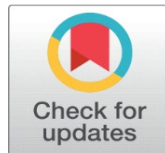
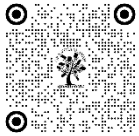


DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATIONS IN MEDIA CONSUMPTION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the dynamic patterns of media consumption across various demographic groups, focusing on factors such as age, gender, occupation, income, and education. Through a survey of 500 respondents from different cities of North Bihar, the research reveals that while traditional media like newspapers and television remain prevalent, there is an increasing inclination towards digital media. Results show significant demographic differences in preferences, with younger audiences favoring digital platforms and older groups leaning towards traditional formats. Gender-specific trends highlight that males are more engaged with print media, while females exhibit a preference for Hindi newspapers. The findings underscore the intricate relationship between demographics and media preferences, suggesting that consumer behaviors are influenced by socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and technological advancements. These insights can guide media producers, advertisers, and policymakers to tailor content and strategies, ensuring relevance and accessibility across diverse population segments.

Keywords: Media, Consumption, Demographics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Media consumption patterns have become a key to comprehending societal behaviour and preferences in the current digital era. The widespread availability of the internet and the advancement of digital technologies have had a significant impact on how people consume information. In addition to impacting more conventional media outlets like print and television, these shifts have also sparked the growth of digital platforms like social networking, streaming services, and online news portals. Understanding the ramifications of the dynamic evolution of media consumption across multiple demographic dimensions, particularly gender, requires a thorough investigation. Actually, less than half of the 200 million homes that exist now only actively subscribe to one or more mass media outlets. This may be because media content is increasingly consumer-centric and driven by the market rather than society and citizens, making it less relevant to a wide range of individuals. Additionally, news material is dominated by the government, business, and public relations, with little to no mention of civil society.

Media and society

Mass media significantly influences society through electronic and print communication, acting as a mediator in growth, development, information diffusion, and world changes. It is not just an entertainment medium but also a powerful tool for presenting the real world to society. Social media websites have changed communication patterns, with two-thirds of Indians spending time online. With the availability of smartphones and mobile internet, social media usage has increased, with 62 million urban users in India by December 2012. Companies rely on social media to understand consumer tastes, brand awareness, and market niches.

Influence of Media

Globalisation has shifted the focus from print media to electronic media, influencing Indian consumers and resulting in significant media revolutions, with both forms significantly impacting society.

Print Media and Society

Print media, the most affordable form of mass media, plays a crucial role in nation-building and reconstruction by highlighting social, economic, and moral issues.

According to Smith (2015), "With a 7% increase in readers in 2014, it reached 301.6 million, more than twice that of TV (+3%) but less than half that of radio (+18%) or digital (+15.5%)" (p. 45). Newspapers provide wholesome information and are essential for expressing thoughts and views, exposing ills, encouraging popular discussions, and bringing necessary changes in society. In the coming year, print media is expected to grow in Tier II and III cities due to increased disposable income and literacy rates, as well as advertising industries. According to the Media Industry Report (2015), The print media industry grew 8.3% from INR 243 billion in 2013 to INR 263 billion in 2014, primarily due to increased circulation revenue, with an average growth rate of 8% up to 2019" (p. 12).

Electronic Media and Society

Electronic media, including television, radio, and the internet, is the most advanced form of mass media in India. According to the Media and Entertainment Industry Report (2015), "The media and entertainment industry reaches 161 million households, 94,067 newspapers, 2,000 multiplexes, and 214 million internet users. The television industry is projected to grow at a CAGR of 16.2%, reaching Rs 88,500 crore by 2018" (p. 20).

Media Consumption

According to the Media and Entertainment Industry Report (2015), "India's media and entertainment industry experienced significant growth, reaching millions of people through 161 million TV households, 94,067 newspapers, 2,000 multiplexes, and 214 million internet users, including 130 million mobile users" (p. 15). This growth increased awareness of issues, educated and entertained people, and connected people across the nation. TV expenditure increased from 5.6% in 2012 to 13.8% in 2014, with print media experiencing an 8.5% growth rate.

Media Growth in India

According to the Indian Media Industry Report (2014), "Indian media consumption increased in 2014, with print media showing the strongest growth, while radio was the fastest-growing medium. India has over 70,000 newspapers and 690 satellite channels, making it the world's largest newspaper market. Advertising expenditure is expected to grow 12.6%, with digital advertising accounting for Rs 4,661 crore" (p. 18).

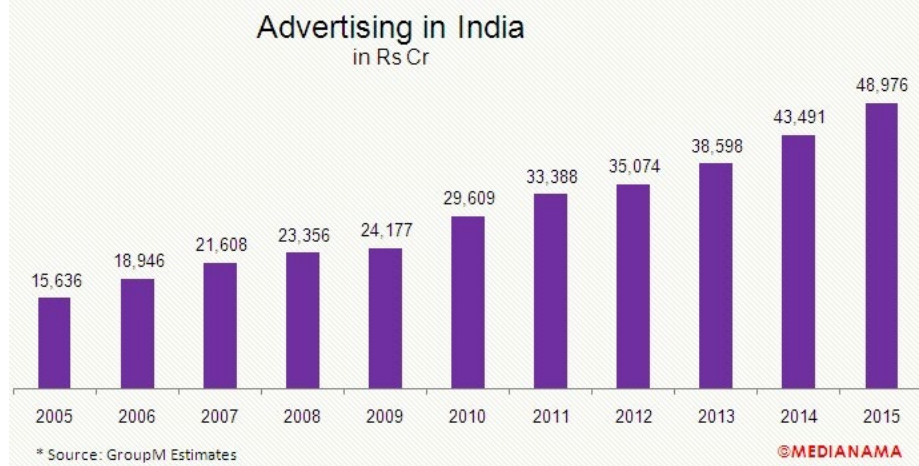


Fig 1.6: Advertising in India (in Rs Crore)

The digital revolution and creative content strategies have propelled the media and advertising sector in India to strong growth. Digital and experiential media had a major role in the expansion of the Indian media and entertainment (M&E) sector, which reached ₹2.3 trillion in 2023, an 8% year-over-year rise. The shift towards digital consumption is highlighted by the fact that new media, such as digital platforms and online gaming, currently account for 38% of the industry's income. Remarkably, in 2023, digital advertising accounted for 52% of overall ad revenues, demonstrating the increasing power of platforms like social media, OTTs, and AI-powered content delivery (EY, 2023; IndianTelevision.com, 2023). The digital revolution and creative content strategies have propelled the media and advertising sector in India to strong growth. Digital and experiential media had a major role in the expansion of the Indian media and entertainment (M&E) sector, which reached ₹2.3 trillion in 2023, an 8% year-over-year rise. The shift towards digital consumption is highlighted by the fact that new media, such as digital platforms and online gaming, currently account for 38% of the industry's income. Remarkably, in 2023, digital advertising accounted for 52% of overall ad revenues, demonstrating the increasing power of platforms like social media, OTTs, and AI-powered content delivery (EY, 2023; IndianTelevision.com, 2023).

Marketers must understand consumers' needs, wants, and target markets to deliver desired satisfaction. However, understanding consumers varies greatly due to age, income, education, and occupation. Few comprehensive studies have been conducted on consumer buying behaviour in India, particularly in the Garhwal region. This study aims to profile consumers and examine media consumption habits, attitudes, and the impact of media on buying behaviour.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Simon (1957) seeks to demonstrate that, in comparison to the scale of situations where rational action is necessary in the actual world, humans are limited in their ability to formulate and solve complicated problems. An individual behaves rationally, which does not match the real world. We must comprehend how this reduced model is put together in order to forecast his conduct, and it will undoubtedly be connected to his psychological characteristics as a seeing, thinking, and learning animal."

Kahneman and Tversky (1979, 1984) proved the framing effect by manipulating the informational structure in the context of decision problems. **McFadden (1999)** clearly examines the rationality of consumers by arguing that the decision process of an individual is influenced by affect, attitudes, motives, and preferences.

Simon (1956) presented the idea of fulfilling, a type of utility-maximization where time and effort limitations are applied to both conduct and the internal decision-making process that is meant to control behaviour. **Appadurai (1996)** highlights the growing gap between ethnic identification and physical place in relation to cultural reproduction. Ethnic groups have moved more physically as a result of mass media influence, and as the internet has grown, the imagination has become a site of contestation.

Kangun (1968) revealed that to understand the consumer, we must go through the stimulus-response theory of learning, which is what motivates an individual to act in a particular manner. The theory is based mainly on drive, cue, response and reinforcement. A particular drive at a particular point in time creates a particular response, and the cues determine questions of when, where and how behaviour takes place. If the response to a drive is making a connection between a cue and response is established, and then the behavioural pattern is learned.

Markin (1969) investigated that, by and large, consumer behaviour depends on biological and psychological factors. However, the sociological forces also affect consumer decisions like the family, reference groups, social class and culture.

Strodtbeck (1951) investigated the dynamics of power and influence between husbands and wives by employing the "revealed difference technique." This method involved identifying each family member's stance on hypothetical scenarios and observing their interactions while they worked to resolve disagreements. Strodtbeck concluded that the final decision could often be predicted by analyzing each participant's initial opinion and the amount of time they spoke during the discussion, stating that "the ultimate decision [could be predicted] by weighing the privately predetermined opinion of each participant by the total time she/he had spoken" (p. 24).

Research Gap

Most of the referred empirical studies on the issue have been conducted in Western countries, which may not be equally applicable in a developing country like India. However, inferences obtained from these studies are valuable in conducting constructive research in any part of the world. Actually, while examining the effects and uses of media, a system approach is needed. A demographic comparison of media consumption patterns and a normative study of families seem to be needed; they might provide as a basis and background for future research as well as a useful standard for society, advertisers, and individual families. By doing this, we might have a better understanding of consumer preferences, taste, social standing, and cost so that we can modify appropriate tactics appropriately.

Objective

To determine a demographic based comparison of media consuming habits.

Hypothesis

H0 1: There is no significant association between consumer demographics and considering media as a source of information.

H01a: There is no significant association between consumer age and their consideration of media as a source of information.

H01b: There is a significant association between consumer gender and their consideration of media as a source of information.

H01c: There is a significant association between consumer educational background and their consideration of media as a source of information.

H01d: There is no significant association between consumer income level and their consideration of media as a source of information.

H01e: There is a significant association between consumer occupation and their consideration of media as a source of information.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research approach**

The primary purpose of the present study is to examine the media consumption habits of consumers and the influence of the media on different stages of their buying process. Along with this, consumers' overall attitude towards media has also been examined.

- **Data collection method**

The conceptual framework for the study and the variables to be examined were developed using secondary data collected from national and international books, published records, journals, magazines, and websites. However, a stratified convenience sampling technique was used to gather primary data.

- **Data Collection**

A total of 500 respondents were selected for the study from the different cities of North Bihar. After being edited, classified, tabulated, and processed, the collected data is quantitatively analysed using IBM SPSS 20.0, a statistical software program. The data were analysed through descriptive Statistics to evaluate the hypotheses.

- **Questionnaire Structure**

In this study, a structured questionnaire containing four parts was prepared. The first part was related to the media habits of the consumers, and the second part was bearing the questions related to the impact or influence of media on their buying behaviour, whereas the third part of the questionnaire was on the attitude of the consumers towards media and the last part of the questionnaire contained the personal information of the respondents.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Factors	Dimensions	Respondents	Percentages
Gender	Male	281	57
	Female	216	43
Age	25-35	220	44
	36-45	194	39
	46-55	80	16
	56 & above	03	01
Occupation Distribution	Student	168	34
	Service	275	55
	Business/Self Employed	54	11
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary	04	01
	Graduate	68	14
	Post Graduate	275	55
	Professional	137	28
	Any other	013	02
Monthly Income Distribution	Less than 20000	209	42
	20001-35000	193	39
	35001-50000	73	14
	50001-65000	13	03
	65001 & above	09	02
Marital status	Single	140	28
	Married	357	72
Family Type Distribution	Joint	363	73
	Nuclear	164	27

Table 1 displays the demographic profile of the respondents, including their ages, genders, jobs, qualifications, monthly income, and family distribution. Among the total respondents, the majority were male respondents (57%), whereas the number of female respondents was less than half (43%). With respect to age as a variable, the distribution shows that the young respondents between the age group of 25-35 have the majority (44%), followed by the 36-45 (39%) and the adults between the age group of 46-55 (16%). The number of respondents above the age of 56 yrs was almost negligible (01%). It is appreciable to note that the majority of the respondents (55%) were well-qualified, holding postgraduate degrees, followed by professionals (28%) and graduates (14%). This majority is because more than one-third of the respondents (34%) were pursuing their doctorate and are supposed to be an active and potential buyer. The distribution of occupations is the mainstay of people service (55%), followed by students (Ph.D Scholars; 34%) and Business/Self-employed (11%). PhD students have considered this since they have purchasing power (scholarship) and are supposed to be more mature and exposed to the media environment and business practices. Regarding the distribution of income,

a majority (42%) of respondents were from below Rs 20,000 per month, followed by 20,001-35,000 (39%), 35,001-50,000(14%), whereas the lowest number was 50,001-65,000 (3%). Whereas 65,001 and above was the least(2%). Concerning the marital status distribution of the respondents, it is noted that a majority (72%) were married respondents compared to unmarried respondents (28%).It is appreciable to note that in the case of the type of family distribution, the majority was of joint families (73%) in comparison to nuclear families (27%).

Table 2: Consumption Habit

Factors	Particular	Respondents	Percentages
Newspaper Readers	Yes	497	100
	No	000	000
Time spends reading Newspaper	< 30 minutes	248	50
	30 minutes to 1 hour	223	45
	1 to 2 hours	26	5
Medium of the Newspapers	Hindi	232	47
	English	117	24
	Both	148	29
Most preferred column in the Newspaper	Frontpage	218	44
	Political news	123	25
	Sports News	87	18
	Entertainment News	62	12
	Editorial	07	01
Magazines Reading	Yes	396	79
	No	101	21
Time spending on Magazines Reading	< 30 minutes	107	27
	30 minutes to 1 hour	220	56
	1 to 2 hours	45	11
	2 to 3 hours	07	02
	more than 3 hours	17	04
Preferred Magazines	Family oriented	90	23
	Business	163	41
	Political	51	13
	Entertainment	35	09
	Sports	08	02
	Others	49	12
Medium of Magazine	Hindi	198	50
	English	45	11
	Both	153	39
Television Viewing	Yes	472	95
	No	25	05
Time spent watching Television in a day	30 minutes	133	28
	30 min to 1 hour	243	52
	1 to 2 hours	44	09
	2 to 3 hours	18	04
	< 3 hours	34	07
Time of Watching Television	Morning	62	13
	Noon	70	15
	Evening	237	50
	Night	103	22
Preferred programme on Television	Serials	122	26
	Songs and Dance	84	18
	Mysterries	11	02

	Sports	46	10
	Movies	44	09
	Comedy	50	11
	News	105	22
	Others	10	02
Who watch TV more in the Family	Children	362	73
	Adults	135	27
	Children	362	73
Preference of watching Television over reading Newspaper	Yes	411	83
	No	86	17
Internet Users	Yes	267	54
	No	230	46
Time spends on Internet	Daily	95	36
	Weekly	83	31
	Fortnightly	61	23
	Monthly	22	08
	Once in a while	06	02
Ever made Online Purchasing	Yes	198	39s
	No	299	61
Satisfaction with Online Purchasing	Yes	140	71
	No	48	29

The era of multi-edition newspapers and, therefore, multi-newspaper markets has provided greater choice for the reader, and moreover, Indian newspapers are now the cheapest in the world. This has driven the respondents to read newspapers every day. Furthermore, the sample areas of the study are the main cities of the district; hence, it is obvious that all the respondents do read newspapers every day. Regarding the time spent on reading the newspapers, it was observed that exactly half of the respondents (50%) spend up to 30 minutes daily, followed by one hour (45%), and only very few (5%) spend two hours daily on the same. Almost half of the respondents read Hindi dailies, whereas about one-fourth (24%) read English dailies, and about one-third (29%) read in both languages. It is observed that a majority of people (44%) are interested in the front page of the newspaper, followed by political news (25%), sports news (18%) and entertainment news (12%). Unfortunately, only one per cent of people are interested in editorial news. It is appreciating to note that a very large chunk of the respondents (79%) read magazines at the present time, which definitely gives them a broad choice to make their decision correctly.

It is interesting to note that people spend more time on magazine readings in comparison to newspapers. A majority of respondents (56%) reported that they generally spend one hour a day reading magazines, followed by thirty minutes (27%) and up to two hours (11%). It is noticeable that almost half of the respondents (41%) preferred business magazines, followed by family-oriented (23%), political (13%) and entertainment (12%), whereas the number of preferences for other magazines is unimportant. It is observed that just half of the respondents (50%) read Hindi magazines, whereas English magazine readers are very few (11%). A Good number of people (39%) preferred both languages. A great majority of the people (95%) watch television, whereas there are still people who do not watch television. However, they are very few (5%). It is observed that more than half of the respondents (52%) watch television almost one hour daily, followed by thirty minutes (28%). There are people who watch television more than three hours a day; however, they are less in number (7%) in comparison to two hours daily (9%). The maximum number of the respondents watch television in the evening time in comparison to noon (15%) and morning (13%). However, a good number of the people (22%) watch at night. It is observed that watching serial in television still maintained its dominance (26%) followed by news (22%), songs and dance (18%) and comedy (11%). However, sports (10%) and movies (9%) were liked by almost equal number of people. Children hold remote for the maximum time in the majority of families (73%) in comparison to adults (27%). It is disappointing to note that reading habits among people are reducing gradually as the majority of the people (83%) claimed that they prefer to watch television instead of reading a newspaper. The internet as a medium seems to have faster growth as it is good to know that more than half of the respondents (54%)

access the internet. It is encouraging to note that more than one-third of the respondents (36%) access the Internet daily, followed by weekly (31%), fortnightly (23%) and monthly (8%). It is good to know that Indian consumers are changing their buying habits, as a good number of the respondents (39%) claimed that they made online purchases. Interestingly, among those who have made online purchases, a majority (71%) are satisfied with their purchasing.

5. RESULT AND FINDINGS

The study reveals interesting insights into the media consumption habits of respondents. All respondents reported reading newspapers daily, with males spending more time reading newspapers than females. Hindi newspapers emerged as the most preferred choice, especially among female readers. On the other hand, people tend to spend more time reading magazines than newspapers, with sports magazines being particularly popular among males, while family-oriented magazines are favoured by females. Television remains a significant source of entertainment, with a majority of respondents spending more than one hour daily watching TV. Serials are the most preferred programs, and children control the remote for the maximum amount of time in most families. Interestingly, there is no significant gender-based difference in preference for watching television over reading newspapers. Internet usage has also become prevalent, with more than half of the respondents accessing the internet regularly. A significant portion of respondents reported having their own email IDs. When it comes to online purchasing, a higher number of males participate in online shopping compared to females. Mobile phones have emerged as the most common medium for accessing the internet for both male and female respondents. These findings highlight the evolving patterns of media consumption, with clear distinctions in preferences based on gender and age.

6. CONCLUSION

The study provides valuable insights into the evolving media consumption habits of respondents, showcasing distinct patterns influenced by gender and age. Daily newspaper readership remains consistent among all respondents, though males dedicate more time to it compared to females. Hindi newspapers are notably the preferred choice, especially for female readers. In contrast, magazines attract more attention overall, with males showing a preference for sports-related content while females lean toward family-oriented publications. Television continues to dominate as a primary source of entertainment, with the majority of respondents spending over an hour watching daily. Serials emerge as the most favoured programs, and children often control television content in households. Notably, there is no significant gender difference in the choice between watching television and reading newspapers. The growing influence of the internet is evident, with over half of the respondents reporting regular internet usage and widespread ownership of email IDs. However, online purchasing behaviours differ by gender, with males participating in online shopping more actively than females. Mobile phones have become the dominant medium for accessing the internet across both genders, emphasizing the increasing reliance on portable technology. In conclusion, the study reflects shifting media consumption habits characterized by traditional preferences like newspapers and television, alongside a growing dependence on digital media. Gender differences are prominent in reading habits, content preferences, and online activities, highlighting the need for targeted strategies to cater to these varying interests. These findings underscore the dynamic interplay between traditional and modern media, offering a comprehensive understanding of how media consumption patterns are shaped by age, gender, and evolving technology.

Conflicts of Interest

None.

Acknowledgments

None.

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