

# News Channels and Public Opinion: A Study on Selected Hindi News Channels in India

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## ABSTRACT

News plays a crucial role in the lives of Indians. People keep themselves updated about any developments, happenings, and current affairs through the news. It helps people stay informed about current events, politics, the economy, culture, and more. It also plays a vital role in shaping public opinion, influencing decision-making, and holding those in power accountable. The news media, especially 24\*7 television news channels, often act as watchdogs, exposing corruption, injustice, and other issues that impact society. Overall, news is an integral part of Indian society, serving as a bridge between people and the events that shape their viewpoint and opinion. The paper tries to find out the role of leading Hindi news channels in India and their influence on viewers' opinions and perceptions. In this paper, the researcher has taken mainly three leading Hindi news channels in India: Aaj Tak, ABP News, and NDTV. In this research paper, data was collected and analysed randomly using the questionnaire and interview methods to determine audience perceptions and the role of television. The analysis indicates that viewers watch those channels that support and are in Favor of their viewpoints, opinions, and perceptions. The audience never changes their preferences for the content of news; rather, they consider the news shown to them to be true, unbiased, reliable, and significant.

**Keywords:** Public Opinion, Hindi News Channels, television, News, Media

## Introduction:

News provides information about local, regional, national and international happenings and events. Its aware people about existing laws, provisions, new policies, schemes and new development in various sectors. The constant availability of 24\*7 news channel has created a sense of addiction among the viewers as it gives instant news with latest updates. News aware people with different issues that is happening around them. It educates the mass about different happenings. It widens the existing knowledge about politics, policies, sports, science and latest development in different area. In a demo News provides information about local, regional, national, and international happenings and events. It informs people about existing laws, provisions, new policies, schemes, and new developments in various sectors. The constant availability of the 24\*7 news channel has created a sense of addiction among the viewers, as it gives instant news with the latest updates. News-aware people are aware of different issues that are happening around them. It educates the masses about different happenings. It widens the existing knowledge about politics, policies, sports, science, and the latest developments in different areas. In a democratic society, it helps people to make wise decisions during elections and take a stand for any irregularities and injustices. News keeps people aware of different events, and it helps people give and share their opinions in public.

These days, the presentation and approach of different news channels have drastically changed due to the competition among different news channels. These days, television news channels are no longer a one-way process. Now, due to the availability of different social networking sites and advanced technologies and platforms, viewers have become active participants. These days, news channels broadcast the news that people love to watch and give priority to. People these days are showing their disinterest and disagreement through comments and views. Public opinion polls, most shared videos, and most talked-about news have become prime-time news these days. On the other hand, the frequently shown news also generates interest among the viewers and sometimes changes their opinion and viewpoint on a particular issue. Viewers choose their content among news channels that align with their views, beliefs, and ideologies. The news shown on the channel gains more credibility among its viewers as it matches their beliefs and ideologies.

### **Objective of the Study:**

- To investigate the rationale for selecting a particular media channel
- To find out the influence of Hindi News Channel on the formation of public opinion
- To identify the factors that influence public opinion

### **Methodology:**

As per the requirement of the present topic, a survey was conducted among 250 respondents from Berhampur city between the ages of 30 and 60. For this purpose, a questionnaire was commissioned, and data was collected from different localities in Berhampur. For the purpose of data collection, a simple random sampling technique was used. Questionnaires were distributed, and data was collected with the help of research scholars. The above-average age group was preferred, as people in this age group usually prefer watching television and newspapers for the purpose of news updates. People belonging to this particular generation prefer news channels more than any other source for news updates.

### **Review of Literature**

A study conducted by Satish Kumar on “Professionalism and Commercialism in Prime-Time Newscasts a study of Indian News Channel” there was widespread and rampant practice of both professionalism and commercialism in order to make their newscasts look like different from others. This was seen from the rat race of resorting to heavy technical and graphical visuals. The throat cutting competition indulged by the news media as seen in their race to a higher TRP by way of various technical and graphical images was culminated to commercialism.

SAGE Publication, (1997) urges the social meaning of news as “Form a traditional Journalistic perspective. Answer to news? Focus on what people need to know and what they should know about their community, their country, and their world. When the nature of news is explored from a social perspective however the need to know and should know answer become an only a small part of the answers. The emphasis now shifts to the social processes by which journalists decide what is news and the social forces that influence and limit how journalists gather and assemble news from raw materials into a journalistic product.

Swanson’s (1973) pilot study of a small group of Southern Illinois voters reveals that 69 percent of the public received most of their political information from the mass media. Further 54 percent of the respondents found television news their most important source of information, while 23 percent listed newspapers. More than two-thirds of the respondents thought that the media they identified as their first

and second most important sources of information about the campaign presented a fair picture of both Nixon and McGovern.

Deori (2022) found that Hindi news channels tend to upload more videos on crime, politics, health, and protests, which are also the topics that generate the most audience engagement. This suggests a potential influence of news content on public opinion. However, the study did not directly measure the impact of these videos on public opinion. Jaggi (2022) discussed the perception of the BBC as a fair and impartial news source in India, indicating that the credibility of news channels can shape public opinion. Mittal (2013) proposed a method for sentiment analysis of Hindi reviews, which could be applied to public opinion expressed about news channels. Finally, Hall (1978) highlighted the economic and ideological functions of news, suggesting that these factors could influence the content and presentation of news on Hindi news channels, potentially shaping public opinion.

### **Theoretical Background:**

The study is based on the two-step flow theory of media. Which suggest that The media messages are not only mediated by opinion leader but also by news maker. News maker can be the news editor, politician, experts. They play a major role in disseminating the information and news. The opinion leader who comes on television screen to represent a political party or a group ideology influence the audience in a greater extend. Audience accept the news anchor opinion as true and believe everything blindly.

### **Finding of the Study and Conclusion –**

The viewers of news channel are different from any other form of audience. There first preference is news channel than any other form of content like soap serials, cinemas, reality shows, or other genres. Non news channel viewers diverted to news channel when there is a major crisis, disasters and major breaking news like accidents, natural calamities, or major political changes. Another finding suggests that time spent watching news channels is relatively much more during elections in both legislative and Lok Sabha elections. People watch 4-6 hours of news during elections time. It was also found that audience have their choice of preference for news channels. Most of the respondent suggested that they never change their preference for news channel. The findings also suggest that the preference of audience for news channel depend on the presentation style of the news presenter. The findings also suggest that respondent feels and appreciate the news that they watch on their favourite news channel. The respondents prefer those channels which mainly support the ideology of their preferred political party. The preference for any particular channel never changes for audiences. For news updates and discussion programs, the audience switched to their preferred channels only. The audience often trusts their favourite news channel. It is because the content of the channel aligns with the viewers perceptions, beliefs, and values The audience takes sides of different panellists while watching panel discussions on television. The audience discusses political matters and their views on a particular issue with their colleague and friends' group. The sensationalism and news presentation style of leading Hindi news channels attract viewers to watch these channels, even though the news channels never focus their regional news on the channel. The respondents have shown their dissatisfaction over the repeated content of political news.

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