

A Study on Readers' Perception of Newspapers in Nagpur**Prof. Pooja Bhutada¹, Prof. Sridevi Jaiswal²****¹Asst. Professor, Tirpude Institute of Management Education, Nagpur
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1, Balasaheb Tirpude Marg, Civil Lines, Nagpur-440001.****ABSTRACT**

India is an interesting market for newspapers as its citizens belong to different faiths and speak different languages. While Hindi is a national language and has the most newspaper readership, regional newspapers too are followed strongly. In fact, in some states, readership of regional newspaper outnumbers the readership for Hindi newspaper. There are different types of news papers in the market right from national level news papers to community newspapers. In the midst of this all, there also exists substantial readership for English newspapers which are mainly confined to urban areas of the country. Though all of them are print media, the audience for all these news papers is different.

Nagpur is also home to some famous Hindi & English Newspaper publications. Being fairly urbanized, a section of the society of Nagpur also follows readership of English Newspapers. It can be said all three language newspapers viz. Marathi, Hindi and English have their presence in Nagpur. The city houses some of the oldest newsgroups like "Navbharat" and "The Hitavada" which are operating since pre independence era.

In such context, we have undertaken to survey of 350 Nagpurians regarding quality of newspapers read by them. Age, gender, profession and income were the criteria defining respondent profile. Survey aims to know the perception of participants in respect of important newspapers published in Nagpur, published in three main languages viz. English, Hindi and Marathi.

Dainik Bhaskar, Times of India and Lokmat Samachar emerged as most read newspapers in the city. Findings suggest that Hindi daily Dainik Bhaskar scores over all other dailies on various factors for selection of a newspaper. This paper also makes suggestions to different newspapers to improve their readership.

Keywords: Language, Newspaper, Print, Readers, Readership.

INTRODUCTION

The newspapers have not lost their importance even in today's techno-savvy world. The experience of reading news in a newspaper is altogether different from hearing the same news on other media like television, radio or online media. In a developing country like India, print media is still the most feasible medium to impart news especially in rural areas & small towns owing to its cost effectiveness and ease of use. In urban areas, a reader is poised for choices to select a newspaper for his routine readership.

Today the basic task of the media is to provide truthful and objective information to the people that will enable them to form rational opinions. However, print media is often accused of various charges like twisting of facts, sensationalization of news etc. Sometimes, quality of a news article in particular

newspaper leaves much to be desired. A conscious reader desires more utility from the newspapers in terms of Objectivity, Integrity and Accuracy & various other aspects.

In such context, we have undertaken to survey the Nagpurians regarding the quality of newspapers read by them. Survey aims to know the perceptions of the participants in respect of important newspapers published in Nagpur. Study is concerned with knowing the reader's perception about all the major newspapers published in three main languages viz. English, Hindi and Marathi. Selection of newspapers is as under:

<u>Hindi Newspapers</u>	<u>Marathi</u>	<u>English</u>
1. Navbharat	1. Maharashtra Times	1. Times of India
2. Dainik Bhaskar	2. Lokmat Times	2. The Hitavada
3. Lokmat Samachar	3. Sakal	3. Economic Times
4. Tarun Bharat		4. Lokmat Times

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Today, just about everyone depends on information and communication to keep his/her life moving through daily activities like work, education, healthcare, leisure activities, entertainment, travelling, personal relationships and the other stuff with which one is involved. We rely on print media for the current news and facts & trust the media as an authority for news, information, education and entertainment. The media has a power to affect the way we act and think. Many people believe that what is depicted by the media is true and acceptable, altering their judgment and thus causing altercations. Media has a profound influence on the behaviour of its audience.

Considering such powerful influence of newspapers, we have undertaken a study to understand the perception of newspaper readers towards its contents. Participants have been asked a series of questions to enable us to comprehend their view points in respect of various aspects concerning quality of the newspaper they read in Nagpur.

The study will be an eye opener for these newspapers and will go a long way to bring about desirable changes found to be necessary in these newspapers.

OBJECTIVES

The survey is aimed at finding the perception of Nagpur people about the newspapers read by them. Survey is concerned with knowing the relative market position of various Hindi, English and Marathi newspapers. The main objectives of the survey can be stated as under:

1. To find the newspaper having highest readership in the city in three major languages i.e. viz. Hindi, English and Marathi.
2. To ascertain the impact of various factors affecting the respondent for selection of a particular newspaper.
3. To invite suggestions from respondents on various parameters and factors for improvements in newspapers of all three languages.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**Sample frame:** Nagpur city**Sample size:** 350

Survey description and respondent profile: Sample drawn for this research included respondents belonging to different age groups, gender, professions & variable income levels. Data was gathered using a questionnaire that recorded responses on reader preferences, tastes, opinion and suggestions for newspapers in English, Hindi and Marathi languages. Questions were designed to measure the impact each parameter had on a respondents mind while deciding on a particular newspaper for their reading.

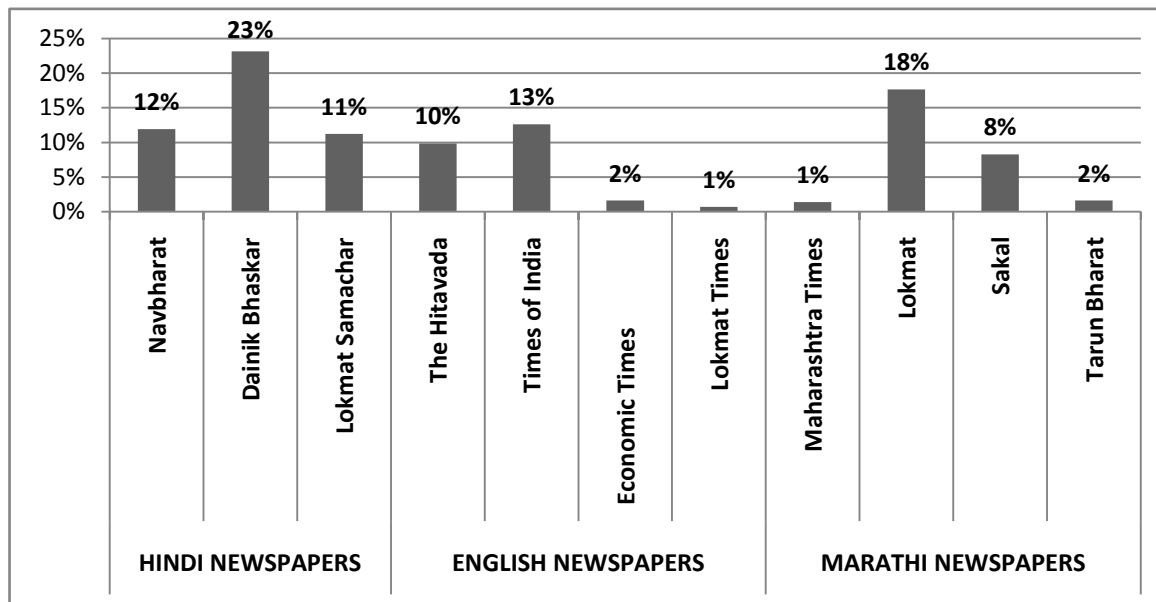
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

- I. **Readership distribution of newspapers** –Respondents were asked about highest readership for a particular newspaper in a particular language in Nagpur city.

Table 1: Readership Distribution of Newspapers

LANGUAGE	NEWSPAPER	READERSHIP
HINDI NEWSPAPERS	Navbharat	12%
	Dainik Bhaskar	23%
	Lokmat Samachar	11%
ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS	The Hitavada	10%
	Times of India	13%
	Economic Times	2%
	Lokmat Times	1%
MARATHI NEWSPAPERS	Maharashtra Times	1%
	Lokmat	18%
	Sakal	8%
	Tarun Bharat	2%

Figure 1



As per above table, Dainik Bhaskar emerges as the Hindi newspaper with highest readership at 23%. Times of India is the most read English newspaper in the city with 13% respondents in its favour. Lokmat enjoys highest readership in category of Marathi Newspapers having 18% readership.

It can also be inferred that Dainik Bhaskar is the most read newspaper in the city followed by Lokmat (Marathi) and Times of India (English) at 2nd and 3rd place respectively.

II. Factors that affect newspaper selection

These factors are studied for knowing the preference of reader for a particular language newspaper. The data in percentages is tabulated below-

Table 2: Total Responses for All Newspapers on Various Parameters

NEWSPAPERS	HINDI			ENGLISH				MARATHI			
				The Hitavada	Times of India	Economic Times	Lokmat Times	Maharashtra Times	Lokmat	Sakal	Tarun Bharat
Price of a Newspaper	13%	26%	12%	11%	9%	1%	0%	1%	17%	8%	2%
Quality of Language used	10%	26%	10%	11%	12%	1%	1%	1%	18%	7%	2%

<u>Use of Appropriate Titles</u>	13%	24%	10%	11%	11%	2%	1%	1%	17%	9%	2%
<u>Reporting with accurate facts</u>	13%	26%	9%	11%	11%	2%	1%	1%	16%	8%	2%
<u>Unbiased reporting</u>	12%	27%	9%	10%	12%	2%	1%	1%	18%	7%	1%
<u>Well drafted articles</u>	13%	25%	9%	9%	14%	2%	1%	2%	16%	6%	2%
<u>In depth coverage of news</u>	12%	30%	9%	11%	11%	1%	1%	1%	15%	7%	2%
<u>Reporting without political inclination</u>	14%	24%	12%	10%	14%	2%	1%	1%	13%	7%	2%
<u>Celebrity/Guest columns</u>	13%	26%	10%	11%	13%	1%	1%	1%	14%	8%	1%
<u>Printing/Paper quality</u>	10%	28%	11%	11%	10%	1%	1%	1%	16%	8%	2%
<u>Promotional Schemes offered</u>	11%	29%	11%	10%	12%	1%	1%	1%	15%	9%	1%
<u>Sports Coverage</u>	13%	26%	10%	10%	13%	2%	1%	1%	13%	9%	1%
<u>Business Coverage</u>	14%	26%	9%	11%	12%	2%	1%	1%	14%	8%	1%
<u>Local Coverage</u>	12%	24%	12%	9%	14%	2%	1%	1%	16%	8%	2%
<u>National Coverage</u>	13%	24%	12%	10%	13%	2%	1%	1%	14%	9%	2%
<u>International Coverage</u>	13%	27%	10%	11%	12%	2%	1%	1%	13%	9%	2%
<u>Showbiz/Movies Coverage</u>	13%	25%	10%	10%	12%	2%	1%	2%	14%	10%	0%
<u>Current Affairs Coverage</u>	13%	25%	12%	9%	14%	2%	1%	1%	14%	8%	1%

FINDINGS

1. Readership: Dainik Bhaskar emerges as the most read newspaper in Hindi Newspaper category followed by Navbharat and Lokmat respectively. Times of India emerged as the most read English newspaper, followed closely by The Hitavada. Remaining newspapers have negligible readership in the

city. Lokmat Samachar enjoys the top ranking under Marathi category and Sakal newspaper stands at second position.

2. Factors affecting selection of a newspaper-

i) Price of a Newspaper: Top three news papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Navbharat (Hindi). Remaining papers, especially English newspapers have not received favourable response for price as a parameter.

ii) Quality of Language used: Top three papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Times of India (English). The Hitavada is on 4th position closely followed by remaining Hindi newspapers. Most of the Marathi papers have received least responses on this parameter.

iii) Reporting with accurate facts: Dainik Bhaskar has received highest responses for this parameter followed by Lokmat (Marathi) and Navbharat respectively. Times of India is slightly ahead of The Hitavada and are at 3rd and 4th position respectively.

iv) Use of appropriate Titles: Top three news papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Navbharat (Hindi). Remaining papers, especially English Marathi newspapers have not received favourable response for this parameter.

v) Unbiased reporting: Top two news papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) and Lokmat (Marathi). 3rd position is tied between Times of India (English) and Navbharat (Hindi).

vi) Well drafted Articles: Top three papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Times of India (English). Navbharat (Hindi) is marginally behind Times of India and occupies 4th place. Remaining newspapers are considerably behind on this parameter.

vii) In depth coverage of News: Top three news papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Navbharat (Hindi). Times of India and The Hitavada are at 4th place with almost equal votes in their favour.

viii) Reporting without political inclination: Dainik Bhaskar has again topped the preference chart for this parameter. 2nd position is jointly occupied by Times of India (English) and Navbharat (Hindi) newspaper, closely followed by Lokmat (Marathi) newspaper.

viii) Celebrity Guest Columns: Top two papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) and Lokmat (Marathi). 3rd position is jointly shared by Times of India (English) and Navbharat (Hindi).

ix) Printing/Paper quality: Top two papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) and Lokmat (Marathi). 3rd position is jointly shared by The Hitavada (English) with Lokmat Samachar (Hindi).

x) Promotional Schemes Offered: Top two papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) and Lokmat (Marathi). 3rd position is occupied by The times of India (English) closely followed by Navbharat (Hindi) & Lokmat Samachar (Hindi) at 4th place jointly.

xi) Sports Coverage: Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) has received highest preference for this category. Interestingly 2nd position is jointly occupied by three newspapers viz. Lokmat (Marathi), The times of

India (English) and Navbharat (Hindi). 3rd position is also jointly occupied by Lokmat Samachar (Hindi) and The Hitavada (English).

xii) Local Coverage: Top three papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Times of India (English). Navbharat (Hindi) & Lokmat Samachar (Hindi) are slightly behind at 4th place jointly.

xiii) National Coverage: Top two papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) and Lokmat (Marathi). 3rd position is jointly occupied by The times of India (English) and Navbharat (Hindi).

xiv) International Coverage: Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) has received highest preference for this category. Interestingly 2nd position is jointly occupied by Lokmat (Marathi) and Navbharat (Hindi). 3rd position is occupied by The times of India (English).

xv) Showbiz/Movie Coverage: Top three news papers receiving highest preference of respondents for this parameter are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Navbharat (Hindi). Times of India is marginally behind and occupies 4th place.

xvi) Current Affairs: Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) has received highest preference for this category. 2nd position is jointly shared between Lokmat (Marathi) and Times of India (English). 3rd position is occupied by Navbharat (Hindi) which is closely followed by Lokmat Samachar (Hindi) at 4th place.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Majority of respondents under Hindi newspaper category, i.e. 30%, suggested that Dainik Bhaskar can use more interesting writing style. In category of English Newspaper, "The Hitavada" appeared to be newspaper that requires improvement in its writing style with 6% respondents suggesting it. In case of Marathi newspapers, 13% respondents suggested that Lokmat should improve its writing style

2. Most of the respondents under Hindi newspaper category, i.e. 24%, suggested that Navbharat should cover more of local news. In category of English newspaper, "The Hitavada" 11% respondents suggested that Lokmat should have more local coverage. In case of Marathi newspapers, 12% respondents suggested that Lokmat shall include more local coverage.

4. In Hindi newspaper category, 22% suggested that Navbharat should cover more educational articles on Financial matters. In category of English Newspaper, "The Hitavada" 10% respondents suggested that Lokmat should have more informative articles on Financial matters. In case of Marathi newspapers, 15% respondents suggested that Lokmat should include more articles on financial matters.

5. Maximum respondents under Hindi newspaper category, i.e. 22%, suggested that Navbharat should cover more of Inter-national news. In category of English Newspaper, "The Hitavada" 09% respondents suggested that Lokmat should have more Inter-national coverage. In case of Marathi newspapers, 15% respondents suggested that Lokmat should include more International news in it.

6. Under Hindi newspaper category, 27% suggested that Dainik Bhaskar should cover more articles on lifestyle related issues. In category of English Newspaper, "The Hitavada" 8% respondents suggested that Lokmat should have more informative articles on lifestyle related issues. In case of Marathi newspapers, 15% respondents suggested that Lokmat should include more articles on lifestyle related issues

7. Majority of respondents under Hindi newspaper category, i.e. 25%, suggested that Navbharat should cover more of informative articles on Health care. In category of English Newspaper, 10% respondents suggested that The Hitavada should have more informative articles on Health care. In case of Marathi newspapers, 14% respondents suggested that Lokmat shall include more informative articles on Health care.

8. In Hindi newspaper category, i.e. 22% suggested that Navbharat should cover more articles on updated information technology. In category of English Newspaper, 9% respondents suggested that The Hitavada should have more informative articles on updated information technology. In case of Marathi newspapers, 15% respondents suggested that Lokmat should include more articles on updated information technology.

9. Another observation from Hindi newspaper - 26% suggested that Dainik Bhaskar should cover more articles on Job and Employment. In category of English Newspaper, 8% respondents suggested that The Hitavada should have more informative articles on Job and Employment. In case of Marathi newspapers, 15% respondents suggested that Lokmat should include more articles on Job and Employment

CONCLUSION

Dainik Bhaskar, Times of India and Lokmat Samachar emerged as most read newspapers in the city for Hindi, English and Marathi language respectively. It is worthwhile to note that Navbharat and Lokmat are the two oldest circulating newspapers of the city, whereas, circulation of Dainik Bhaskar started only a decades ago. Considering this, it is a significant achievement for Dainik Bhaskar.

In case of English newspaper, readers have opted for Times of India as most preferred newspaper and again it is surprising to note that The Hitavada has not made it to the top despite of its presence in the city since decades. The result is a testimony for brand value of the Times Group which has presence across entire nation and is one of the most widely followed newspaper in a country.

In case of Marathi newspaper, respondents have reposed their trust on decades old local newspaper, Dainik Lokmat, and it is worthwhile to note that Maharashtra Times, promoted by the Times group and launched in the city couple of years ago has not made any inroads in the market yet.

Further, quality of all the newspapers circulated in the city was tested on sixteen parameters. Dainik Bhaskar has emerged as the unanimous choice for the top spot on all the sixteen parameters. For second & third spot, there is a contest between Navbharat (Hindi), Lokmat (Marathi) and Times of India (English). Performance of The Hitavada is particularly poor in spite of its long presence in the city.

Lastly, survey invited various suggestions from respondents in respect of all language newspapers. It is interesting to note that most of the suggestions in case of Hindi newspaper are referred for Dainik Bhaskar and Navbharat. This is because these two papers have the highest readership in Hindi language newspaper and thus, suggestions also pertain to these two newspapers. Same is the case in case of Marathi newspapers wherein most of the suggestions are for the Lokmat as the paper enjoys highest readership for Marathi Language newspaper. In case of English newspaper, however, almost all the suggestion are for The Hitavada followed by Times of India at 2nd place.

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