International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies



ISSN Print: 2664-8652
ISSN Online: 2664-8660
Impact Factor: RJIF 8.31
IJAHSS 2024; 6(2): 386-393
www.socialstudiesjournal.com
Received: 15-11-2024
Accepted: 18-12-2024

Dr. Mukesh Kumar
Assistant Professor,
PG Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic and Persian University,
Patna, Bihar, India

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Mukesh Kumar
Assistant Professor,
PG Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic and Persian University,
Patna, Bihar, India

Small Hindi Newspapers: Problems and Potentials

Mukesh Kumar

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26648652.2024.v6.i2c.317

Abstract
This study examines the problems, potentials, and policy needs of small Hindi newspapers in India defined by the RNI as titles with circulations up to 25,000. Drawing on a literature review and in-depth interviews with editors/owners of 38 newspapers across 19 Indian states/UTs (including Press Council nominees), the research situates small papers as crucial democratic intermediaries that localize information, scrutinize grassroots governance, and often pioneer investigative revelations overlooked by large chains. Despite their civic value and rising registration figures, small newspapers face structural disadvantages: high newsprint costs, thin revenues, technological lag, limited professional staffing, and inequities in government advertising (DAVP) and outdated RNI categorization that allows large chains to compete within the "small" bracket. Findings underscore that local papers retain strong audience trust and relevance, and that digital affordances can extend their impact if supported. Policy recommendations include establishing a Small Newspaper Development Corporation; concessional/ subsidized newsprint quotas; transparent, time-bound, bias-free ad disbursal, enhanced representation of small papers in the Press Council of India; reformed RNI classification treating chain editions as a single unit; bank credit and PPP support (treating small papers akin to cottage industries); mandatory physical verification to curb publication fraud; and structured journalism internships to professionalize local newsrooms. Implemented together, these measures can secure media plurality, strengthen local accountability, and sustain small Hindi newspapers as engines of democratic participation.

Keywords: RNI classification, DAVP advertising policy, Small Hindi newspapers, newsprint subsidy, local journalism, media plurality, press policy reform

Introduction
"Small newspapers are the pillars of democracy in this country as they cater to the needs of the majority of the Indian population and particularly those who live in the rural areas" (Sharma, 2006) [2]. The Registrar of Newspapers (India) defines small newspaper as-"A newspaper with a circulation of up to 25,000 copies per publishing day" (RNI., Press in India., 2010). "Small newspapers serving their intimate involvement in the local scenario play a more direct role in the process of democratizing communication and motivating socio-economic transformation than newspapers published at trade area" (A report: future of print media, 2001) [10].

The relevance of small newspapers can be brought home with the help of a case study of a newspaper called "Poora Sach". A small Hindi newspaper "Poora Sach" that started on 2 February 2002 by Ram Chander Chhatrapati "stood for the complete truth without any cuts or manipulation-just hard facts. In the very first edition, he wrote editorials on the front page taking 'an oath that truth will never be compromised". It was during this time that Chhatrapati started writing on the malpractices by the Dera Sacha Sauda Ram Rahim. A few months later he received an anonymous letter alleging that Ram Rahim sexually assaulted sadhvis inside the Dera and he started digging deep into the story. After collecting the necessary information, he prepared a report and went ahead to publish it. Chhatrapati kept reporting on the matter despite several threats and on 24 October 2002 he was attacked. He battled for his life for 28 days. Ram Chander Chhatrapati passed away on 21 November 2002 in New Delhi.

Chhatrapati's favourite statement "there is only truth and lies, there's nothing between (*sach aur jhooth ke beech koi teesri cheez nahi hoti)"*. The fight that Chhatrapati started in 2002 reached its decisive conclusion in 2017.

When all the corporate media houses refused to publish the anonymous letter in the sadhvi episode, he published it first and hence paid the price by his own life.


पूरा सच
सांध्य दैनिक
कार चालक के हठ ने खोल दिया धार्मिक डेरे का कच्चा चिट्ठा
धर्म के नाम पर किए जा रहे हैं साध्वियों के जीवन बर्बाद
अरूट जी की जयंती मनाई गई
पुरानी रंजिश के चलते युवक पर हमल

Fig 1: Front Page of Newspaper Poora Sach


दैनिक जागरण
डेरा प्रमुख दोषी करार, भारी हिंसा में 32 मरे

Fig 2: Front Page of Newspaper Dainik Jagran

'The story had all the elements of a journalistic scoop. And the letter had been in circulation since 2002. So why hadn't any mainstream media organizations touched it? (Tripathi, 2018) [8]. The struggle of small newspapers regarding this case depicts the relevance of the local media in a global and a monopolized scenario.

The future of small-market newspapers is "not certain and the road ahead will continue to be rocky and unpredictable. But the foundations of small-market newspapers are more solid than some people, including local journalism and local audiences, may realize. If all news is local, then this sector will continue to matter for a long time to come" (Radcliffe, Damian; Ali, Christopher, 2017) [9].

Small Newspapers in India

The practices and performance of the mainstream media have been dominated in the above paragraph. This section casts a look at this small newspaper in the Indian context. "India is the largest democracy in the world; it becomes very important that the citizens have access to information

for the proper functioning of its institutions. In the past, the print media shouldered the responsibility of disseminating information and news regarding the happenings within and outside the country" (RNI, Press in India, 2010). "Small newspapers are the pillars of democracy in this country as they cater to the needs of the majority of the Indian population and particularly those who live in the rural areas" (Sharma, 2006) [2]. The Registrar of Newspapers (India) defines small newspaper as-"A newspaper with a circulation of up to 25,000 copies per publishing day" (RNI, Press in India, 2010).

"Small newspapers are brought out by people with small means. They come out both from big and small towns and carry local news and cover problems concerning the local public. Many of them are also working on specialized subjects like science and technology, health, family planning, religion, etc. The small newspapers generally speak the local language of the people and are read and understood by them and thus are capable of influencing or building up public opinion at the grass-root level. They serve as a bridge between the people living at distant places in the interiors of the country on the one hand and the local administration, state government and the central government on the other" (A report: future of print media, 2001) [13].

According to the report of RNI (RNI, 2017), the total number of small newspapers in India registered with RNI is 3652 and during the year 2014-15 the total number of dailies being published is 8474 of the total number of newspapers being circulated, 43% are the small newspapers. According to the report of RNI 'Press in India' the total number of small newspapers in India registered with RNI in 5931during the year 2017-18 and total number of dailies being published is 8921 of the total number of newspaper being circulated, 66% is the small newspapers (RNI., Press in India., 2019). Data shows that small newspapers are increasing.

"Small newspapers serving their intimate involvement in the local scenario play a more direct role in the process of democratizing communication and motivating socio-economic transformation than newspapers published at trade area" (A report: future of print media, 2001) [13]. Small newspapers play an important role in the local scenario. It is also observed that these newspapers ensure accountability to the voters of the people's representatives from panchayat, parliament, and bureaucracy at the grass-root level. So, the role played by these newspapers in ensuring the vibrant and effective democratic government cannot be exaggerated. Scandals and scams have been exposed by small newspapers in the country.

The aim of the small newspapers is to access the remote villages where big newspapers don't even care to look at. Local news is the mainstay of these small newspapers. For the government, local news is also important as much as national and international news. Small newspapers are catering to the majority which is illiterate and deprived and this section of the public requires extra support and care to realise democracy in its true spirit.

"In the largest democracy of the world, small newspapers catering to the overwhelming majority of the people, mostly poor and uneducated, need special patronage and care, to make democracy meaningful" (Future of print media, 2001) [13].

"The small press has faced a new threat over the past 3-4 years with the big newspapers launching regional supplements to the main paper. These, no doubt, affect the circulations of the local paper but they are not, at least not yet, able to compete with the local newspapers in terms of coverage of local news. The local press enjoys this edge since it has its finger on the pulse of the local populations. It focuses on the comparative importance of local personalities and events and more attuned to local tastes and dislikes. It enjoys a further advantageous position in terms of advertisement potential at the local /district level of limited services and products" (Ray, 2005) [11].

According to Surendra Pratap Singh "The cement scam of A.R. Antualy was first exposed in the regional small newspaper with huge reliable evidence. The infamous incident of Bhagalpur blinding case was first published in small Hindi newspaper" (Anuradha, 2011) [12].

Literature Review

Small newspapers 'as they cater to the needs of the majority of the Indian population and particularly those who live in rural areas, the allegations against small newspapers are lack of professionalism, manipulating circulation figure for a bigger share of government advertisements. These newspapers have also been called fake and have been accused of fraudulent reporting. Nonetheless, small newspapers have time and again posited a challenged to the dominance and authority displayed by big newspapers (PCI., 2001) [13].

The internet is posing a serious commercial challenge to the local press that is why they say 'if newspapers stick to the ink they will sink' (Sargeson N and Astill P, 2005) [14]. Therefore 'more radical strategy for the future of local papers was emerging-one that exploited the distribution potential on the internet (Pilling R, 1998) [15] 'It is also an opportunity to expand access to local journalism beyond the borders of the locality for which it is primarily intended. Digital printing technologies have made it easier to transmit paper copies of local newspaper overseas cheaply and quickly (Mcnair B, News from a small country: the media in Scotland., 1998) Print is still at the heart of the business (Astill, 2005) [14].

Small newspapers are accused of lacking professionalism. To combat this, one can enforce what was followed in 1980 in the UK. As per the 'National Union of Journalist (NUJ) had an agreement with nearly all the national newspaper that they would not hire journalists unless they had worked in a regional press either for three years if non-graduate, or two years, if a graduate (Cole, 1998) [17].

Local journalism today is changing in part because of the larger changes underway in our media environments. This transformation puts the future of local journalism in danger. The existence of local media is in question because the business models are under tremendous pressure and because of the very social and dynamic significance of categories like 'news' and 'journalism'. The digital media environment, undoubtedly, represents considerable potential for inspiring new forms of local journalism (**Nielsen, 2015**) [18].

Newspaper reading is declining across all countries, among all demographics, older people are an important target segment for regional papers markets. Many of the problems of regional daily papers are driven by the changing social structure. Traditionally the 'evening paper' was either home-delivered or habitually collected on the way home. This pattern of consumption was closely associated with a

workforce based in large factories and offices who kept regular hours and travelled a relatively shorter distance to their job on foot or by public transport. Flexible hours, shrunken workforces and constantly changing shift patterns, coupled with commuting by car, have disrupted these habits (Aldridge, 2007) [19].

There is stiff competition between small newspapers and the metropolitan press. With most publications, the issue has been with the machinery; it was either old or an out-dated, its turn out was slow being as it only generated a few hundred copies an hour-resulting in the paper coming out late, in some cases even later than the metropolitan papers. Newspaper with a predominance has been accused of displaying, "power of the holder of a monopoly to influence their public in any way" by small newspapers. This was the complaint that was made to the RR Divakar Committee by small newspapers. According to 'Reports of the enquiry committee on small newspapers' one of the recommendations for new ventures is to have them run on a co-operation to advance money for new ventures to be run on a co-operative basis. Another is to set-up publicly owned printing shops which are at the disposal of newspapers in smaller places. The other recommendation of Diwakar committee for small newspapers is that all allotment of government display advertisements to the smaller papers, the supply of newsprint to minor dailies on a subsidized price, a summary telegraph service for a nominal charge, free training of personals etc. (Jeffrey R, India's Newspaper Revolution, 2000) [20].

Eapen stresses that the Hindi newspapers have a potentially larger audience than the population of the US but face many problems. The pattern of ownership is among the most disturbing factors of Indian journalism (Eapen KE, Daily newspapers in India: their status and problems, 1967) [21]. According to Rao, one handicap with small newspapers is the paucity of good news and feature services at cheap rates. While the big papers subscribe to most of the news and feature syndicates and besides have their own correspondents and news services as well, small newspapers find it beyond their means to subscribe to news agency services, let alone having their own correspondents. They often have problems filling their pages with quality material. They have many difficulties but small newspapers always do remarkable work in the Indian press (Rao, 1966) [22].

Surendra Pratap Singh apprises that it is common knowledge that some scams and scandals in the country were first exposed by small newspapers. 'The cement scam of Antualy was first exposed in a small regional newspaper with reliable evidence. The infamous incident of the Bhagalpur blinding case due to which an English newspaper received international recognition was first reported in a small newspaper in Hindi' (Anuradha, 2011) [12].

Small newspapers serve as a bridge between the people living in the interiors of the country on the one hand and the local administration, state government, and the central government on the other (PCI., 2001) [13].

In 1965 an inquiry into small newspapers revealed that six proprietors who ran their publications were doing so at a loss; as missionary work (Jeffrey R, India's Newspaper Revolution, 2000), 'Generally a vernacular journal was the product of a singlehanded effort where usually an individual was the editor, the owner, and also the publisher. A regular body of the staff was almost unknown. These editor proprietors all over the country working on their own not only managed their newspaper but also wrote nearly all the articles' (Gupta, 1977) [23]. The same situation can sometimes be found at small-scale newspapers in India.

GN Ray in his speech published under title 'Problems and prospects of small newspapers' stressed that the majority of the Indian population today lives in rural areas, hence the need for the flow of information to and from the rural area is even greater. The bigger and the more well-known papers are mostly from large cities and towns, not fully aware of the needs and problems of the rural or small-town public or even of the local taste. The small newspapers enjoy the potential to bridge this gap (Ray GN, 2005) [11].

Ironically, small newspapers printing a few hundred copies draw a newsprint quota for the thousands. Money can be made by selling newsprint. Small newspapers recognized by state or union government draw regular government advertising. Circulation claims are rarely checked for small newspapers. Proprietors need to print only a few copies to satisfy government authorities that the solicited advertising has appeared (Jeffrey R, India's Newspaper Revolution, 2000) [20].

Jeffrey highlighted some negative aspects of small newspapers. He describes that 'small newspapers can be used for blackmail'. These practices are known to be found in newspapers of all languages (Jeffrey R, Urdu: waiting for citizen Kane?, 1997) [24].

Many small newspapers do not maintain accounts and no financial data regarding their capital, expenditure, revenue profit, and loss is available. They hardly have any sense of modern business methods applicable to newspapers. It is found that a large majority of the small newspapers are not capable of self-sufficient growth and cannot be regarded as economically sustainable (Rao, 1966) [22]. Sharma argues that small newspapers are the pillars of democracy in this country as they accommodate the needs of the majority of the Indian population and particularly those who live in the rural areas (Sharma, 2006) [2]. However, 'the problems of small newspapers are the same in every state. They relate to the lack of transport and communication facilities, inadequate printing machinery, costly news services, inadequate information sources, untrained staff, lack of economic support, absence of credit facilities and consultation service, shortage of newsprint, insufficient advertisement in important ones' (Rao, 1966) [22].

Anurag Tripathi describes the struggles of small newspapers in chapters such as 'Poora Sach' (the complete truth) and 'Lekha-Jokha (The chronicle). In the chapter, "A journalist is silenced", he highlighted the problems and potential of small newspapers (Tripathi, 2018) [8].

Research Methodology

Objective of the study

- To identify the problems faced by owners and editors of such publications.
- To identify the potentials of small Hindi Newspapers of India.

Considering the objectives of this study, two Hindi newspapers each from 19 States (including 3 union territories) were selected for the study, amounting to a total of 38 newspapers. The selected 19 states are the only states which show a significant presence of small newspapers in the Hindi language.

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, the interview of the following was conducted

- **Nominated members of the Press Council of India from the category of Small Newspaper**
  - Shyam Singh Panwar (Jan Samna)
  - Keshav Dutt Chandola (Raput Maryada)
- **Editor/Owner of the concerned newspapers.**

Table 1: List of editors and owners for interview

No.	Newspapers Name	Owner's Name	Editor's Name
1.	Swatantra Vaartha	Aga Publication Ltd.	Radhey Shyam Shukla
2.	Swatantra Vaartha	Aga Publication Ltd.	Radhey Shyam Shukla
3.	Dainik Purvoday	Purvoday Publication Ltd.	Satyanand Pathak
4.	Dainik Purvoday	Purvoday Publication Ltd.	Satyanand Pathak
5.	Bihar Ki Hakikat	Kumar Abhimanyu	Kumar Abhimanyu
6.	Mona Times	Surendra Prasad	Surendra Prasad
7.	Pehli Khabar	First Newsmedia Pvt. Ltd.	Surrendra S. Hooda
8.	Jansatta	The Indian Express Ltd.	Mukesh Bhardwaj
9.	Samachar Khoj	Ganesh Singh Rajpoot	Ganesh Singh Rajpoot
10.	Chhattisgarh Swar	Sai Kripa Trading Pvt. Ltd	Ganesh Singh Rajpoot
11.	Savera India Times	Naresh Agrawal	Naresh Agrawal
12.	Ashli Azadi	Maruti Nandan Publication	Vijay J. Bhatt
13.	Rashtrawadi Times	Chandra-Jyoti P. Pvt. Ltd	Ram Sakal Tiwari
14.	Ishan Times	Sanjay Rai	Sanjay Rai
15.	Janabhumi erald	Harishbhai M. Sapkal	Harishbhai M. Sapkal
16.	Jan Hitaisi	Laxmichand G. Agrawal	Laxmichand Agrawal
17.	Babyian Times	Manju Gupta	Manju Gupta
18.	Tyagi Times	Dharampal Tyagi	Satpal Tyagi
19.	Dainik Bhaskar	D.B. Corp. Ltd.	Uttam Sen Gupta
20.	Dainik Jagran	Jagran Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.	Sanjay Gupta
21.	Chamakata Aiyna	Binay Kumar Shukla	Jai Prakash Rai
22.	Apna India	Alok Kumar Soren	Prakash Kumar Jha
23.	Dainik Jagran	Jagran Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.	Abhimanyu Sharma
24.	Northern Times	Ashok Kumar Raina	Ashok Kumar Raina
25.	Dopahar Ka Sammna	Prabodhan Prakashan	Bal Keshav Theckeray
26.	Tarun Mitra	Kailash Nath	Swatantra Kumar
27.	Dainik Alok	Mohammad Hamid Khan	Mohammad H. Khan
28.	Kirti Kranti	Umesh Dixit	Lokesh Dixit
29.	Dainik Jagran	Jagran Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.	Sanjay Gupta
30.	Dainik Jagran	Jagran Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.	Sanjay Gupta
31.	Asian Standard	Anilkant Sharma	Anilkant Sharma
32.	Hello Times	Kailash Chandra Muta	Kailash Chandra Muta
33.	City Times	Media Communication Pvt. Ltd	Shailendra M Tripathi
34.	News Reader	P. Kumar	P. Kumar
35.	Rudra Times	Amit Kumar Sharma	Sneh Lata Sharma
36.	Kumaon Times	Krishna Kumar Gupta	Krishna Kumar Gupta
37.	Hind Samvad	Imtiyaz Khan	Imtiyaz Khan
38.	Rajasthan Patrika	Rajasthan Patrika Pvt. Ltd.	Govind Chaturvedi

Theoretical perspective

Social theory of the Media: The freedom of the press is important not just to democracy but also imperative for human development. The role of media in facilitating human development as well as democratic consolidation emanates from its 'watchdog' function. Free media increases government accountability and public awareness, leading to enhanced possibilities of human development. The communication media as essential for the maintenance of society and enquires about the press as a true or a false carrier of news and information. Tonnies considered newspapers to be a 'printed marketplace' now as the press was construed as the organ of the public opinion. The social theory of the media contributes to any formulation of the media's role in the triangle of democracy-media-development.

Discussion

The problems of small Hindi newspapers: For small newspapers, individual circulation is low and their markets are different local areas. They do not, therefore, attract enough advertisement grants from big advertisers, such as Indian companies, or even from the central government; what to speak of support from the Multinational companies. The lack of newsprint at an affordable price and unavailability of trained journalists on account of their small budgets is also a major problem. The symptoms of attrition are visible in local newspapers everywhere: losing or stagnant circulation, falling advertising revenues, poor production values, non-existent marketing set up. The review of literature also substantiates this (Rao, 1966) [22], (Jeffrey, 2000) [20], (Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew; Peake, Jeffrey S., 2006) [26], (Ninan, 2007) [25].

Small newspapers are also "losing the battle on printing and technical quality" (Ninan, 2007) [25]. As printing technology became cheaper, there was an increase in the newspaper business which made it easy for the owners of small newspapers. However, that is not sufficient, as a newspaper needs the support of the readers, advertisements, and that of

the state (Jeffrey, 2000) [20]. Nireekshak comments on the entry of foreign media and points out that, 'the foreign media with its vast resource would complete with indigenous press in a way that Indian press will be eliminated "along with the indigenous small, medium, and languages press, the domestic news agencies will also have to wind up' (Nireekshak, 2000) [27]. Also substantiate, (Gupta, 2016) [33], (Khan MH, 2017) [31], (Tyagi, 2017) [32], (Kumar, 2018) [39], (Agrawal N., 2018) [35], (Agrawal L. G., 2018) [35], (Bhatt, 2018) [39].

Due to a lack of monetary strengths, 'Journalists are streaming out of the industry because 'along with low pay, journalists working in local papers complain constantly of overwork, long hours' (Barter, 2005) [36]. Hence, low budget is an essential problem witnessed by the small Hindi newspapers. As per the research, most of the government advertisements are distributed through the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP). The rates of DAVP are relatively low. The barriers of red-tapism have to be overcome to get recognition from this organization. Big newspapers get the ads automatically but it becomes a problem for small newspapers. DAVP pays 1/3 of the rates to English newspapers for the advertisements as compared to regional language newspapers (Bhargava, 2009) [37]. According to Table 6.1, we can see that the DAVP offers many benefits to the big corporate house newspapers.

This claim has also been substantiated by (Khan I., 2015), (Gupta, 2016) [33], (Khan MH, 2017) [31], (Tyagi, 2017) [32], (Kumar, 2018) [39], (Agrawal N., 2018) [35], (Agrawal L. G., 2018) [35], (Bhatt, 2018) [39].

A small newspaper does not even follow the guidelines of the Press Council of India. Example-Newspaper Chamaktha Aiyna (Jamshedpur) had published pictures of Nirbhaya in Nirbhaya case in 2012. Also substantiate by (Annual Report 1990-91, 1991).

As per the report of the inquiry committee on the small newspaper, it is found that due to inappropriate and the supremacy of big press owned by big business houses, the small-scale newspapers are not being established. Small newspapers are available but they do not get advertisements or get fewer advertisements. They cannot stay in competition with the big newspapers (Jeffrey, 2000) [20].

Small newspapers have continued to ask for more advertisements from the central and state governments. In 1971, they argued the government to 'direct all advertisers to give 25 per cent of the total advertisement budget to small and medium newspapers'. Although the Government of India and the public establishments have announced protection for small and medium newspapers but this has not been implemented in real terms (Jeffrey, 2000) [20]. This has also been substantiated by editors of small Hindi newspapers of India.

Small newspapers run into losses, but journalists keep on publishing these newspapers to serve social causes and in public interest. A report from 1965 shows that although a set of small newspapers was undergoing losses, the owners of those six newspapers continued to publish newspapers in order to serve society (Jeffrey, 2000) [20]. Also substantiate the same (Gupta, 2016) [33], (Khan MH, 2017) [31], (Tyagi, 2017) [32], (Kumar, 2018) [39], (Agrawal LG, 2018) [35], (Agrawal N., 2018) [35], (Bhatt, 2018) [39].

Alternatively, such publishing can continue for one of the following "three reasons: for blackmail, for government and public sector advertisements, and for newsprint quotas which were then sold in the black" (Ninan, 2007) [25]. According to a report issued by the inquiry committee on small newspapers, many small newspapers print news without any affirmative confirmation of an incident and hence do not abstain from the sensational, defamatory, and abusive language in their write-ups. The *Amrit Varsha* from Dhanbad (Jharkhand) has been notorious for blackmailing the sales officials (Jeffrey, 2000) [20]. Ram Shakal Tiwary, the editor of *Rashtrawadi Times* newspaper published from Delhi, told a researcher that he also uses pressure tactics on government's officials in order to obtain news which is unacceptable as this newspaper is not published officially.

The "commercial instincts of Hindi press were honed early on by developing pragmatic political linkages to procure land and favours. Both big and small Hindi newspapers have benefited from governments" (Ninan, 2007) [25].

Small newspaper journalists received many threats for publishing local news if it reveals wrongdoing or oppression by people in powerful positions. On October 3rd, 1980, a 23-year-old woman journalist named Chhavi Rani was murdered after being raped as she had exposed corruption her small newspaper 'Pragativadi' in collaboration with her husband. In April 1991, Mohammed Shaban 'lawyer', editor of 'Alsafa', a small Urdu newspaper was killed in Srinagar because he criticized both sides (Jeffrey, 2000) [20]. The editor of *Hind Samwad* newspaper which is published from Asansol told the researcher that 'he was threatened many times from anti-social elements for writing against them. The journalist had exposed black marketers as well as contractors and was threatened to remain silent. Such incidences have also been substantiated. (Gupta, 2016) [33], (Agrawal LG, 2018) [35].

Small local papers have also realized after big newspapers invaded their markets that they cannot afford to be only and truly local because they have a low budget and cannot compete with the big boys of the publishing industry which have made a big impact on the regional language sector. Small newspapers also realized that the big ones would not do the stories the smaller papers covered such as exposing corruption, or pollution caused by the industry as it would affect the revenue they earned from their advertisers. (Ninan, 2007) [25].

According to a report issued by the inquiry committee on small newspapers, the government allocates newsprints in the name of promoting small newspapers. However, these newspapers present exaggerated consumption figures with increased numbers and sell their newspapers at higher prices. After 1991, the newspapers were given an exemption for importing the paper directly, but on the condition that they have to purchase a fixed quota of Indian Newspapers too (Jeffrey, 2000) [20].

Local Matters: Potential of Small Newspapers

If the news is our window to the world, then local news is our window to the part of the world we actually inhabit. Local news tells us what is happening in our own backyards and streets. Local journalism is part of the social cement which binds communities together and, is widely and rightly, viewed as an essential element in the construction of a viable local identity. Local news and local journalism are important for communities and the broader information ecosystem. Local newspapers are the main media sources of information about local news and politics.

Local newspapers scrutinize local democracy intensively and also demonstrate the distinctive position of a newspaper in a community. Localization provides media access to everyone without restrictions. The local press writes about issues of the common man and is very influential. Local newspapers are primarily utilized to communicate with the public. People are more interested and, even more, affected by the news from their neighborhood. Local media plays an efficient role in addressing important issues. Moreover, the local press has more credibility and is accountable to a region as these newspapers do the ground research effectively. Local newspapers are able to report and go beyond the propagated news criteria. These newspapers provide much better information about the consumption of locals. The local press works as a pivotal information source for mediators of culture and identity and as an arena for public discourse. People trust the local press more than the national press. The extent of the local press has widened because of the support of locals and interest shown by people.

Having established the indispensable importance of regional and local newspaper, we will now see its place in a globalized and digitized age of the Internet. The Internet has become phenomenal in the world and it has involved people in great numbers to build an easy and effective network of communication. It has also posed challenges for the print media and has forced them to expand the level and saturation of news among the public. Yet, the local press has benefited from it. The local press has overcome boundaries of regions and countries through online editions. These newspapers also get to know about the taste of other consumers by evaluating feedback and online readership. Local press these days is also developing discussion forums and communities of bloggers to raise local issues. Although Print media hold its prestigious position, online media, newspapers and other medium are gaining momentum in today's on-your-finger tips-news era.

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