

## Anatomy of the Crisis in Television News Media with special reference to Marathi News channels

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### Abstract

In the advent of mobile technology getting cheaper; TV channels are now easily accessible & can be viewed on smart phones. TV media have reached new heights in terms of availability and reach ability. This development has created new challenges for the broadcasters. It has become difficult to find out the number of viewers and audience of the channel. previously TRP was the tool available and acceptable by both the channel owner and advertisers. Due to emerging complex situation advertising agencies are getting confused to release advertisement's on TV channels including news channels. this is **one crisis situations** I see for TV news media.

News channel phenomena is comparatively a new area of business in the field of journalism. A regular news channel profession has started in India in the Year 2005-2006. Running a 24 hours channel is always a challenging task. providing a fresh content every 8 to 12 hours is a matter of great concern for all news media players across the country. **This is the second concerning situation** for All our news channels especially regional channels having less resources of collecting news.

News is the most precious commodity which has been consumed by lacks of viewers regularly. The preparation and presentation news thus become more delicate and an issue of tremendous studied inputs. News channels have not yet been able to create an image of their own. This is due to a lack of Policy research and non-committal attitude. This require an immediate attention to get it further decayed.

The researcher wants to focus crisis issues of news channels, especially of Marathi news channels and find out the chronic symptoms and offer solutions on the present condition.

**Research hypothesis**

- TV News channels in Indian Media industry are facing multiple crisis.
- Marathi News channels have no specific editorial policies.
- Use of language is a serious area in News channels presentations.

**Working definition of CRISIS –**

Industry Crisis means a grave situation which is difficult to overcome and creates serious threats to the reputation of an organization and also affects financially.

**Working definition of Editorial Policies of channels**

Means the overall ideology of the channel and the way the contents and subjects of the channels are selected and disseminated.

**News Channels Presentations**

Means display of contents and also anchor's style of delivery and skill of using language and coining the script for news stories. .

**Introduction-**

Television News channels in India have been viewed as a new dynamic source of communication with a lot of visual resources. The mass media in this country (India) has become an economically strong area, with a huge business turnover which could be equaled to 1 percent of India's gross domestic product (GDP) and competes with the volume of many business houses and industrial sectors in India. In the realm of communication studies, News media studies are taking momentum across the world. It includes content studies, effects studies, financial and marketing aspects of media. convergence and rise of social media are some of the major aspects of media studies in the contemporary research diaspora. 'Television news' has always been a point of heated discussion now a day not because of its reach and networking but due to media practices of news channels. This is comparatively being a new area of news dissemination and presentation and having entirely a different genre compares to other TV programme formats. This has raised many issues which needs a systematic scrutiny of news channels' activities.

The media in India is definitely playing a role of opinion leader. Public perceptions of socio-political events, voting, tilting towards a particular ideology is being influenced by news channels. However, these channels are more tilted to sensationalize the news than moderately

dealing with it. This paper will deal with this aspect and will make an attempt to understand grave lacunas in news channels' working.

Of late, the media has brought down the quality of India's public's news consumptions. Media growth has led to lower public viewing and created a serious threat to Values of society. it has directly affected the media's credibility.

The most alarming fact is that media have forgotten their primary duties for which they have been created. Informing the public and taking them into right direction is missing in all spheres of media practices. Supporting the truth and making analysis of complex events and happenings is no more the priority of new media houses.

Majority of the news channels including English are free to air channels. They do not dare to become a pay channel, why? Because they fear to lose their present viewers. If you don't have a professional, substantive revenue model, how would you survive and how long? Is a question to be answered by media professionals.

Declining Quality of news production, lack of reliability, authenticity and diversity and neglecting pluralism are major serious issues facing the present new channel world. Reporting from inexperienced new reporters and their shallow analysis on important developments have devalued the profession and serious and responsible journalism.

Despite the emerging globalization ambience and international events affecting our day to day activities have been neglected by them. the Indian media remains silent on such grave issues. The coverage on the international issues is pathetically inadequate. Around 1,500+ TV channels are beaming on the Indian of which 250+ are news channels, still we have not seriously addressed the growing demands for information and knowledge.

Broadcast journalism particularly TV journalism is facing more complex situations now. If you tune any news channel it looks alike, while copying other channel they are losing their own identity, own face. If you do not have a personality of your own how long will you survive? And this question is most alarming for our news channel industry.

In the present diaspora of media, we come across many such issues which has become a regular practice, but actually they had elements of crisis. The breaking news, discussions at 9pm, excessive political news are some of them. Is it due to crisis of right content and ethics in journalism? We have to examine that.

Crisis of ideology, crisis of knowledge are major challenges before us, that also needs to be addressed here. 'Crisis' is the word which has engulfed the entire society in the widest possible ways. If we do not take serious cognizance of the same, dooms day is not too far.

### Review of literature

- 1) 'Indian media facing a crisis of credibility' by Murali Krishnan has pinpointed many crisis issues related to News channels  
He narrated that in recent years the media has brought down the true value of India's public discourse. He further added growth of media has narrowed the actual public sphere, and tilted towards elite centered news it has affected the credibility of the media.  
He further stated that the media no longer adequately performs the primary functions it is meant to, which give it public legitimacy: namely, informing the public, telling the truth, analyzing complex social, economic and political processes, providing a platform for public discourse and acting as catalyst and function as a watchdog and not a bloodhound.
- 2) All major Tv channels, including Zee, Network18 and ABP are present in the regional news market segments. **Sundeep Nagpal, an industry veteran and the Founder Director, Stratagem Media, explained,** "In the business of news broadcasting/ publishing, it is the best to have a large footprint. News becomes much more relevant when it comes in the regional language, because then it reaches even the rural parts of the country. This ultimately increases the footprint. The cost of increasing this reach is not significantly higher for the national networks, there is only content cost. However, it is evident that regional news channels which are a part of their national group are surviving on the finance available from their mother institutions. Local language (regional) news channels in India in fact have niche position to disseminate information to the majority of the population, those who cannot understand English language. Language wise and also in terms of cultural arena these channels have an important role to play in the society. Despite the rapid internationalization and the opening up of Indian society and culture to global influences, the Indian media remains extremely self-diligent entity. There is awfully rare coverage of international issues, events, institutions and processes.
- 3) In research article in journalism studies **Constanza Mujica** stated her views about presentation techniques of News channels.

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She studied two groups one having news with dramatic presentation and other without it. They found that, controlling for various background differences, exposure to the dramatic news stories significantly decreased subjects' recall of the information in the stories. It also reduced the complexity with which individuals thought about the events reported. The results raised important concerns about the contribution of such news to the public's information level and utility of dramatic news stories.

4) Nikhil Wagle in an interview to a web magazine stated that Marathi news channels should concentrate more on contents. State level issues and regional news should be their priority. Breaking news concept has to be seriously reviewed He also foresees that the next decade of Indian TV news industry will be of more consumer centered and technologically advanced. In an exclusive chat with [Indiantelevision.com](http://Indiantelevision.com), Wagle shares his vision on the Marathi news space, where he feels there is huge room for creative experimentation.

#### **History of Marathi News Channels**

Doordarshan Mumbai was established on Gandhi Jayanti (2nd October 1972.) now known as Sahyadri channel was the only source of Marathi TV infotainment programmes till Alpha Marathi (Subsidiary of Zee group) began their transmission in 1998. It was followed by ETV Marathi by Eenadu a Hyderabad based company started their Infotainment private regional channel. This was the beginning of the era of Private regional news segment on the Indian soil.

Eenadu TV (ETV) has its footprint in 12 regional languages in the news & current affairs segment. ETV channels were infotainment channels having a mix of entertainment and news bulletins was not entirely a news channel but it was a combination of sitcoms & news. The credit of beginning hourly news bulletin goes to ETV. In the year 2007 three major news channels

were launched the first ever private news channel was established by ZEE group (known as ZEE 24 taas) on 12th February, 2007. It was followed by Star and IBN. After that a few Marathi news channels joined the bandwagon. They are Jai Maharashtra, TV9., Maharashtra 1, AM news etcetera. We can roughly say that in the last 12 to 13 Years Marathi News channel concept emerged in digital news sector.

**Research design** – For this research following design was adopted

- 1) Content analysis- Researcher selected major news bulletins as a sample ( ABP Maza and Zee 24 taas ,Between 1<sup>st</sup>& 30 November,2019) for data collection this is a primary source of the research .
- 2) Researcher also gone through various research articles and newspapers features to substantiate his hypothesis.

**Justification for specific stratified sample–**

November,2019 was most happening month for Political circle of Maharashtra. After election though having won highest seats BJP (105) (Bhartiya Janata Party) could not form the government because their ally Shivasena was not ready to go along due to some pre political commitments which was not entertained by the BJP. That created a great crisis for the state of Maharashtra.

**Background**

After election results out on 24th October,2019 of Maharashtra Legislative assembly, it was evident that the ruling BJP Shivasena alliance were in a position to form the Government in the State. Since BJP won 105 seats and Shivasena 57 seats in the 288 seats assembly, mandate was truly in favor of them. However, Shivasena staked claim in the chief minister's post, the tussle between the parties was intensified. Shivasena claimed that BJP had promised at the time of Lok Sabha election that 50-50 formula would be adopted in Vidhansabha elections and equal share would be given to both the parties including CM's tenure. But it had not happened and power politics, tactics, strategies from all the political parties excited entire Maharashtra. The news channels were not exceptions in fact they exploited the situation unfolded exciting drama on the small screen and mobile screens by adding some spice in it. News channels in their tough competition came out with identical visuals and narration that made the presentation more monotonous. It was expected that these channels would not leave their calm and would come out with some maturity, but that was not happened

**Contents of News items between 1st November& 30th November,2019. In two major Marathi News channels (Zee24 taas & ABPMaaza)**

- 1) **BJP strategy to overpower Shivasena in power games.**
- 2) **Shivasena insists on CMS's post.**
- 3) **Fadanvis outgoing CM of Maharashtra meets BJP president to find solution.**
- 4) **CM talks to RSS (RashtriyaSwayamsevak Sangh) chief.**
- 5) **Power politics is at its peak, Sena MLAs meet**
- 6) **President Rule imposed in Maharashtra**

- 7) Uncertainty glooms on Maharashtra
- 8) Governor asks BJP to stake claim to form the Government, BJP shows unwillingness
- 9) Governor asks the second largest party Shivasena to form the government
- 10) Shivasena fails to have number in the stipulated time
- 11) Talks among Congress, Rashtrwadi Congress and Shivasena continues
- 12) MLA's are kept in the hotel to avoid defection
- 13) Sena Leader Sanjay Raut admitted to leelavati hospital
- 14) Congress shows the reluctance in joining the alliance
- 15) Meeting in New Delhi, Sharad Pawar absent
- 16) Shivasena quits NDA (National Democratic Alliance)
- 17) Soniya Gandhi not ready to with Shivasena
- 18) Sharda Pawar meets Modi for 45 minutes, eyebrow raised
- 19) Amit Shaha, Modi meets after pawar's visit
- 20) Talks continue in forming the government
- 21) BJP ready to give chief ministerial berth to Shivasena
- 22) Consensus on Udhav Thakare's appointment as CM.
- 23) Oath taking ceremony within 2,3 days
- 24) A new formula Of Mahaaghadhi for ministerial berths
- 25) In a dramatic mode Fadanvis and NCP's Ajitdada Pawar takes oath at Raj bhavan as CM and Deputy CM respectively.
- 26) Mahaaghadhi (Shivasena+National Congress+ Rashtrwadi congress) takes oath of integrity amongst them.
- 27) Ajit Pawar returns to his party, resigns Fadanvis also resigns
- 28) Udhav Thakare becomes CM of Maharashtra

The given chronology of events in Maharashtra power politics circle have certainly got a news value and accordingly most of the media houses adhered to that.

Newspapers particularly in regional language have colored it a bit more to than the actual objective contents. This changing approach of newspapers is due to high tempered vocal TV news channels who are blowing this news out of proportion all the time.

**Observations**

- 1) During the period of 1<sup>st</sup>& 30<sup>th</sup> november,2019 both (ZEE 24Taas and ABP Maaza) TV news channels dedicated most of their headlines to the political developments in the state.
- 2) The news bulletin was dominated by predictions rather than actual happenings
- 3) Most of the so-called news were just updates of unimportant chain of events were labelled as breaking news.
- 4) Unnecessary details were shown like Medical reports of Mr. Sanjay Raut,MLA's are being shifted to various 5 star hotels, A Rashtrawadi congress MLA is being caught by shivasainik and brought back to the camp.
- 5) Meeting between Sharad Pawar & prime minster Narendra Modi was portrayed as if BJP & Rashtrwadi Congress having a pact for forming the government.
- 6) Tabloidization of news had the striking characteristic of majority of these bulletins.
- 7) Major Happenings like untimely heavy rainfall, threat of cyclone, Delhi Police agitation, threat to sugar industry due to nonexistence of the state government, Ajodhyaverdict, Sharp decline in industrial growth, Chief justice of India in RTI orbit and price rise in the commodities were given secondary preference.
- 8) The coverage was haphazard in a sense that all happenings and political moves were shown as per the availability visuals & bytes, had no proper linkage and consolidation.
- 9) The approach towards presentation of these news bulletins was not based on core news value but it was a frustrating attempt to unfold a fictitious drama.
- 10) After watching all these news items, types of visuals supported, use of bold letters and gaudy colors the entire seriousness of watching a major development in the state of Maharashtra was converted by these channels into a block buster thriller.

**Other major findings****Financial status of the news channels**

The researcher also tried to find out the financial status of these 2 Marathi news channels through the balance sheets of their parent group.. But the balance sheets available could not

specify the income and revenue details of these particular channels. These channels are part of big national MNC's having multimedia production and transmission across the country.

#### **The TRP issue**

It was observed that TRP's of both the channels are quite encouraging compare to their other Marathi competitors. However, these channels are free to air or charging meagre price. ABP Maaza is free to air channel on Tata sky while Zee 24 Taas charging only 10 paisa per month. This fact shows that these channels are not ready to take risk and become pay channels by charging reasonable fees. TRP issue is always a controversial one and many times it has been proved that it doesn't meet scientific scrutiny and thus could not be taken as a reliable source to gauge viewer's aspirations.

#### **Conclusions**

- 1) Marathi news channels have no specific editorial policy .
- 2) Marathi News channels are very careless about using the language both in text and narration.
- 3) Marathi News channels are obsessed with power politics and have forgotten their primary function to inform and educate
- 4) The construction of the news item and intro have been grossly neglected.
- 5) News values are measured more on the basis of glamour and excitement than its developmental potentials.

#### **Suggestions**

- 1) **News channels should create their own style book as major newspapers in India have.**
- 2) **News editor must formulate and circulate their news policies and vision for news value amongst the staff members.**
- 3) **Reporters need extensive training in presentation skills and current affairs segment to make their piece a note worthy**
- 4) **There should be a clear demarcation of news and editorial comments.**
- 5) **The editorial comments must come from the senior editors and not from anchors and field representative.**
- 6) **Channels must concentrate more on developmental news rather than power politics events.**
- 7) **Debate programme on prime time should have a variety of subjects .**

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