



Print will not Die!

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Abstract

The print media might be seen heading to South in the Western countries, but in Indian context, it continues to register substantial growth year after year. Not only the number of newspapers is on the rise, but the circulation of newspapers, particularly the Indian language newspapers, also registers considerable increase. Surely, the readership is shifting from urban areas to the rural areas. This study shows that the readers still feel more comfortable with the print form of the newspapers than the digital form i.e. reading a newspaper on computer laptop or mobile phone screen. The media experts feel that the print will continue to grow until the country achieves 100% literacy and the people who are now around 50 stop reading the print newspapers. Also in both the urban and rural areas, the print will reinvent itself in newer formats, which may be a paperless format, where the newspapers will be supplied to the readers through most modern gadgets.

ISSN : 2348-5612 © URR



Keywords: *Print, literacy, gadget, paperless format, circulation*

Introduction

The debate whether the print media is going to die, as the digital rapidly dominates day-by-day, is still inconclusive. The media planners and experts are divided over this issue. Some believe that the print is going to vanish, as it is on the verge of disappearing in most of the Western countries, but some are confident that the print will not die at least for three more decades or until the developing countries like India achieve 100% literacy. The argument that print is going to vanish gained momentum around 2005 when the US scholar Philip Meyer (*Meyer 2004 & 2009*) in his book, *The Vanishing Newspapers*, predicted that ‘the last newspaper in the US will be printed in first quarter of 2043’. But, some veteran Indian journalists, who are witness to the ups and downs in the Indian media for over six decades, suggest to see the prediction by the US scholar in the Western context only. Veteran journalist Dr Nand Kishore Trikha (*Trikha, 2015*), who has about seven decades experience in journalism, argues: “When television was introduced in India in 1959, people started saying that print would now die. But, nothing wrong happened to the print. At that time, the Indian Newspapers Society (INS) had even demanded the Government of India not to issue advertisements to *All India Radio* (AIR) and *Doodarshan* (DD) expressing fear that it would adversely affect the advertisement revenue of the newspapers. But that fear proved to be baseless. Print still survives and the Radio as well as TV channels are seen losing their impact and trust. What Philip Meyer said about the print may apply to the West, but not to India. People in the West think in their own way. But, in India nothing wrong is going to happen to the print. Web and social media, which were cited as newer threats to the print, basically increase the appetite for print news. Not only the circulation, but also the readership of the newspapers is on the rise in India. Nothing wrong will happen to the Print if it adopts the new technology, which should be seen as a friend, not as an enemy and also change according to the changing tastes and requirements of the readers.”