



EDITORIALIZING OF CONTENTS IN PRINT MEDIA – A STUDY OF THREE ENGLISH NATIONAL DAILIES

Aarti Soni* Dr. N. Sushil K. Singh**

*Research Scholar, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar.

**Associate Professor, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar.

Abstract

This research was conducted to know the editorialized content of three English National Dailies; *The Hindu*, *The Tribune* and *The Statesman*. The study was determined about analysing the 'editorializing' (journalist's views) presented in news, making a factual/straight news story an opinionated piece of writing. Both the qualitative and quantitative content analysis was employed to measure the extent of editorializing straight news stories as well as the frequency of usage of multiple viewpoints of sources in the news stories. The findings showed that all the papers were practicing the act of editorializing in straight news stories.

The Tribune with 10% of editorialized stories was engaged in this practice more than *The Hindu* with only 6% of stories. While measuring the frequency of views plurality in news stories, *The Hindu* was leading with 16.66% of stories having more views than *The Tribune* with only 11.66% of news items with plural views of sources. Inclusion of more people's views makes news story more credible among readers. In editorializing of both views – people in the story as well as newsman, there is less significant difference between *The Tribune* and *The Hindu*. Both these papers emphasize the importance of opinions. *The Statesman* gave more importance to only informational stories. Therefore it is recommended that presence of plurality of quoted statements or attribution of authority sources of society should be there in the news story which increases credibility among readers.

Keywords: *Editorializing, Ethics of Journalism, Opinionated Content, Multiple Views, Factual Views, Objective Reporting.*

Introduction

In mediated world the information travels faster and reaches every nook and corner of the globe, shrinking the once wide world into a global village. Since the discovery of movable type to World Wide Web (www) the change in technology is so fast and rapid that the pace is beyond comprehensive and control. However on the other hand, the societies across the globe hook to the earlier pace of paradigmatic changes and technological changes in general are employed to fasten the social belts, not to bombarding the current social systems.

Media acts as a bridge between government and its citizens. It can be called as a corner stone of democracy. It imparts news on public issues where both the policy makers and public can share their opinions, behaviours and attitudes. In other words, media is said to be the "Voice of People" which carries the public opinions to nations' development. In newspapers, news stories carry opinions either of people in the story (referred to as people's views) as well as people who processed the news stories (referred to as newsman's views). Opinions in the news stories enhance the credibility of paper among its readers. Without opinions, news is just information. In the present time, news is not just the information but information along with interpretation.

The association of facts and information with the interpretation of event in journalist's own views or opinions is referred as editorializing practice. This is very important step in the process of news making. In news organisation, journalists or a team of editors processed the news story by selection, addition of views, and placement of story and make a story presentable in paper.

There are different types of news stories published in newspapers. There are stories whose feature is just to impart information only like crime stories, accident stories etc. Some stories demand the interpretation of journalist to make readable for readers. There are also some stories which need to include views of some persons like celebrities, dignitaries, and those authority people whose statements can be attributed in news. Each paper gives different types of treatment to news stories differently. Different newspapers organisations follow practice of news editorializing in different way. Some organisations have their own standardization of news making process. But some follow others only. There is a need to follow a universal format of processing news, so that evaluation or analysis could be done easily.

Sometimes journalists face some pressures from outside which modify the nature of news story. Pressure act like constraints for journalist to cover the story. Like any organisation, press organisation to follow some kind of format for



the coverage, selection, publishing of news story. It reflects the press behaviour. Press said to be the fourth estate, but according to B.G. Verghese, it is no more the fourth estate but the first and important estate of democracy. It plays very important part in democratic country like India.

News is a social product. It operates and functions with the social ethos and pathos. News has always influence the social economic and political processes. It's a myriad of activities wrote in a specific format called news and unwinding of process reveal the social construction of the news. News, as an old tradition percolates down to the deep social understanding and affects the society. It's the culture and tradition of any civilized society, though it may come in different media.

Martin Mayer (1993) explained all news items compete for attention with all other news items. The decision on what is 'news' today is therefore a function of the intensity of the competition. *Omego and Nwachukwu* (2013) news story, an account of an event possesses distinct characteristics of immediacy, factuality and objectivity.

The old quote "news is not when a dog bites a man but when man bites a dog" is not appropriate in this present time. It is not news which we didn't know yesterday. But news is something beyond what we see through our eyes and hear by our ears. In this present time, news does not occur but it is made to occur. News not occurs but itself but is created. The events are created to make news. Today, the component of media – News is consumed by all. News is a kind of information; bring home every kind of knowledge regarding society. It also brings change in the mindset of people about social, political, economical, cultural and other spheres of life. Now the time, News has greater and more exposure to information and communication to the larger audience than before.

In area of news research, editorializing is important variable for analysis. As practice of editorializing influence the process of news making. The presence of interpretative content in any story affects the sensitivity of news. Either views of journalist or newsman leaves an impact on readers mind. Journalist's interpretation of news makes it a credible source of information in newspaper. Some media critics do not favour the practice of editorializing, as it harms the objectivity of any news which is supposed to be a very important element of any news story.

Writing news with objectivity is a good journalism practice. When any information is reported in factual manner without any writers' views, it is said to be the objective piece of writing but if reporter add his views in the news story, it becomes subjective and also comes under the editorializing practice. *John Soloski* (1989) contented that the objectivity as the most important aspect and specific aspects of news professionalism like news judgment, selection of sources and structure of news beats all flows through it. *Bernard Roscho* (1975) objectivity resides in the behavior of the journalist rather than news stories them. Journalists seek out the facts and report them as fairly and as balanced a way possible. For them objectivity does not mean that they are impartial observer of the events as it does for the social scientists. Later *Soloski* suggested that it is obligatory for any journalist to seek out facts from all legitimate sides of an issue then, report the facts in an impartial and balanced way.

Statement of the Problem

News is a highly specialized form of reporting of any event/issue. It emphasizes truth, fairness, balance, fairness and objectivity. A news story is a report of event and a form of objective writing. In this present scenario, the opinionated content can be easily seen in news reports. Whenever a journalist introduces his/her opinions in news report either latently or blatantly, then that medium and journalist is said to be editorializing. This research therefore, seeks to find the extent these English Dailies engaged in the act of editorializing news.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to analyse the editorializing content of the news stories with respect to presentation of views of people and newsman in three English Dailies i.e. The Hindu, The Tribune and The Statesman.

Research Questions

1. What is the *Editorialized Content* found in the news stories of the newspapers The Hindu, The Tribune and The Statesman?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Theories: The study is based on two mass communication theories one is The Social Responsibility Theory and the second on is Media Dependency Theory. The reason behind the selection of these theories is that the press revolves



around a tripartite system includes Mass Media, Audience and the Society. The responsibility of press lies under this system.

- a) **The Social Responsibility Theory (SRT):** This Social Responsibility Theory of press is associated with “the Commission of the Freedom of Press” in United States at 1949. It has been stated in the book “Four theories of Press” (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm) that pure libertarianism is out dated and obsolete, there is need to make a way for replacement of Libertarian theory with the Social responsibility theory. During 20th century, most of the developing countries and third world nations have used this theory. This theoretical approach was a result of broadcasting and media ethics. Early communication administrators such as Robert Hutchins (head of the Commission on Freedom of the Press) expressed his concern over code and ethics of communication and mass media in Libertarian media cultures. Early followers of the theory believed that mass media should also have some kind of contribution to its societal improvement. The Committee on a Free and Responsible Press (1947) expressed the view that the press should provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning. SRT allows the press to have a responsibility towards its public/society without any censorship. This theory lies between both Authoritarian theory and Libertarian theory because it gives media freedom in one hand and ethically controls in other hand. SRT helped in creating professionalism in media by setting up a high level of accuracy, truth, and information.
- b) **Media Systems Dependency Theory (MSD):** This Theory was developed by American communications researchers Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976. The theory suggests that media and their audiences should be studied in the context of larger social systems. There is an internal link between media, audience and society. The audience learns little from the real life, so they use media to get more information to fulfill their needs. MSD ties together the interrelations of all three components mass media, audience and society; these all depends on each other and form a tripartite system. At its core, the basic dependency hypothesis states that the more a person depends on media to meet needs, the more important media will be in a person's life, and therefore the more effects media will have on a person. Media dependency theory is a systematic approach which studies the effects of mass media on audiences. It also studies the interactions between media, audiences and social systems.

Review of Related Literature

“Editorializing is a practice in journalism, where journalist introduces his reasonable interpretation one’s thoughts and self comments in the form of endorsement, reflecting discretion”.

The term editorializing refers to the association of views or opinions in news items. Opinions are expressed in news items in more often than not by the people who processed the news items. Editorializing is a practice in journalism, where journalist introduces his reasonable interpretation one’s thoughts and self comments in the form of endorsement, reflecting discretion. The term editorializing refers to the association of views or opinions in news items. Editorialize came from word editorial, which means written by an editor. This term was coined in 1856 means, “introduce opinions into factual accounts”.

Sushil Kumar Singh & Brij Kishore Kuthiala (2009) asserted that the paradigm hegemony of news practices is fairly expressed by the process of editorializing of the news stories. The study also revealed that considering news as only information, those days have been gone in the past. Now the time, the trend of editorializing across the news media whether print or electronic is pertinent which helps to understand news story in better way. There is a close resemblance between television and newspapers in the nature of editorializing. The study suggested that there is a need if standardization across media where facts and opinions can be inserted fairly.

Sunny Mabize & Otikor Sameul (2015) observed that the practice of editorializing in news by the newspapers owners affects the credibility among its readers and also flouted the ethics of the press. By comparing the editorializing content of two Nigerian newspapers(owned by political leaders) it was found that ownership not only affected the straight news stories which were severally partisan but also defeated the core objectives of journalism and the moral duty which are guided by ethical code of conduct. It was suggested through this study that, the concerned authorities should initiate some strong measures against the media owners not to interfere in editorial content of paper, along with this there should have a regular review contents and of activities of press with a view to ensure compliance with professional and ethical code of conduct.

John Maxwell (2012) discussed the essentials for journalist regarding editorializing. Journalists need to avoid using adjectives reflecting their opinions or their prejudices; there should be an instant identification of that person, whenever someone is quoted; any story whether in favourable and unfavourable statements about someone or something, the



identifiable person should attributed; it is legally permitted to disguise bias as fact. Journalist has the privilege to be present on the behalf of the public for what he is paid for. The position of reporter does not guarantee wisdom or confer omniscience whether he is highly paid or not.

Margret A. Blanchard (1998) conferred from period 1960-1980, the usage of the term editorializing got increased in numbers by 56% during 1967 to a high 78% in 1972. But from the period mid 1980s, the usage of the term get decline due to change in business condrioms. Ban on editorializing affected badly too many broadcast nations. Even Industry too didn't give its favour to use this term during 1990s. The practice of editorializing got declined due to up selling of sponsors and audiences. There were very few people who were following the practice of editorializing protested as ban invaded their Freedom of Speech.

Naveed Saleh (2013)n his study revealed that when a news or feature article injects author's opinion, the writer is editorializng. He disagreed with this practice of editorializing followed by media by stating it as a poor journalistic practice. Editorializing included the assumption the audience members "know" what writer referring to.

Kyle Stokes (2014) in his blog asserted that the journalism that makes a difference today goes beyond stenography, it contextualizes, it questions, it reveals the underlying power structure of the institution being covered.

Murthy et. al. (2010) found that presentation of news stories has been changed along with time and technology and growing trend of treating news as a commercialized commodity for mass consumption. News of crime, legal disputes, politics, economic, social and development took a back seat. The appearance of front page is being prepared attractive and catchy.

Ellen Hume (1996) concluded that the news organisations are facing challenges. The competition is increasing and audience is shrinking day by day which need quality, reliable and useful information product on which citizen can act. The selection of medium is not problematic but selection of the message is quite a challenging task. Objectivity is very important in any message to let journalist perform his work.

Juhani Pajunen (2008) found that the theoretical study of news is helpful in practice as well as detecting any biasness from the news stories. The majority of news articles were neutral and slightly biased clearly shown that objectivity has been preserved relatively well in the articles analysed. Another finding show that it is worth stressing that analysis of news stories cannot be totally objective. No two different analysts would bring same interpretation of news stories selected for the study.

Research Methodology

This study was designed to study about the contents of news stories to discuss the editorializing of them with respect to the presentation of views and opinions. In this study, researcher's aim was to analyse the contents of newspapers with respect to editorializing of news stories. The population of the data was 180 news stories with 60 stories of each newspaper taken from January to June of the Year 2014. In the time period of six months, 20 editions have been selected. Three first leading news stories on the front page of each edition were taken for analysis of editorializing.

- a) **Sampling Technique:** The Random Sampling Method was adopted in selecting newspaper editions for study.
- b) **Research Instrument:** The main research instrument for the analysis was the *Coding Sheet*, as it guided the process of information from the three English Dailies. The coding units of contents were theme, main actors, source, place of occurrences of events, editorializing of news and balance in the story.
- c) **Data Collection:** Newspaper was the Primary source of data collection. The data used for study was obtained from *The Hindu, The Tribune and The Statesman*.
- d) **Technique for Data Collection:** There were many statistical tools and methods used in analysis which makes the large amount of data into summarize format and provide required information. To conduct this research, researcher employed *Quantitative & Qualitative Content Analysis* to fulfill the objectives. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages, while qualitative content analysis used description of observations expressed in predominantly non-numerical terms. This type of study is made when researchers want to focus on message qualities that are unique, rather than generic.
- e) **Frequency and Percentage Table:** This is the most common method of describing where data has limited number of values. Frequency tables give complete picture of the distribution of data for variable. When there is less number of categories, frequency tables are more meaningful to researchers. Percentage distribution tables are often easily interpreted because percentage of various items can be compared easily.



- f) **Unit of Analysis:** The unit of analysis for all the news stories were classified according to its variable as discussed below:
1. **Only Information;** these are those news stories which imparts only information of any event or occurrence. These types of stories just inform the readers and carry data in numbers, actions or happenings of the event.
 2. **People’s Views; the stories** which carry opinions of those sources who were involved in the story, any dignitaries, personalities in the story considered in People’s views stories. These can be referred as Main actors in the story who has been attributed.
 3. **Newsman’s Views;** these stories contained the views of journalist who report, write or processed the news story. After interpreting the news, he (newsman) vehemently inserts his discretion and makes a straight news story as an opinionated piece of writing.
 4. **Both Views;** some stories carry views of both the people in the story as well as the journalist. A team of journalists in press decides who needs to be attributed, how many opinions a news story must carry, how the newsman’s views be presented in story either latently or blatantly. Those stories come into this category.

Content Analysis:

To study news, content analysis is the best method which is highly flexible and mostly used in communication research and mass media content. This is scientific method for investigating both the qualitative and quantitative information. In media message is in the form of print and electronic have two types of meanings contained within i.e. intended and perceived. Similarly every news carry some meanings too. The intended meaning is the messages which an editor puts into news for reader on based on his knowledge of concerned subject. The perceived meaning is drawn by a reader from news story on the basis of his own experiences.

Kuthiala Brij Kishore (1999) define content analysis as *a scientific process of investigating both qualitative and quantitative information of the oral, printed, and audio-visual message within a context in view of the intended and perceived meanings*. He emphasized the need of content analysis of public communication to determine the nature of messaging between the public and the organizations. To understand communication, there is need to reveal the infinite number of content or messages these mass media of communication - newspapers, radio and television contains.

Sushil K. Singh and Brij Kishore Kuthiala (2009) define content analysis is a highly flexible method which can be used by Communication & Journalism scholars, journalists and other professionals in media. This method is useful for studying the content of mass media communication like news. News as mass produced messages which contained both intended and perceived messages.

Data Analysis

At the individual level of analysis, news represents the outcome of a reporter’s expert judgment and personal motivation. Without interference from manipulative sources or demanding news organizations, this perspective might argue, reporters supposed to produce a newspaper news content which accurately represents a well rounded look at the day’s events without any personal or vested opinion in the story.

**Table 1. The data collected in terms of editorializing of The Hindu :
THE HINDU**

Editorializing	Frequency	Percentage
Only Information	7	11.66
People’s Views	10	16.66
Newsmen’s Views	4	6.66
Both Views	39	65
Total	60	100

The above table shows that, in *The Hindu*, total 11.66% of the data collected fall into the category of ‘Only Information’, there were 16.66% of stories having views of only those people who were involved in the story. The views of newsman comprised in 6.66% of stories. The percentage of stories having both (people and newsman) views were 65%. This data indicates that The Hindu rely more on imparting news stories having both the views of people as well as newsman. Putting more views of sources shows that this paper gives more importance to people’s views rather than newsman’s opinions. ‘Only informational’ news stories were less in percentage than ‘people’s views’ and more than ‘newsman’s views’ content in the paper.



Table 2. The data collected in terms of editorializing of The Tribune :
 The Tribune

Editorializing	Frequency	Percentage
Only Information	6	10
People's Views	7	11.66
Newsmen's Views	6	10
Both Views	41	68.33
Total	60	100

The data collected in case of The Tribune has been indicated in the above table. In The Tribune, 10% of stories were only informative in nature. Among total stories, there is fairly a high amount of stories have both (newsman & People) views which constituted 68.33% of collected data. Nearly same amount of news stories having only people's views and only newsman's views i.e. 11.66% of stories having only people's views and 10% of stories were having newsman's views. This table indicates that this paper gives importance to stories having both views either of people or newsman in one story or differently.

Table 3. The data collected in terms of editorializing of the Statesman
 The Statesman

Editorializing	Frequency	Percentage
Only Information	21	35
People's Views	8	13.33
Newsmen's Views	4	6.66
Both Views	27	45
Total	60	100

The above table indicates the editorializing in news stories of The Statesman. 35% of stories of total data which were only informative without any type of views contained. This paper contained news stories which had both views i.e. people and newsman was 45% of collected data. 13% of stories were having only people's views and only 6.66% of stories were having only newsman's views. This data indicates that this paper gives more importance to stories with either both views in one story or without any views (only information).

Discussion

Harvey & Marilyn (1974) concluded that any event is constituted by major three agencies. First as *news promoters* who identify any event as news, second as *news assemblers* who make the information of event into news and third are the *news consumers* who consume that news and make a sense of society.

The process of editorializing of news stories or communication content which is to deliver to its news consumers depicts the whole paradigm of news practices. Sigal (1973) took a close look on news reporting and making. His study asserted that making news is a consensual process which takes place within a context of share values of news with conceptions of newsmen's role.

Undoubtly, all three papers gave importance to views of both people in the news as well as newsman equally. The Hindu and The Tribune have somehow same percentage of both views. The percentage depicted that these papers follow the practice of editorializing more than The Statesman. As The Statesman was having a more 'informational' news story. The front page of The Statesman often carried first top left side news in the image format that has been counted as 'only informational'. The percentage data of The Hindu depicts that it has given importance to source's views in news stories as well as newsman's opinions in the stories differently more than The Tribune.

All three papers laid emphasis on including more views of people involved in the event. As more views of people (within the news) in any story makes it credible for the viewers. All three papers pay attention towards the practice of editorializing.

The result of the study indicates that there is growing following practice of editorializing by newspapers now days. There is similarity in editorializing practice between English Dailies. There is a growing trend of interpretative reporting in news practices in Indian Print media. This interpretative reporting involves the comments, views/opinions or the interpretation of journalist about the event. This editorializing practice helps reader to understand the news in a better way. The days



have gone when news was meant to be just information or an account/report of any event. The paradigm of news practices has been changed through the time. Readers are not being served with only information of any event but they are delivered the Glass of society not mere mirror of society. In mirror we see what we want to see but glance through glass helps one to see beyond our imagination or we can say glass helps one to view world widely. Today's readers gets interpretation of events, so that they could get the news beyond just information.

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