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An Evaluative Study of Influence of Social Media on Journalism: Interference or Professional Advancement

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

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Abstract

Journalism is an established profession in the society across the globe. With the sudden increase in social media technologies in last few years, the nature of Journalism practice has been significantly influenced. Due to added value of social media traditional journalists have consciously embraced this technology for delivering and promoting their work. Enormous literature is available on impact of social media to journalism practices leading to various perspectives. Yet least qualitative studies are available on the perception of journalism practitioners on their professional interaction with social media. The study is an attempt in this direction to find out the professional impact of social media and the active role being played by the journalism practitioners to embrace the technology. It also attempts to find an answer to that whether the advancement of social media technologies in journalism practice is interference or professional advancement.

Keywords: journalism, journalism practices, social media, Web 2.0, communication, social participation

1. Introduction

The emergence of new media technologies in recent years has changed the face of journalism practice. "Each new development in the world of journalism seems to change the way the consumers receive their information and each new development in journalism lead to a decline in one form of media consumption and a spike in consumption of another form" [1]. "Journalism is experiencing considerable changes linked to social, cultural, economic, and technological transformations" [2]. Social media is an extension of Right to Freedom of expression in a virtual world. Social media has brought new characteristics like interactive dialog and social

interaction which can be used by the Journalists for real conversations with their audience [2]. “In the 2017 Global Social Journalism Study, 75 percent of journalists describe social media as *completely* or *to a large extent* necessary to promote and distribute content” [3]. News organizations have also started adopting social networks for sharing news and information with the decline of circulation of print copies of newspapers.

Take into consideration of the changed structure of journalism practices with the influence of social media the current work was intended. The basic intention of this chapter was to find out the usage pattern of social media and find answer to the research question that whether social for journalists is interference or professional development.

2. Social media

Social media has been defined from various perspectives. A range of interpretations can be found in the area. Some of the prominent ones have been mentioned below:

Technopedia [4] in nutshell refers social media to be an umbrella term for various internet based applications which lends end users the ability to create contents and mutual interaction.

University College London views social media as a technology that affords ‘social scalability’. It argues that traditional media was divided into two parts: (a) public broadcasting for large group and (b) private communications for small groups which has been bridged by the social media. The social media bridge over the public and private media has created media sociality lending an element of scalability for information dissemination among the largest and smallest group [5].

Encyclopedia Britannica [6] has defined social media as technologies, platforms, and services that enable individuals to engage in communication from one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many. Kaplan and Haenlein [7] in their most cited work view social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.

On the other hand, Carr and Hayes [8] defines social media from a technological perspective as Internet-based, disentrained, and persistent channels of mass personal communication facilitating perceptions of interactions among users, deriving value primarily from user-generated content. McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase opines that social media are web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, co-create, modifies, share, and engage with user-generated content that is easily accessible [9]. Burgess, Marwick and Poell have defined social media as digital platforms, services and apps built around the convergence of content sharing, public communication, and interpersonal connection [10]. Miller et al. argues that social media should not be seen primarily as the platforms upon which people post, but rather as the contents that are posted on these platforms [11]. On the other hand, Hopkins views Social media as computer-mediated communication software that enable users to create, share and view content in publicly networked one-to-one, one-to-many, and/or many-to-many communications [12].

3. Social media platforms

According to purpose and function FEMA has classified social media into seven categories [13].

3.1. Social networking

Social networking platforms are informal means of communication to discover people with similar interests and connect virtually. They can be in the form of social websites or applications. According to Boyd and Ellison social network sites can be considered as web-based services where individuals can (1) create a public or semi-public profile (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system but the nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site [14].

Examples: Facebook, Twitter, GooglePlus, and LinkedIn.

3.2. Blogging (using publishing websites)

Blogging is a personal online virtual diary to record ideas, stories, articles and many more things.

Examples: Wordpress, Blogger.

3.3. Managing multiple social media platforms

An aggregator is a tool that can be used to “aggregate social media site feeds in one spot, allowing users to search by keywords.”³¹

Examples: Hootsuite

4. Objective

The work has been carried to meet the following objectives:

- To find out the usage pattern of social media by Indian Journalists.
- To know the perception of journalists about social media. Interference vs. professional development.

5. Methodology

In order to meet the objectives, journalists engaged in news channels of India were considered as sample for the study. Further, only Hindi and English news channel were included in the

study. A questionnaire designed using five point Likert scale was presented to the journalists. Those who responded to the questions were interviewed through video conferencing.

6. Data analysis

About 350 questionnaire was distributed to the journalists of Hindi and English news channels. Out of 350 distributed questionnaire 150 submitted the completed questionnaire. Response rate was 42%.

Table 1 shows the list of news TV channels that were part of the study.

Out of 150 submitted questionnaires 40 (26%) were from English news TV channels and remaining 110 (73%) were from Hindi news TV channels. Moreover, 98 respondents were female and 52 were male.

The summary of usage pattern practiced by the Indian journalists is presented in **Table 2**.

It reveals that majority of journalists are utilizing the social media tools to keep the readers abreast of recent developments around the world. Most striking is the fact that majority of them respond to user's view and are engaged in active communication.

It was astonishing to further note that about 95% of respondents were virtually present on their social media platforms 24 × 7. Also, they pointed out that various news channels are running campaign or episodes to curtail the false information and evaluate the information shared over the social media platforms. **Figure 1** shows the average time spent on social media platforms.

The journalists were then asked to give their opinion on social media as interference or professional development. About 96% of the respondents considered social media as a vital tool for professional development. Many of the respondents cited many uses of the social media which has helped them to excel professionally. Some of the opinions are mentioned below:

"In a global economy, media professionals cannot confine themselves to purely local connections due to which social media is inevitable".

"Through social media information is available 24/7 and you have the power to decide when you want to access it and for how long".

"In an era of information overload, social media is only platform where flow of information becomes overwhelming by looking for ways to narrow focus (e.g. Twitter lists, which allow you to group those you're following in categories and better filter your results)".

"Through social media one can look for groups that focus on your career/discipline area, connect with alumni or represent professional groups in your field".

"Online communities created in these social media spaces provide opportunities to share resources, spark questions that expand collective learning and make connections that sometimes lead to employment offers, consulting requests and collaboration opportunities".

Hindi news TV channels

1	Total TV
2	News World India
3	DD News
4	IBN7
5	India News
6	NDTV India
7	India TV
8	Live India
9	ABP News
10	Zee News
11	News 24
12	News Nation
13	CNBC Awaaz
14	Khabar Bharti
15	Aryan TV
16	Jan TV
17	Lok Sabha TV
18	Aaj Tak
19	Tez TV
20	Samay
21	Hindi Khabar

English news TV channels

1	Bloomberg Quint
2	BTVI
3	CNBC TV 18
4	CNN News 18
5	NDTV 24 × 7
6	News 9
7	News X
8	Republic TV
9	Times Now
10	WION

Table 1. TV channels under study.

Posting images	70%
Sharing news	80%
Tweeting news	75%
Respond to reader's views	92%

Table 2. Usage pattern.

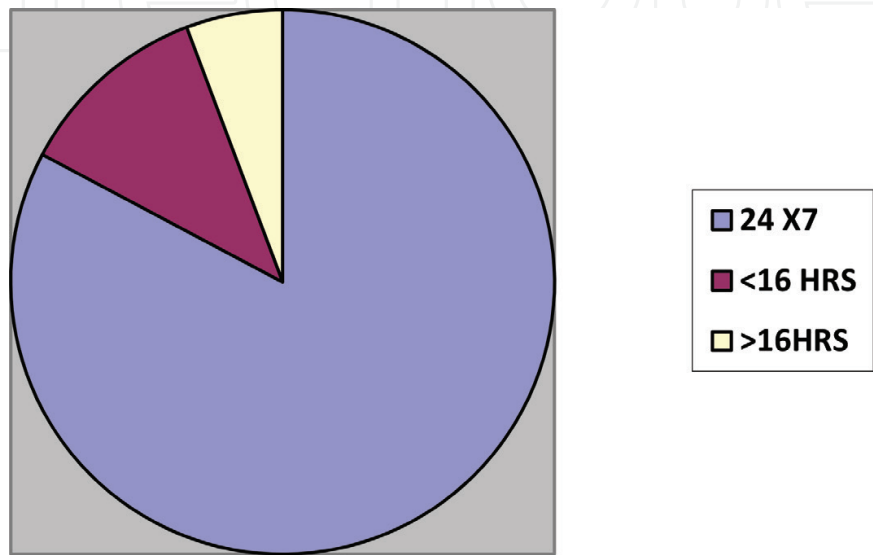


Figure 1. Average time spent on social media platforms.

7. Conclusion

The advent of social media has offered news organizations an enormous potential to market their contents, wider-reach and frame brand image. Either in the form of conversations or newspaper clippings, social interaction has remained a viable source for dissemination of news. However, this form of interaction has become virtual under the impact of social media and extended the news coverage. The significance of social media lies in proper understanding and adoption of various tools. The way social media is reshaping journalism, journalists have positively adopted the change and performing their duties more efficiently in keeping people abreast of recent developments.

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