



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Changing Media, Changing Audience In Post Liberalized India. (1991-2019)

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Abstract:

We are witnessing a dynamic reshaping of the Indian 'mediascape'. This has been underway for more than two decades since the economic reforms in 1990,s the growing impact of globalisation, and the birth of new technologies and new media, or the convergence between old and new media. A new and more intense 'mediatisation' of society and everyday life is emerging. This is happening alongside the rapid reconstruction of the cultural and economic landscape of India itself. In this transformation the communicative and ideological dimensions, the digitalisation of technology, and changes in culture - 'the imaginary' the discursive universe of politics and communication, are all crucial areas for research. The world is moving from the analog to the digital era and this change is having profound and wide-ranging effects. Media is moving from a broadcast form to a network form. Information that was linear is now interactive and mobile. Content has moved from one-way narrative to participatory. Conversation is everywhere, in all forms. A wide-ranging global conversation has begun. The shift in eras is not only a technological shift ,but in a transformational time, people change as well in their expectations, their mindsets, their needs; in what they value and how they connect to each other. (Khandekar.v.k 2010)

This article presents a time line (1990-2019) post liberalized change in media and the Audience with change in social, political, economic and technological advancements in India. (With special reference to GDP, Purchasing power Parity, rise of youth Population, rise of higher education institutions, rise in literacy & growth of IT Industry).

Keywords: *audience, liberalization, media, technology. Gdp, Ppp,*

INTRODUCTION

The Indian media was initiated since the late 18th century with print media started in 1780, radio broadcasting initiated in 1927, and the screening of Auguste and Louis Lumière moving pictures in Bombay initiated during the July 189, among the oldest and largest media of the world (Thomas & Bura 2006). Media of India consist of several different types of Indian communications media: television, radio, cinema, newspapers, magazines, and Internet-based Web sites. Many of the media are controlled by large, for-profit corporations who reap revenue from advertising, subscriptions, and sale of copyrighted material. India also has a strong music and film industry. India has more than 70,000 newspapers and over 690 satellite channels (more than 80 are news channels) and is the biggest newspaper market in the world - over 100 million copies sold each day (BBC News 2012)

Stating its journey during 18th century Indian Media witnessed number of changes , social, technological, cultural, political all either pushing its digits up side or pulling backwards means a To and Fro concept and policy of Media was operating in India.

Indians enjoyed no fundamental rights in the British India; there was no question of guarantee of freedom of expression. When the Bengal Gazette popularly known as Hicky's Gazette started in the 18th century as a first newspaper published in the country the colonial rule conferred no privileges or special liabilities apart from those in the general statute. Soon, however, as is evident from the history of Indian journalism, a plethora of laws relating to media were enacted primarily to suit the interest of the foreign rulers. Coming to post independence, even though the constitution did not make any special mention of the word 'press', the intense debates amongst the fathers of our constitution ensured that the Media would create a special place for itself even without a specific mention. The need for freedom of speech and expression was well accepted by civil society of India and such freedom was also declared by Supreme Court way back in 1950 when the Constitution of India was just operative and the Supreme Court of India started functioning while deciding the question of pre censorship (Press council of India).

However, since then long time has elapsed and with passage of time, there has been paradigm shift in the functioning of media. As a result, "accountability" is a word heard more often than 'freedom' in the context of today's media functioning thereby justifying a serious look to the changing face of Media.

There are three ways to look at how society is informed. The first is that people are gullible and will read, listen to, or watch just about anything. The second is that most people require an in-formed intermediary to tell them what is good, important or meaningful. The third is that people are pretty smart; given the means, they can sort things out for themselves; find their own version of the truth. The means have arrived. The truth is out there. Throughout history, access to news and information has been a privilege accorded to powerful institutions with the authority or wealth to dominate distribution (Bowman and Willis, 2003)

Table 1: Impact of Liberalization on Indian Economical, Social & Technological Parameters.

Change in Social, Technological & Economic Sectors in post liberalized India (1991-2020) (Changing Macro-economic Parameters from 1991-2010)						
Year	GDP in Crore Indian Rupees	No of Higher Educational Institutes in India (colleges and universities)	(PPP) per capita GDP % Change	Youth Population In hundred thousand (age 15-25)	Growth of IT Industry Billion US \$	Growth of Telephone Density in Million
1991	5.15	5932	3.70	15	0.70	55
1992	5.94	6204	4.79	15.3	0.75	60
1993	6.81	6530	4.92	16.4	0.79	65
1994	7.92	6977	6.30	16.9	0.88	70
1995	9.25	7538	7.47	17.7	0.90	76
1996	10.83	8149	7.53	17.9	1.1	88
1997	12.60	8577	3.93	18.2	1.7	104
1998	14.01	9503	5.18	18.7	2.7	114
1999	16.16	9844	6.87	19.1	3.9	127
2000	17.86	10150	6.14	19.6	5.75	135
2001	19.25	10406	4.22	27.3	8.26	140
2002	20.97	11418	4.65	27.6	11.2	146
2003	22.61	12080	7.45	28.4	17.5	151
2004	25.38	12482	9.75	29.9	21.6	168
2005	28.77	13942	10.99	31.3	28.5	187
2006	32.82	16992	11.46	31.9	37.4	214
2007	37.79	22785	11.60	32.4	39.0	278
2008	41.62	28988	7.04	32.7	43.0	363
2009	44.93	29500	6.43	33.3	47.0	397
2010	48.79	30,689	9.82	35.3	50.01	405
2011	87.36	32,000	7.47	40.0	59	415
2012	81	34000	8.18	40.3	79	420
2013	92.27	36000	4.03	40.8	89	425
2014	90.84	38500	3.49	41.5	98	430
2015	113.50	39000	4.41	42.7	120	567
2016	1044.27	39700	6.86	44.2	138	663
2017	111.68	42,000	5.93	45.65	150	818
2018	189.71	46,000	7.55	47.55	165	880
2019	145.66	51,000	4.88	49.67	180	1101

Source:-StatisticsTimes.com (2018), Trading Economics (2018), Youth in India (2017) Srivastava (2015), IBEF (2018) Information Technology in India (2012), Population projection for India and states (2001-2026), A bird's view of Indian Economy (2011), India GDP - per capita (PPP) (2012), Higher Education in India, Population Bulletin (2006), India's IT Industry: High Growth (2001), Indian Information Technology Industry Overview (2010), Economy Watch (2010), Telecommunications Statistics in India (2012), Indian Telecom & IT Status (2007).

Impacts of Liberalization on Indian Media

The increasing influence of electronic media in India stimulated by economic liberalization in early 1990s when India adjusted to an extremely transformed external reality and an emerging internal financial crisis. Both these factors played a key role in framing the Indian politics with some new emerging concepts. While media options multiplied in response to liberalization in India. New investments of approximately US \$ 20 billion were made by MNC companies in India, as a result media options also multiplied (Panchali Mukherji 1999), with the entry of Rupert Murdoch's star TV Network in 1991, MTV, Sun TV India launched in 1992 as first private channel in south India, also the entry of five new channels belonging to Hong-Kong based star TV gave Indians as fresh breath of life. MTV, Star plus, Star movies, BBC, Prime sports and Star Chinese channel after that CNN, Discovery channel, National Geography, made its foray to India. It gave citizens access to numerous news sources as opposed to the sole government regulated news channel of the pre-liberalization era. (Khandekar, 2010). In 1991 the Indian television networks deregulate and cable-satellite network emerged for the first time. Audience got access to five hundred and fifteen cable-satellite channels by June 2010. Moreover, there were thirty three twenty four hour news channels that would constantly engage in political and economic debates and conduct opinion/exit polls in election years (Press Trust of India, 2010a). The number of satellite-radio stations grew from six during the 1990s to three hundred and twelve by the middle of the last decade (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting India).

The print media, despite being challenged by the phenomenal growth of the electronic world, has fought back to record a compounded growth rate of 13 percent. The rapid expansion and diversification of the Indian press at a time when the Western world is talking about the demise of the newspaper by 2030, is in a large measure due to the country's growing population. This is accompanied by rising literacy levels, particularly in the hitherto backward Hindi speaking heartland, and the explosion of the aspiration class estimated at 42 percent that has ridden on the country's sustained economic growth over the last decade.

The Indian Newspaper Society, an organisation of the print media in India with over 990 dailies, bi-weeklies, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies as members publish in 18 languages from all over the country, accounting for over 90 per- cent of the national readership. (Tarun Basu, 2010)

In the 21st century the electronic media reenergized by the internet revolution. Citizens start looking at the internet as an additional source of information; they began voicing their opinion through blogs; opinion polls and social networking websites.

Internet and cable television brought meaningful changes to public and private spheres of life more quickly than education, industrialization or any other socio- economic factor. Digital media been highly disruptive to the Indian media industry. While creating challenges for traditional media companies, digitally enabled media created many new opportunities including the formation of the interactive media industry. "Interactive" is the distinguishing attribute of new media. Media moved to a business that is increasingly audience centric as the audience now commands the power to choose. Bandwidth considerations are becoming less of an issue for delivery and computing power for consumers continues to progress in its capability. Media consumption is gravitating towards increased use of interactive platforms that are not tied to a single location or confined to the display of a single type of media. Media programming is being promoted and distributed across a wider array of platforms. As the reliance on single platforms and channels decreases, the reliance upon quality storytelling, information, design and promotion increases. (John, et., al 2004).

The technological advancement in the era of liberalization burst on scene in the form of internet and World Wide Web all driven in advancement in digital technology. Along with Digitalization came a large number of ancillary communication devices, product and services. First fax machines and computers then cell phones, iPods and blackberries and now social networks as You-Tube, Twitter, Orkut, Face book, LinkedIn, Google+ and the like.

All these factors created a new face of India audience by forming world's largest middle class estimated at 300 million consumers, a number almost equal to the population of USA (Jain, 2001) and projecting towards 583 million by 2025 making India the world's fifth largest consumer market in the world (Mustafi, 2013).

Technology opened doors that have created a new mindset amongst young people. The rise of blogging, sharing music, downloading information, taking part in chat rooms, bulletin boards and online communities has occasioned a new set of values. Consumers have moved from an Age of Competition (importance of ‘Me’) to an Age of Cooperation (importance of ‘We’). There has been a realisation that to get ahead, life should be about participation, involvement and openness rather than aggressive individualism. Far from the apathetic breed of adolescents the media presents, technology has helped create a new mindset that is more about taking part and pro-activity: a ‘lean forward’ attitude. Not only this, but they are a generation of ‘commentators’ who are constantly connected, communicating frequently and generating debate. The ease and multiplicity of communication media means that people have and share more opinions than ever before.

Old Media

New Media



Source: Ross.k & Nightingale.v (2003)

A Transformational Moment

Sometimes so much change occurs that it leads to a “state change.” Warming ice melts and becomes water. Water grows hotter until it changes into steam. The same kind of state change can happen with products and services, with content and its delivery, and even with customers and their expectations. Consider the lifecycle curve of a product or service. The first curve dips down as the product requires initial investment before it “rounds the curve” and begins slow growth. If the product is successful in its marketplace, it enters a phase of rapid growth. Finally, over time, its growth may begin to slow, plateau, and even decline. While a product may disappear altogether, there is also the chance that it will be re-invented and transformed into a whole new form. Think horse and carriage giving way to cars. The core product was still transportation, but delivered within a whole new form.

The shift from one product lifecycle to another is quite familiar, as products follow each other in increasingly rapid succession. Records gave way to 8-Track tapes, to cassette tapes, to CD’s, to MP3 players that download music from the web. The transformational shifts are coming faster and faster. This same kind of shift can take place in a business, or even in an industry as a whole. And at times, a deep shift occurs that affects all industries at once a shift in eras. Think of the agricultural era giving way to the industrial era. Business after business was transformed at once, in parallel. Not only was the nature of work redesigned, but the way people saw themselves and related to one another was deeply affected as well. Mass production and centralization of work in cities deeply impacted workers’ roles, identity, family relationships, as well as communities and culture as a whole.

Today, we are at the cusp of another shift in eras. The world is moving from the analog to the digital era and this change is having profound and wide-ranging effects. Media is moving from a broadcast form to a network form. Information that was linear is now interactive and mobile. Content has moved from one-way narrative to participatory. Conversation is everywhere, in all forms. A wide-ranging global conversation has begun. Notice that the two curves overlap. In a transformational time, the mainstream majority is still on the traditional curve, while the second curve is growing quickly, signaling future growth. (Alex et., al 2008)

Changing Technology, Changing Customers

The shift in eras is not only a technological shift. In a transformational time, people change as well — in their expectations, their mindsets, and their needs; in what they value and how they connect to each other. As technologies change, people change. Customers who used to be happy with a cassette tape with 7-8 songs per side now carry a device in their pockets smaller than a cassette that holds thousands of songs. The same device enables users to make phone calls; keep years of photos; update their calendars, contacts, or work files; send text messages to friends; and access all parts of the web for information on news, local events, travel, stocks, weather, or updated sightings of celebrities. Customers now carry their personal media and communication centre in their pockets. Connection to friends, family, work, and the world at large is easily and constantly at hand. People are connected.

This changes customers, what they expect and what they value. The way people interact with their media and information throughout the day impacts what they begin to expect elsewhere and how they behave. While these changes in technology, in modern lifestyle could be negative and costly for established media companies, they also have the potential to be highly positive and financially rewarding. The key is recognizing these changes and creating content and ways to connect to it that match the changes in customer values.

The proliferation of technologies for reproduction and distribution of media forms allowed people to enjoy them in situations of their own choosing rather than at the whim of the broadcaster. By the turn of the twenty first century, interactive digital technologies had broken the last vestiges of dependence on simultaneous mass distribution. A network and database logic capable of sustaining individual interactivity on a global scale has begun to replace the cumbersome mass media technologies of the broadcasting era.

The introduction of new technologies alters the underlying expectations that people bring to their engagements with media, and so the nature of audiences seems continually to change. In the broadcast era, audiences had been characterized as masses, as communities, as consumers, as markets, as niches, as targets, as individuals, as obsessed fanatics and even as vegetating couch potatoes. The Internet has

fostered a new set of terms for audience modes of engagement – ‘maven’, ‘gamers’, ‘lurking’, for example. Because audiences are ‘unnatural’ they tend to be endowed with characteristics borrowed from the situations where they engage with media, and with characteristics of the media forms they enjoy. The nature of audiences is always therefore being redefined in accordance with new situations of engagement. Yet we sometimes forget that the new situations may possess parallels with past modes of media engagement (Beville, 1988)

Ross and Nightingale (2003) propose that there are at least five dimensions to all research about audiences. They include: the people involved; their activities; the media materials with which they engage; the media time/space in which the engagement occurs; and the media power structure that delimits the control that each stakeholder in a media event can wield. Most studies of audiences cannot address all five dimensions simultaneously and so pragmatic research decisions have to be made that lead researchers to focus on the people and/or their activities, with lesser emphasis on the media’s contribution to the media/audience events. Because audience research is always informed by a theory about the media

Rapid privatization of the media created a situation where regulation of the industry shifted almost completely from the political and cultural fields toward the economic field (Vihalemm, Lauk, and Lauristin 1997; Lauk 1999). With advertising became the main source of income for most media outlets, content was adapted to market principles rather than to reflect professional journalistic standards. Journalistic production was more often evaluated from the view- point of sales profits, than from social or cultural values. Competition for audience attention also changed the content and functions of the media. Information and entertainment have intertwined, superseding analysis, enlightenment, and social integration. Due to the diversification of outlets and the rising cost of media consumption, the media lost its culturally and socially unifying role and increasingly became a source for entertainment.

During the 1980s, as mass audiences grew larger, it became statistically possible to identify and address target and niche audiences. This allowed advertisers to spend less on advertising and achieve the same or better results since advertising could target only potential customers. Even as cultural researchers sought to demonstrate how audiences resist dominant ideas and maintain their local cultures, marketers developed a parallel interest in audience cultures – but to better exploit particular formations within the mass audience (Turow 1997; Robinson 1999). The audience orientation of cultural research was matched, in effect, by the emergence of a customer orientation in marketing. Today television is losing market share to new media, and audiences are on the move. Television is being squeezed by the new media mix. It is forced to fight off competition for advertising revenue from computer games, mobile media and the Internet even from radio which is suddenly more attractive because of its mobility. At the same time, new media have provided advertisers with the capacity to solicit, store and mine databases of consumer choices in unprecedented detail for themselves. The customer relationship approaches to marketing increase the options for manufacturers to approach customers directly, thus avoiding the expense of brand advertising on television. Manufacturers and their customers are starting to expect more than the ‘exposure’ model of audience response can deliver, in terms of immediacy of sales decisions and interaction between manufacturer and consumer. Television and radio stations are less important in the marketing mix than they have previously been. The convergence of old technologies and the development of new media enable people to be audiences in a greater variety of contexts than was possible previously. People are able to shape and vary their media engagements in more satisfying ways. Audiences have always borrowed, poached, improvised and collected snippets of useful media ‘stuff’. The looks, body shapes, hairstyles or voices of others – especially famous others can be useful for purposes of identity development, or for creating a stylistically charged cultural intervention in an otherwise tedious everyday world. Studying the ecology of media bric-a-brac among audiences has been particularly prevalent in the study of fans and fan communities (Nightingale, 2003).

New Audience:

Audience are no longer passive receivers of text.

They have outgrown the models proposed in active reception.

Moving beyond entertainment arena.

In a sense of additive, redress the omission of main stream media.

Being an audience is more active and interactive as compared in broadcasting era.

New Media made by public rather than professionals in digitalization era.

Source: Ross.k & Nightingale.v (2003).

Conclusion:

The changing nature of Audiences: From the mass audience to the interactive media user argues that "things move fast in audience studies" (Livingstone 2003). This fast changing nature of the media audience informed the changing nature of media audience studies, perhaps this is what advised Oso and Bello (2012) metaphorically refer audience study as a swinging pendulum. On this new theoretical framework shift there is a transition from the mass audience concept to the interactive media user (Livingstone, 1998, Livingstone 2003). from the traditional segmentation of audiences to fragmentation (Webster, 2005), polarization (Sunstein, 2000), even the erosion of audiences (Turow, 2010). As DenisMcQuail (1997)remarks, " The media have increasing difficulty in identifying and retaining 'their' particular audience. We can not Stop Ice to change in water when the temperature in the surroundings is too high. Same is the case of audience as the media starts to move with the pace of technology the audience also drifts towards the excited state of interactionism.

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