



## NEWS VALUES AND THE CHANGING FORMATS IN BULLETINS - A STUDY OF TELEVISION NEWS CHANNELS

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Blame it on the ever newer technology. Television news covering social economic and political issues now becomes very intricate complex and fast paced. In the race of technological fiasco television news channels had shun the traditional understandings of the people. Editorializing of two news stories had fear the mainstay of news presentation traditionally. The paradigm hegemony of news practices is fairly revealed by the editorializing process of the content of the news stories, (Sushil Kumar Singh & Brij Kishore Kuthiala, 2009). However the study present that it seems. The news media had done transformation from editorializing of news to technical packaging as all the channels related to the present study resorted to multitudes of visual technology. In addition, the straight news stories areas the channels are disappearing bringing in other mixtures of special programmes, Debate and Discussions etc.

Four news channels operating at the national level in India namely, Aaj Tak, Zee News, Times Now, and CNN-IBN. The first two channels broadcast news in Hindi and the last two in English though CNN-IBN still dedicates its slot (79.2%) special programs (almost 3/4th nearly 1/5th) and a sparing Debate/Discussions (2.3%) appeared in its bulletins. Times Now featured one-half of its news bulletins as special programs and another half as straight news stories with scant Debate television content. However, this scant content of amounted to almost across all the channels.

Amidst change in the format all the channels resorted to widespread items like 'Tic-Tac', 'Sting', 'Teaser' etc. In addition to 'Graphics', 'Flash Texts', 'Voice over' and others during news broadcasts. On the other hand, all the channels also resorted to various visual sources like Hidden or Spy camera, CCTV footages etc. Thus the packaging of the news bulletins in the digital era... has become more complex and challenging. All too for channels selected for the study broadcast their news stories were over federal with and items. The packaging of the stories was also stuffed with the traditional paraphernalia such as P in P, Live input and location etc.

So professionalism is largely seen across the channels clearly at two levels:

1. The emergence of elements or type of contents like Debate and Discussions during the presentation of news stories without or little scope of editorializing the news story, and
2. Multitude of visual effects ushered in by digital innovations.

Here the question 'is there a change in the news values?' becomes pertinent. If there is a change in the news values, is there a change in the dynamics of social values accordingly? Such and similar questions are being attempted to be addressed in the present study.

The factors that contribute the news values are not very precise. News values change with the changes in the social structures and functions. When the social beliefs, values and preferences are changed, the news values are bound to change (Sushil K. Singh, 2010). Or is it the other way round? Is there a change in the social values because of the changes in news values? Who decides and control the news values? There can be a good area of study.

The old practice that the journalists decide which information is to be treated as news is now diminishing its relevance as the parameters of news cannot be arbitrary and be left to the individual judgment of a journalist. This becomes more prominent and true as a part of news stories, guests or people in news are being called in the new formats of news stories like Debate and Special Programs. Now it is left to the audience to decide what they perceived to be news or what to take or not to take from those news stories. They can interpret an event or issue as news by themselves as editorializing is no longer vested with the journalists only, or with the media house. Editorializing is now open to the consumers of news.

### Methodology

To study the stories of the new age news broadcasts, the news contents of the aforementioned four channels were subjected to content analysis.

According to Sushil K. Singh and Brij Kishore Kuthiala (2009), content analysis is a highly flexible method used by communication scholars, journalists and other professionals. This is particularly useful for studying the content of mass



media communication like news. News stories are mass produced messages that contained both intended and perceived messages. The messages are perceived by the consumers of news based on their own experiences.

Brij Kishore Kuthiala (1999) defines content analysis as a scientific process of investigating both qualitative and quantitative information of the oral, printed and audio-visual messages within a context in view of the intended and perceived meanings. He is of the view that the content of the newspapers, radio broadcasts and television channels need to be revealed as we received infinite number of information through these media of mass communication.

Care was taken for the present study about the classification of the coding units. The general principle of mutual exclusivity of the categories was maintained.

### Procedure

To facilitate the collection of data for the study four channels were selected which telecast news. They are: Aaj Tak, Zee News, Times Now, and CNN-IBN. The bulletins of these news channels were recorded during transmission simultaneously of all the four channels.

The news bulletins of the four channels which were broadcasted during the prime time were recorded between 8.0 PM to 9.0 PM in a span of 16 days from 10 November, 2014 to 25 November, 2014.

The data was collected as per the coding plan for content analysis as stipulated in the code book devised for the purpose.

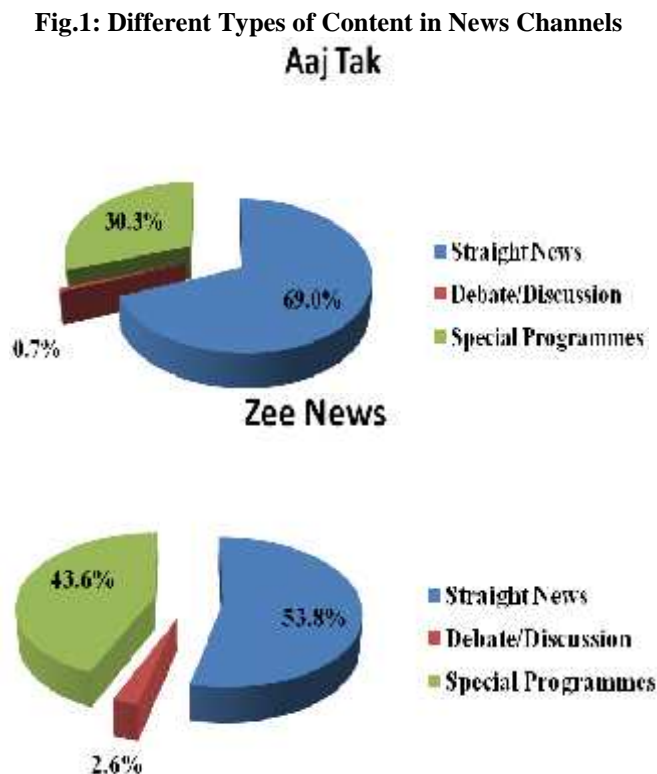
### Data Analysis

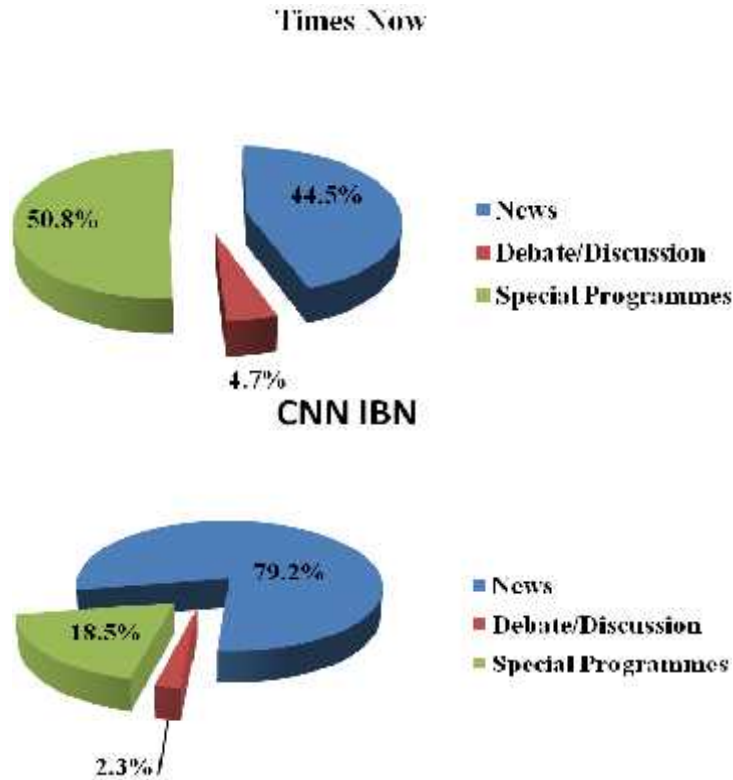
The data collected as per the procedure mentioned above was subjected to analysis.

Data for the study were collected with respect to the different types of content style, appearance of guests and or reporters in the bulletins etc.

The content style was consisted of straight news story, debate/discussions and special programme.

The appearances of guests and reporters were counted as per number.





For the purpose of the study, the one hour contents of all the four channels were classified into three distinct types. They are: 1. Straight News, 2. Debate/Discussion, and 3. Special Programs.

The Hindi based channels Aaj Tak and Zee News have very contrasting characters it comes to the different types of content. Zee News has resorted more to the new ingredients of Debate and Special programs and therefore dedicated less space to straight news stories. There is marked presence of the new formats as in other English channels. The trend has similar indications if we compare the two English channels. When the Times Now marked new formats way ahead, CNN-IBN is going the traditional way with little incorporation of the new formats. CNN-IBN featured fourth-fifth of its time the straight news format with only 2.3 percent Debate and a significant 18.5 percent Debate or Discussions in the news stories.

In case of Zee News and Times Now where the two channels resorted more to the new formats, both the channels devote a little more or less than half of their news hour to the straight news stories. When Zee News occupied 53.8 percent, Times Now had only 44.5 percent to its account. Significantly, both the channels incorporated Special Programs in their news stories. When Zee News carried it 43.6 percent, Times Now had half of its news duration for the format. Aaj Tak and CNN-IBN carried the format but very cautiously.

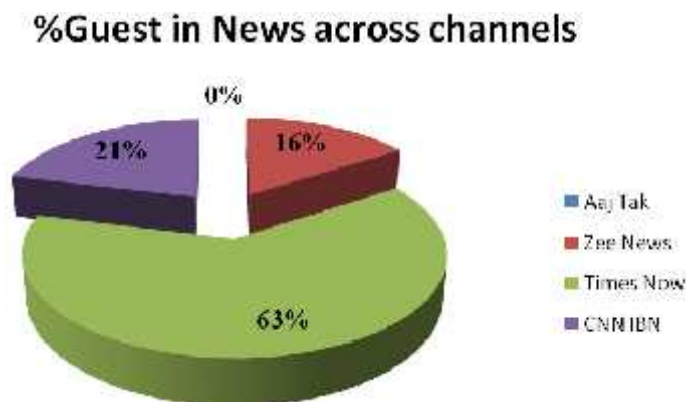


Fig.2



The given figure above (Fig.2) describes the appearance of guests in the news stories. In the days of straight news stories the news was about people. Editorializing was done to carry less of journalist's opinion and more of opinion of the people in the news. But now opinions of other people of the society who are not related or involved in the news stories are also incorporated. Perhaps this is an indication of the changing trend of journalism as we can see a paradigm shift from straight news stories to Special Programs and other formats like Debates and Discussions.

Times Now, which carried the highest number of Special Programs and Debates and Discussions, had more percentage of guests in their news bulletins. Guests were appeared a whopping 63.0 percent leaving far behind other channels Zee News and CNN-IBN. Significantly, Aaj Tak did not featured any guests during their news stories.

### %Reporter on spot across channels

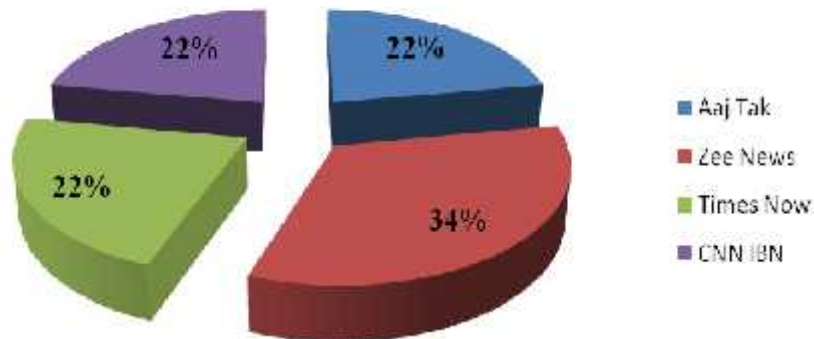


Fig.3 Reporter on Spot across Channels

Fig.3 above illustrates the share of reporters about their appearance in the news stories across the channels. In this category Zee News leads all other channels. Its share in this category was 34 percent while all other three channels, viz. CNN-IBN, Aaj Tak and Times Now accounted for 22 percent each.

Times Now, which called in more guests in their news stories featured very less of their reporters. Zee News fairly features both the guests and the reporters.

### Discussion

Even in the age of internet and new media the unassuming power of television as an agenda setting mass media cannot be undermine. In the recent times there has been much hype on the role of social media on various social issues. However, it was the television which holds the ground. Whether it is the tweets or the blogs, television remains the mainstay for public debates, information or news, holding the fort of the mass media in the real sense. The sheer prominence of television is because of its popularity and engagement with the social issues providing platform for debates and discussions on various time bound issues by inviting people from various sections of the society.

Television news channels have come up with Special programs and Debate or Discussions to garner public opinion on issues being carried in news stories. However, question remains as how far they represent or shape up public opinion by inviting two or three guests in their news stories. A report published in The Hindu on June 25, 2012 by Mohammad Ali states that 'television news now a day not emerged as shaping public opinion but there is a small group of "experts" who are manufacturing the opinion of the public'.

It has been very intriguing that how and where the news is going to the public. How and why this transformation is cropping up in the news broadcasts? Or is it any way related to add the news values? The credibility and objectivity of news presentation are at stake and further studies can be conducted in this regard.

News as "only information" is a faux pas (Sushil Singh & Kuthiala, 2009). It is generally considered that television news is a sequence of socially manufactured messages that carry many of the cultural dominant assumptions. Glasgow University Media Group launched 'Bad News' states that "The news is a highly mediated product: from who gets on what questions they asked; via selection of stories to presentation of bulletin".



In an article *The Sociology of News Production Revisited* James Curran and Michael Schudson wrote that news is what newsmen write or speak. They do so in the news bulletins. However, the news presentations on television has transformed since and is now laced with a lot of technological innovations. Repeating the same lines time and again and resorting to various technical inputs like tic-tac says it all.

The new avatar of news telecasts has brought more questions than understanding. How to determine news values or how to define away from the traditional understanding of news etc. are yet to be determined. Because the usual packaging has given way to new avatar like debate and discussion, special programmes and appearance of guests in between are becoming cacophonous.

For good or bad, it is high time to study the new direction of news as given by the news channels so that the social lives of the people get true inputs on the understanding of news business.

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