



## Print Media v/s Electronic Media: A Need for Introspection

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### Abstract

*The media industry has seen significant changes over the past few decades, with the rise of electronic media challenging the dominance of traditional print media. Print media, which includes newspapers, magazines, and books, has been around for centuries and has been the primary source of news and information for many people. Electronic media, on the other hand, has seen a dramatic increase in popularity with the rise of social media, online news websites, and streaming platforms. In this research paper, we will explore the advantages and disadvantages of print and electronic media and consider how they have impacted society and the media industry. The comparison between print media and electronic media is an interesting and ongoing debate in the media industry. While both forms of media have their advantages and disadvantages, it is important to consider the impact they have on society and whether they are meeting the needs of their audience. Print media, such as newspapers and magazines, has been around for centuries and has traditionally been the main source of news and information for many people. It is tangible, portable, and easy to read. Print media has a long history of credibility and reliability, with many readers trusting the information that is presented to them. Electronic media, on the other hand, has exploded in popularity in recent years with the rise of social media, online news websites, and streaming platforms. Electronic media is accessible from anywhere with an internet connection and can reach a vast audience quickly. While electronic media has its benefits, such as instant access to breaking news and the ability to interact with others online, it also has its drawbacks. There is a growing concern over the spread of misinformation and fake news online, and the algorithms used by social media platforms can create filter bubbles that limit the diversity of news and information that people are exposed to.*

**Keywords:** Newspapers, magazines, online websites, social media, internet management, electronic media, advertisement, information, credibility and reliability, popularity, digital device, television, radio, smartphones, streaming online platforms, sports, lifestyle, business, entertainment.

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### Introduction

With the advent of the internet, loaded with social networking sites, the scenario of media affect has changed considerably. Looking at the rise in the use of the internet, the print and electronic media have begun to question the future of their industries. For about 600 years printing has been the basic tool of mass communication for storing and disseminating of information and knowledge. Since the latter half of the previous century, electronic media has made a significant impact on the mass media landscape yet print media has not been overshadowed and its social reference<sup>2</sup>. In this line, when the history of modern mass media in India is considered, it is

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<sup>2</sup> Ahlers, D. (2006). News Consumption and the New Electronic Media. Harvard International Journal of

estimated that it started in 1780 when the first newspaper in India was published.

Radio was introduced in 1924 and television in 1959. The Internet was introduced in the early 1990s. In contrast to numerous Western nations, both circulation and the quantity of publications are indeed on the rise. According to the findings of the National Readership Survey (NRS) in 2006<sup>3</sup>, the reach of the press medium (dailies and magazines combined) has increased. The count of newly registered publications has experienced a marginal increase in recent years. However, a significant challenge confronting print media in India is the decline in reading habits within certain groups. We may term it as the rise of literacy- refers to someone who, although able to read, is uninterested in reading<sup>4</sup>.

In an era dominated by electronic media, it becomes imperative to explore the reasons behind the shift of attention from print to digital platforms. Given the current landscape, this study aims to unravel people's attitudes towards both print and electronic media. Against this backdrop, the research seeks to comprehend how individuals perceive and engage with print and electronic media, investigating their influence on daily decision-making, encompassing aspects like shopping and lifestyle. Further, the study also attempts to compare the effects of print media and electronic media on people's lives. The electronic media was limited only to television and radio, whereas print media was related to newspapers, newsletters, and magazines categorized into various types detailed as below: Sports, Lifestyle, Food and leisure, Automobiles, News related (India Today, outlook, etc), Business, and Entertainment.

## Discussion

Print media in India has a rich and diverse history, reflecting the country's cultural, linguistic, and demographic complexity. Some detailed notes are discussed on print media in India.

## Historical Overview of Print Media

The 18th-century introduction of newspapers during British rule marked a transformative period in India's media landscape. The Bengal Gazette, founded in 1780 by James Augustus Hickey, stands as a testament to the beginning of print journalism in the country. This laid the foundation for the proliferation of newspapers in subsequent years, becoming an essential medium for information dissemination<sup>5</sup>.

- **Languages and Diversity:** India's linguistic diversity is reflected in its print media, with publications in Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, and more. This linguistic inclusivity ensures that newspapers and magazines reach a wide audience, fostering a sense of regional and cultural representation.
- **Prominent English Newspapers:** The Times of India, with its extensive circulation, has played a pivotal role in shaping English print media in the country. Known for its editorial quality, The Hindu has maintained a reputation for unbiased reporting. Hindustan Times, a widely read daily in northern India, has become a significant voice in the region.

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Press/Politics, 11(1), 29-52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1081180X05284317>

<sup>3</sup> National Readership Survey (NRS), (2006).

<sup>4</sup> Bozena I. Mierzejewska [bmierzejewska@fordham.edu](mailto:bmierzejewska@fordham.edu) (2013) Media and Internet Management, by Bernd W. Wirtz, International Journal on Media Management, 15:2, 137-138, DOI: 10.1080/14241277.2013.785883

<sup>5</sup> Ray G.N., Future of Print Media, Inaugural address presented at the Seminar on "Future of Print Media" on 17th February, at Surendranath College for Women, Kolkata), (2009).

- **Regional Newspapers:** Regional newspapers are vital for delivering localized news and catering to specific cultural nuances. For instance, Ananda Bazar Patrika in Bengali, Dainik Bhaskar in Hindi, Eenadu in Telugu, and Mathrubhumi in Malayalam serve as prominent regional voices, addressing the unique needs and interests of their respective audiences.
- **Magazines:** Magazines in India span a wide array of topics, from politics and business to fashion and lifestyle. Notable publications such as India Today, Outlook, and Frontline contribute to the country's intellectual and cultural discourse, offering in-depth coverage of diverse subjects.
- **Role in Society:** Print media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information. Acting as a watchdog, newspapers contribute to the accountability of those in power. This role extends beyond news reporting to editorial content, influencing public discourse and societal perspectives.
- **Censorship and Press Freedom:** India's press freedom has been a topic of discussion. While there is a generally free press, instances of censorship and restrictions on media have been reported. Balancing freedom of the press with societal and political considerations remains an ongoing challenge.
- **Readership and Circulation:** The vast readership of newspapers in India underscores the medium's significance. Newspapers reach millions of households daily, becoming a part of people's daily routines. Circulation figures vary, with some publications having a national reach, while others maintain a more region-specific focus.
- **Emergence of Digital Media:** The rise of digital media has prompted a paradigm shift in consumption patterns. Print media outlets are adapting to this change by expanding their digital presence. This evolution reflects the industry's dynamic nature, with traditional newspapers leveraging digital platforms to reach a broader and more tech-savvy audience<sup>6</sup>.

### Historical Overview of Electronic Media

Electronic media in India is a dynamic and evolving landscape that reflects the nation's cultural diversity and technological advancements. The industry continues to adapt to changing trends and consumer preferences, making it a crucial aspect of India's media ecosystem.

Electronic media in India has witnessed a significant evolution since its inception. The introduction of radio broadcasting dates back to the early 1920s, and television made its debut in 1959. The state-owned Doordarshan became the sole TV broadcaster until the liberalization of the media sector in the 1990s.

- **Television Broadcasting:** Television is a dominant force in Indian electronic media. Doordarshan, the national broadcaster, has been joined by numerous private channels, creating a diverse landscape. Popular channels include Zee TV, Star Plus, Sony Entertainment Television, and Colors. The rise of cable and satellite television has led to a plethora of content catering to various tastes.

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<sup>6</sup> Chatterjee M., Contemporary Changes in Print Media in India. Paper presented at a Seminar on "Future of Print Media" on 17th February, at Surendranath College for Women, Kolkata, (2009).

- **Radio Broadcasting:** All India Radio (AIR), established in 1936, is one of the oldest radio broadcasting organizations in the world. With regional and national stations, AIR serves diverse linguistic and cultural communities. Private FM channels have also proliferated, contributing to the diversity of radio content.
- **News Channels:** The advent of 24-hour news channels has transformed the media landscape. Channels such as NDTV, Aaj Tak, and Republic TV provide round-the-clock news coverage. This format has influenced public discourse and the way news is consumed in India.
- **Digital Media:** The digital revolution has impacted electronic media profoundly. Online streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ Hotstar have gained popularity, offering a wide range of content, including original productions. News websites and social media platforms also play a crucial role in disseminating information.
- **Role in Society:** Electronic media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing societal norms. Television and radio have been instrumental in disseminating information, entertainment, and cultural content, contributing to the nation's social fabric.
- **Advertising and Revenue:** Advertising plays a significant role in the revenue model of electronic media. Television and radio channels generate income through commercials and sponsored content. The increasing reach of digital platforms has also attracted advertisers to online spaces.
- **Regional and Language Diversity:** India's linguistic diversity is reflected in electronic media. Channels and programs are produced in various languages, catering to regional audiences. This diversity ensures that electronic media resonates with people across different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- **Government Influence and Regulation:** The government has played a substantial role in regulating electronic media in India. While there is an attempt to maintain standards and ethics, the balance between regulation and freedom of expression remains a subject of debate.
- **Sports Broadcasting:** Sports broadcasting has gained immense popularity, with channels like Star Sports and Sony Ten broadcasting national and international sporting events. This has contributed to the widespread following of sports in the country.

### Challenges Faced by Print Media

The print media industry faces several challenges in the present day. Here are detailed insights into some of the prominent challenges:

- The rise of digital platforms and online news consumption has led to a decline in traditional print readership. Many people prefer accessing news on digital devices, impacting the circulation and revenue of print publications.  
Impact: Print media outlets need to adapt to changing consumer habits and find ways to establish a strong digital presence to remain relevant.
- Advertisers are increasingly allocating their budgets to online platforms and social

media, reducing the revenue generated through traditional print advertisements.

Impact: Print publications face financial constraints, making it crucial to explore alternative revenue streams and develop effective advertising strategies.

- The cost of printing and distribution remains a significant challenge for print media. Rising costs of paper, ink, and distribution logistics contribute to the overall operational expenses.

Impact: Print publications need to optimize production costs to maintain profitability, often leading to compromises in the quality and quantity of content.

- Younger generations, especially millennials, and Generation Z, are more inclined towards digital sources for news and information, contributing to an aging readership for print media.

Impact: Print publications face the challenge of engaging younger audiences and adapting content to meet their preferences and expectations.

- Online news portals and digital-first media outlets are often more agile in delivering real-time news updates. They pose a competitive threat to print media in terms of immediacy and accessibility.

Impact: Print publications must find ways to differentiate themselves and offer unique value, such as in-depth analysis, investigative reporting, and quality journalism.

- Print media relies heavily on physical distribution, which involves logistical challenges, especially in remote or rural areas. Distribution costs and delays can impact the timely availability of newspapers.

Impact: Ensuring widespread and timely distribution becomes a crucial concern for print media, affecting overall readership and market reach.

- Maintaining reader trust and credibility is essential, especially in an era of misinformation and fake news. Instances of biased reporting or inaccuracies can erode trust in print media.

Impact: Print publications need to prioritize accuracy, transparency, and ethical journalism to retain and build trust among their readerships.

- Print media often faces regulatory pressures and censorship concerns. Government regulations or interference can impact editorial independence and freedom of the press.

Impact: Striking a balance between adhering to regulations and maintaining journalistic integrity is a constant challenge for print media outlets.

- The print industry's reliance on paper raises environmental concerns. The production process, including deforestation and energy consumption, contributes to the industry's carbon footprint.

Impact: Print media outlets are under pressure to adopt more sustainable practices, such as using recycled paper and exploring eco-friendly printing technologies.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many industries, including print media. Lockdowns, distribution challenges, and shifts in advertising budgets have affected the financial stability of print publications.

Impact: Print media must navigate the ongoing uncertainties and explore innovative strategies to adapt to the changing landscape post-pandemic.

### **Challenges Faced by Electronic Media**

Electronic media, encompassing television, radio, and digital platforms, faces various challenges in the present day. Here's a detailed exploration of some prominent challenges:

- The rise of digital streaming services, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+, has led to a shift in audience preferences. Traditional television channels face competition

from on-demand, ad-free streaming platforms.

Impact: Electronic media outlets need to adapt to changing viewing habits, potentially rethinking advertising models and creating engaging, high-quality content to retain audiences.

- The proliferation of channels and online platforms has led to content fragmentation. Audiences have numerous options, making it challenging for electronic media outlets to capture and maintain viewer attention.

Impact: Content creators must focus on producing compelling and unique content to stand out in a saturated market and retain audience loyalty.

- Electronic media, particularly online platforms, face challenges related to the spread of fake news and misinformation. Rapid dissemination through social media can amplify the impact of false information.

Impact: Maintaining credibility becomes crucial, necessitating fact-checking measures and responsible reporting to counter the negative effects of misinformation.

- Advertisers are diversifying their spending across various digital platforms, impacting traditional advertising revenue models for television and radio.

Impact: Electronic media outlets need to explore alternative revenue streams, such as sponsored content, product placements, and partnerships, to offset the decline in traditional ad revenue.

- The increasing trend of consuming news online poses a challenge to traditional television news channels. Online news portals and social media platforms often provide real-time updates.

Impact: News channels need to enhance their online presence, invest in digital platforms, and provide unique perspectives and in-depth analysis to compete in the digital news space.

- Viewers are shifting from traditional television to on-demand and online platforms. The younger generation, in particular, prefers flexible, personalized viewing experiences.

Impact: Electronic media outlets need to understand and cater to changing viewing habits, offering content on multiple platforms and adopting innovative distribution strategies.

- Regulatory pressures and censorship concerns can impact the editorial independence of electronic media. Governments may impose restrictions, affecting the freedom to report on certain issues.

Impact: Balancing adherence to regulations with the principles of journalistic freedom becomes a delicate task for electronic media outlets.

- The digital nature of electronic media raises concerns about data security and privacy. Cybersecurity threats can compromise the integrity of digital content and user information.

Impact: Electronic media organizations need to invest in robust cybersecurity measures to protect their content, platforms, and user data.

- Rapid technological advances require constant investment in infrastructure and equipment. Keeping pace with emerging technologies is essential for delivering high-quality content.

Impact: Electronic media outlets need to allocate resources for technological upgrades and innovations to maintain competitiveness and provide an enhanced viewer experience.

- Audience engagement is evolving with interactive features on digital platforms. Electronic media outlets need to find ways to encourage viewer participation and feedback.

Impact: Building a sense of community and interaction enhances the viewer experience and loyalty, but it requires strategic planning and innovative content formats.

- As content reaches a global audience, electronic media outlets face the challenge of being culturally sensitive and avoiding content that may lead to controversies or offend diverse audiences.

Impact: Content creators need to navigate cultural nuances and adopt inclusive approaches to cater to diverse viewers without compromising on creative expression.

### **Advantages of Print Media**

Print media has several advantages over electronic media. Firstly, print media is tangible and portable, which means that it can be read anytime, anywhere, without the need for an internet connection. This is particularly important for people living in areas with limited or no access to the internet. Additionally, print media has a long history of credibility and reliability, with many readers trusting the information that is presented to them.

Another advantage of print media is that it offers a more immersive reading experience. Print publications, such as books and magazines, often contain high-quality photographs and graphics, which can enhance the reader's understanding of the topic being discussed. Additionally, print media can be more effective for long-form storytelling, as readers are able to engage with the content at their own pace.

One study found that print media can also have a positive impact on memory retention. Participants who read a print article were able to recall more information than those who read the same article on a digital device. This suggests that print media may be more effective for learning and retaining information.<sup>7</sup>

### **Advantages of Electronic Media**

Electronic media, on the other hand, offers several advantages over print media. Firstly, electronic media is more accessible and convenient than print media. With the rise of smartphones and tablets, people can access news and information from anywhere with an internet connection. This means that news can be delivered to people in real-time, which is particularly important for breaking news stories.

Another advantage of electronic media is that it offers greater interactivity and engagement. Social media platforms, for example, allow users to share and comment on news stories, which can foster a sense of community and encourage discussion. Additionally, electronic media offers a greater degree of personalization, as algorithms can be used to tailor news and information to individual preferences.

One study found that electronic media can also have a positive impact on news consumption. Participants who were exposed to news stories on social media were more likely to read the full article than those who were exposed to the same stories on the news website<sup>8</sup>. This suggests that electronic media may be more effective for engaging audiences with news content.

### **Disadvantages of Print Media**

Despite its advantages, print media has several disadvantages. Firstly, print publications can be

<sup>7</sup> Ella Creamer, "Reading print improves comprehension far more than looking at digital text, say researchers", The Guardian, 15 December, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Sun Kyong Lee, Nathan J. Lindsey, Kyun Soo Kim, The effects of news consumption via social media and news information overload on perceptions of journalistic norms and practices, Computers in Human Behavior, 75, pp. 254-263, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.05.007>.

expensive to produce and distribute, which can limit their reach and accessibility. Additionally, print media has a limited shelf life, as newspapers and magazines are often discarded after they have been read.

Another disadvantage of print media is that it can be slow to react to breaking news. Print publications often have long lead times, which means that they cannot provide real-time updates on developing stories. Additionally, print media can be less engaging than electronic media, as it does not offer the same degree of interactivity and personalization.

### **Disadvantages of Electronic Media**

Electronic media also has its drawbacks. A major worry revolves around the proliferation of misinformation and fake news. Social media platforms have been criticized for their role in the dissemination of false information, which can have serious consequences for society.

Another disadvantage of electronic media is that it can create filter bubbles, which limit the diversity of news and information that people are exposed to. Algorithms used by social media platforms can create echo chambers, where users are only presented with information that confirms their existing beliefs and biases. This has the potential to create polarization and foster a lack of understanding among various groups in society.

### **Cases in Print & Electronic Media India**

There have been quite a few high-profile cases in both print and electronic media in India.

#### **Jessica Lal Murder Case**

**Background:** Jessica Lal, a model, was shot dead at a socialite's party in 1999. The prime accused was Manu Sharma, the son of a prominent politician.

**Media Coverage:** The media extensively covered the trial, initially focusing on the controversial acquittal of Manu Sharma by the trial court. This led to public outrage and a revaluation of the case.

**Outcome:** Following public pressure and media scrutiny, the Delhi High Court re-examined the case and overturned the acquittal. Manu Sharma was subsequently convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

#### **Aarushi Talwar Murder Case**

**Background:** In 2008, 14-year-old Aarushi Talwar was found murdered in her home. The case took a mysterious turn when the family's domestic help was also found dead. Aarushi's parents, Rajesh, and Nupur Talwar, were initially accused of the murders.

**Media Coverage:** The media extensively covered the investigation, trial, and the twists in the case. The coverage included speculations about the possible motives and various theories surrounding the murders.

**Outcome:** The Talwar's were convicted in 2013, but in 2017 the Allahabad High Court acquitted them, citing a lack of evidence. The case remains one of the most intriguing and controversial in India.

#### **Nirbhaya Gang Rape Case**

**Background:** In 2012, a brutal gang rape occurred on a moving bus in Delhi, leading to the



death of a young woman, later named Nirbhaya (meaning fearless). The incident sparked widespread protests and discussions about women's safety in India.

**Media Coverage:** The media played a crucial role in bringing the case to public attention. The coverage focused on the heinous nature of the crime, the subsequent arrests of the perpetrators, and the legal proceedings that followed.

**Outcome:** The perpetrators were sentenced to death, and the case had a profound impact on India's legal and societal approach to sexual violence.

### 2G Spectrum Scam

**Background:** The 2G spectrum scam involved allegations of corruption in the allocation of 2G spectrum licenses during the tenure of former Telecom Minister A. Raja. The scam is estimated to have cost the government billions of dollars in lost revenue.

**Media Coverage:** The media extensively covered the scandal, exposing the irregularities in the allocation process and the involvement of politicians and business figures. The coverage contributed to public awareness and demands for accountability.

**Outcome:** A special court was set up to handle the trial, resulting in convictions for A. Raja, Kanimozhi (daughter of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi), and several others. The convictions were a significant development in addressing corruption in high-profile cases.

These cases highlight the complex interplay between media, public opinion, and the judicial system in shaping the narrative and outcomes of legal proceedings in India.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, both print and electronic media have their advantages and disadvantages. Print media offers a more immersive reading experience and has a long history of credibility and reliability. However, it can be expensive to produce and distribute, and it is slow to react to breaking news. Electronic media, on the other hand, offers greater accessibility, interactivity, and personalization. However, it can spread misinformation and create filter bubbles. Also, there is an advantage of advertisement through electronic media as compared to the print media. It is important for both print and electronic media to take a step back and evaluate their role in society. They need to consider the impact they have on their audience and how they can best serve their needs. This may involve a shift in focus towards more in-depth reporting and analysis, or a greater emphasis on fact-checking and verification in electronic media. Ultimately, both print and electronic media have their place in society, and it is up to us as consumers to be critical and discerning in the information we consume. We should be mindful of the sources we rely on and be open to diverse viewpoints and perspectives.

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