood. Reading habits, therefore, play a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency. "Laws die but books never." Indeed, books are the most suitable medium through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation (Issa et al, 2012).

Bhan and Gupta (2010) on the other hand have examined study habits and academic achievement among the students belonging to scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste group. The results revealed that sex has no significant impact on the study habits and academic achievement of students. Higginbotham (1999), examined the reading interests of middle school-sixth, seventh, and eighth grade-students in a metropolitan, public school

located in a southeastern state Atlanta, Georgia. The result of this study showed differences in interest by gender, which is congruent with many societies. There is little knowledge about the everyday reading practices of tertiary education students and how these practices affect their academic achievement. Every day reading consists of individuals' reading activities for a variety of purposes, such as for relaxation or information (Issa. et al, 2012). The belief that from middle childhood through adulthood, reading becomes a major component of studying, and much information learned through studying is initially acquired through reading. Thus everyday reading activities in which students engage may, considerably influence their studying skills and subsequent academic performance. There is a general sense in which one appreciates the link between good habits of reading and the academic performance of students generally, (Issa et al, 2012).

## **OBJECTIVES**

The long-term decline in newspaper circulation has prompted numerous efforts to research, reorganize, and restructure the newspaper in order to meet the changing needs of its various audiences. One audience of particular interest is that of the adolescents i.e. the younger school and college going group that is the most vulnerable, for it is this young person who is just developing newspaper usage patterns that may remain with him or her for a good part of his or her adult life.

Hence the main objectives of the study would be:

1. To analyze and Identify different types of newspaper Readers amidst the age group that is considered for the study
2. To find out the importance of news and newspapers that prevails as amidst this age group of young people.
3. Also analyze the impact digital media has on the newspaper readership patterns of the group considered for this particular study.
4. To examine the reading habits (styles) among students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is the investigation of adolescent newspaper readership (mostly on the student community) and its evolution as young people grow into adulthood. Using data from the survey conducted, the author identifies different types of newspaper readers and attempts to classify them on the basis of a comprehensive set of individual, environmental, and stimulus object factors. The findings emphasize the importance of environment variables in explaining differences in the adolescent's newspaper reading habits.

The method of analysis used for this particular study is Content Analysis Method, where content of various websites and articles published was analyzed to draw certain inferences. A survey was conducted and a questionnaire was administered to 100 College Students from various economic and educational backgrounds studying in different colleges in Bangalore City.

### **Survey**

A questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 100 students in the urban zones of Bangalore City. The analysis indicated that the most of the students who were administered the survey questionnaire were readers of various newspapers in circulation in the city and had ample access to news and news material. Respondents in the age group between 16-25 years were represented to be the most vulnerable of the student community and the data were

weighted in proportion to the age distribution in the population. Still, the figures should be interpreted with caution, as they may overestimate media consumption. The survey data were analyzed and inferences were drawn to come to certain conclusions.

## **FINDINGS**

1. It was found that the 80% of the respondents belonging to the age group of 16-25 that was considered for this study had access to a Newspaper every single day, i.e. each of them did come across one local newspaper (Print/Online) every single day.
2. With 80% of students having access to a minimum of one newspaper every single day the readership of the same is found to be 64%. This shows that the access to newspaper is not directly related to readership of the same.
3. Of the data acquired the 64% of respondents who claimed to read the newspaper every day, 36% of them were seen to access it in the printed version, 26% of them were found to access the newspaper in the online or e-version that include (Newspaper pages on Social Networking Sites) and 2% of them were found to access newspapers on their Mobile applications.
4. The respondents of the survey also stated that news was not a very important part of their daily routine. Of all the respondents it was found that only 43% of all the respondents accessed news regularly and followed news as well on a day to day basis. They were also found to have a positive attitude towards news as they felt news was a very important part of their daily affairs.
5. The trend that was seen prevalent among the respondents is that the electronic versions of the news material and newspapers are getting more popular with this younger crowd. The e- versions of newspapers though still not a very preferred form is found to be making inroads into becoming a preferred media form.
6. There is a presence of a positive impact of digital versions of newspaper and news access.
7. Reading habits can be classified in a number of forms. From the data collected from the survey it is seen that the respondents i.e. the students seem to be having a number of varied habits when reading is concerned.
  - a. Some are seen to read it every day to improve one's basic knowledge.
  - b. Some are reading the newspaper only when time permits.
  - c. Some read the newspaper to access only particular information that is required.
  - d. Some read for leisure.
  - e. Some were seen to read only the main headlines to keep themselves aware about the day's happenings.
8. The students who were found to be reading the newspaper regularly were mostly found to belong to families who have the habit of reading newspapers and discussing news at home on a regular basis.
9. Of the respondents a small percentage of students were also of the notion that special hours in school and colleges dedicated to library and reading helped them gain interest in news and reading newspapers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Those who are just outside of the millennial age group will easily remember a time before Facebook and Google. During these formative years the older audience members developed different consumption habits to their younger counterparts currently making their way through their first 20 years of adulthood. Every paper is rethinking its business strategy as readers keep abandoning print for digital, and in particular mobile, devices.

If newspapers create new and engaging ways for their readers to connect with their brand, the readership will grow. Looking at online opportunities that complement the printed form (instead of simply scraping print content in minimal form and teasing readers to read the rest in print or subscribe to a digital format) is the route they should be uncovering. Allowing its citizens to be journalists, creating an environment where individuals can upload their personal or business awards and accolades, getting local with content that speaks to a specific region and engaging in a customized online presence is what draws a reader in and leans them toward more in-depth reporting in print. The news consumption patterns of these younger readers that are being formed now will become habits that will stick with them for a good few years into their future; this would also include things like getting a first job, making a mark in the society, proving to be knowledgeable and responsible individuals of the society. With the future of newspapers rapidly going digital and publishers racing to adopt or create sustainable business models that work online, the fact that younger audiences show a greater preference for adopting digital media products means hopefully they'll eventually manage to take advantage and That's why "the youth" is so important to the newspaper publishers today.

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