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# NEWSPAPER READING CULTURE AMONGST THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Reading is a process which involves recognition and understanding. This study which is based on a survey attempts to analyze the newspaper reading culture amongst the University students. The habit of newspaper reading can prove to be beneficial to the students as they deliver great educational merits. The study reveals various aspects like reading frequency, preferred form of newspaper, whether print or electronic, its value in providing information, its effect on vocabulary of students, various factors which drive the students to read newspaper, type of news read in the newspaper and more. We can also observe in this study whether students' reading habits have been affected due to lockdown situation caused by COVID pandemic as well as their overall experience of newspaper reading.*

**Keywords:** *Information, Newspapers, Newspaper reading, Reading habits, University students.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

A newspaper is a form of serial publication that appears frequently with the purpose of conveying contemporary information to a specific audience. The various sections of a newspaper include front page, folio, general news, editorials, advertisements, classified ads, business, entertainment, announcements, etc. Newspapers provide information on different spheres like politics, education, entertainment, economy, sports, industry, valuable national and international news, and so on. They are characterised by consistency, completeness, reality, exposure, etc. They are available in both print and electronic form. Reading newspaper can equip the reader with opinion building skill by knowing various happenings around the globe. With newspaper reading habit, comes language skills, improved knowledge and vocabulary. In this digital world, where false news spread within no time, newspapers are invaluable. As they help in building the thought process, hence they play a key role in the

society. They also notify information about job opportunities, hence convenient for students searching for jobs.

## **SCOPE OF STUDY**

Scope of this study covers various aspects related to reading habits and mainly analyzes the students' viewpoint, style and practise of reading newspapers. The study is performed on Jammu University students.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study is performed with certain objectives. Those objectives are:

- i. To know which form of newspaper is preferred by the readers.
- ii. To know the frequency of reading newspaper in preferred format.
- iii. To know if newspapers are better options in the eyes of the readers to get information.
- iv. To know about the motives of newspaper reading.
- v. To know what type of news they read in the newspapers.
- vi. To know if there is any change in their reading habits during the lockdown due to pandemic situation.
- vii. To know their overall experience of newspaper reading, etc.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Survey design has been adopted to carry out this study where the study population comprises of students of University of Jammu, UT of J&K, India. Questionnaire that was designed to meet the objectives of this study is used as data collection tool. A sample of 110 students who participated in the online survey is used for this study.

## **PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION OF DATA**

### **1. Age bracket**

Table 1 shows the classification of respondents on the basis of their age. Those respondents who are less than 21 years are 10.9%, maximum are from 21-25 years (63.6%), 20 % of respondents are from 26-30 years of age and remaining 5.5% are above 30 years.

**Table 1: Age analysis of respondents**

<b>Age bracket</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than 21 years	10.9
21-25 years	63.6
26-30 years	20
Above 30 years	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## **2. Gender**

Table 2 shows gender analysis of students where female students are 78.2 %; male students are 20 % and 1.8% students did not disclose their gender.

**Table 2: Gender analysis of respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Female	78.2
Male	20
Preferred not to say	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## **3. Form of newspaper preferred**

The form of newspaper preferred by the students is depicted in table 3. It is found that 21.8 % of them prefer E-newspaper, similar is the percentage of students (21.8%) who prefer print form and 56.4% students prefer both electronic and print newspaper as well.

**Table 3: Preferred form of newspaper**

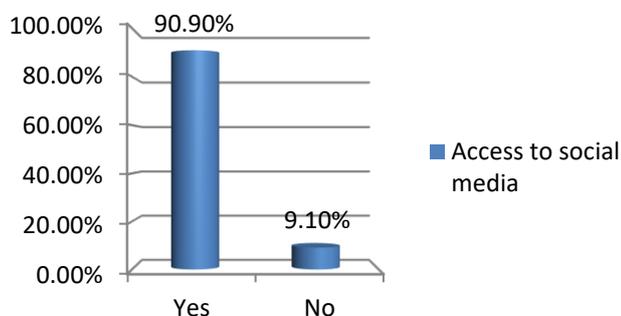
<b>Form</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
E-newspaper	21.8
Print form	21.8
Both	56.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4. Access to social media

The readers' access to social media is shown in table 4. It is found that 90.9 % of the readers have access to social media while 9.1% have not. It is also depicted with the help of below figure 1.

**Table 4: Access to social media**

<b>Access</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	90.9
No	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



**Figure 1: Access to social media**

#### 5. Frequency of reading newspaper in any format

Table 5 shows the newspaper reading frequency of the students in whatever form they prefer to read. Maximum students were reading the newspaper sometimes (32.2%), 14.5% students read every time, 21.8% students read usually, 7.3% students read frequently. Those who read occasionally, rarely and never are 12.7%, 5.5% and 5.5% respectively.

**Table 5: Frequency of reading newspaper**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Every time	14.5
Usually	21.8
Frequently	7.3
Sometimes	32.7
Occasionally	12.7
Rarely	5.5
Never	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## 6. Time spend while reading newspaper

The average time spend by the readers while reading newspaper is depicted in table 6, from which it is observed that maximum readers spend less than 30 minutes (76.4%) on reading newspaper, those who spend 30 minute to 1 hour are 21.8% and those reading more than 2 hours are only 1.8%.

**Table 6: Average time spent while reading newspaper**

<b>Amount of time</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than 30 minutes	76.4
30 minutes to 1 hour	21.8
1 to 2 hours	Nil
More than 2 hours	1.8
Total	100

## 7. Newspapers as better option to get information than fake news on social media

Table 7 shows whether the students favour the fact that newspapers are better option to get information than fake news on social media. The fact is both favoured and opposed as well. 36.4% students strongly favour, 32.7% somewhat favour while 21.8% are neutral. Those who somewhat and strongly oppose are 1.8% and 7.3% respectively.

**Table 7: Newspaper as better to get information option than on social media**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly favor	36.4
Somewhat favor	32.7
Neutral	21.8
Somewhat oppose	1.8
Strongly oppose	7.3
Total	100

## 8. Keeping cuttings of news articles

The percentage of students, who keep cuttings of news articles, is 34.5%. There are students (49.1%) who consider keeping cuttings of news articles but are not doing at the moment while 16.4% students do not even consider, as depicted in table 8.

**Table 8: Keeping cuttings of news articles**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	34.5
No, but considered	49.1
No, and not considered	16.4
Total	100

### **9. Newspapers in building vocabulary**

Table 9 depicts the role of newspapers in building vocabulary. Majority of the students (74.4%) believe that newspapers help in building vocabulary whereas 12.7% of them do not. A matching percentage of 12.7% students are not sure whether newspapers help in building vocabulary.

**Table 9: Newspapers in building vocabulary**

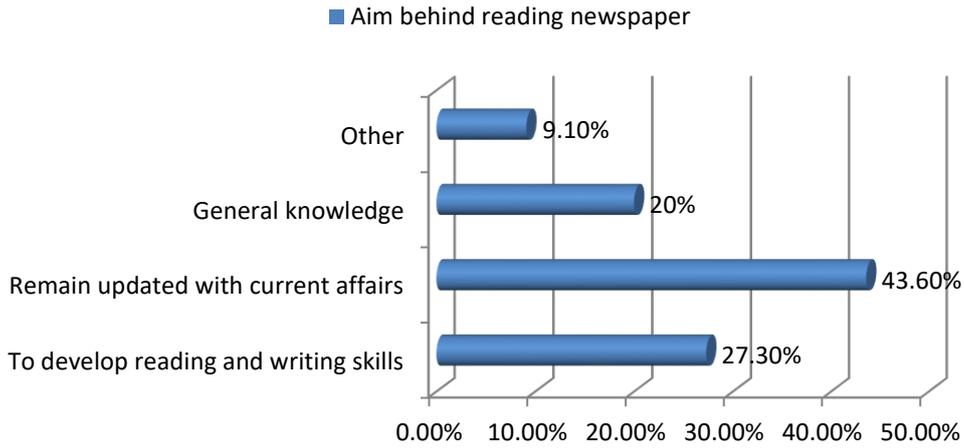
<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	74.6
No	12.7
Unsure	12.7
Total	100

### **10. Aim behind reading newspaper**

Table 10 illustrates the various motives/aims behind reading newspaper. The main aim is to remain updated with current affairs (43.6%). Other motives are to develop reading and writing skills (27.3%), general knowledge (20%) and some other reasons (9.1%). These aims/motives are also shown in figure 2.

**Table 10: Aim behind reading newspaper**

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
To develop reading and writing skills	27.3
To remain updated with current affairs	43.6
General knowledge	20
Other	9.1
Total	100



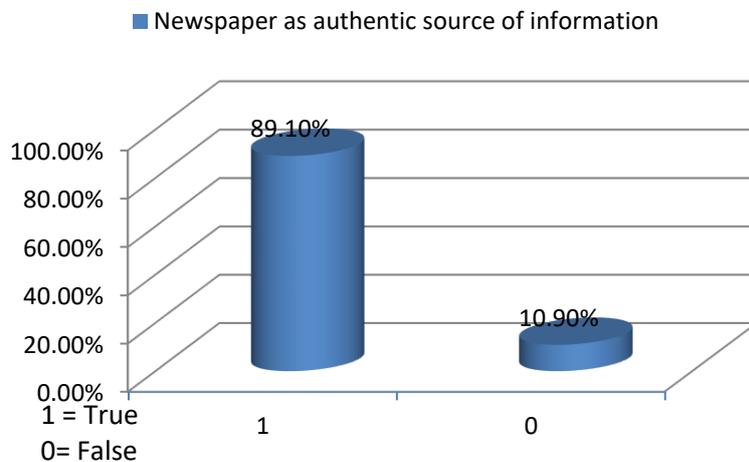
**Figure 2: Aim behind reading newspaper**

**11. Can newspaper be a medium of authentic information in absence of libraries and other similar options?**

Both table 11 and figure 3 illustrates whether newspaper can be a medium of authentic information in absence of libraries and other similar options, from where it can be seen that majority of students (89.1%) are of the opinion that newspaper could be a medium of authentic information while rest 10.9% students think of this as false.

**Table 11: Newspaper as medium of authentic information**

Response	Percentage (%)
True	89.1
False	10.9
Total	100



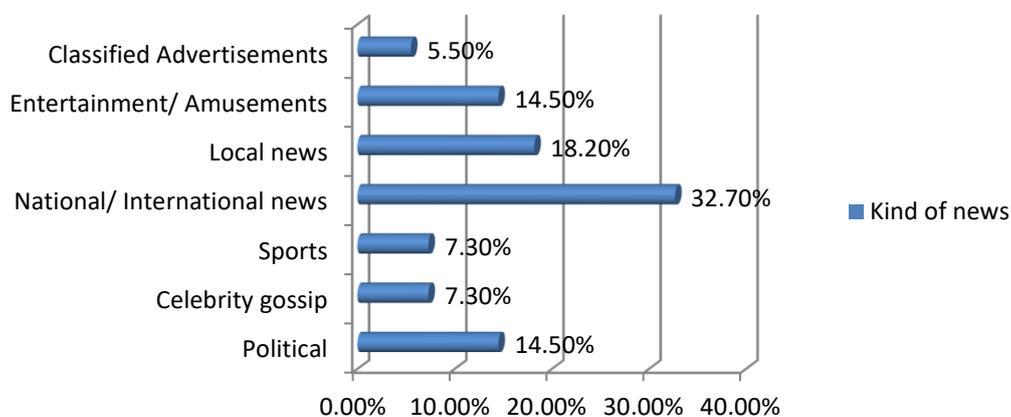
**Figure 3: Newspaper as medium of authentic information**

## 12. Type of news read in the newspaper

Table 12 represents the type of news read by the students in the newspaper. The different kinds of news read by the students are political (14.5%), celebrity gossip (7.3%), sports news (7.3%), national/international news (32.2%), local news (18.2%), entertainment/amusements (14.5%), and classified advertisements (5.5%). These different types are shown in figure 4 also.

**Table 12: Type of news read in the newspaper**

Kind of news	Percentage (%)
Political	14.5
Celebrity gossip	7.3
Sports	7.3
National/ International news	32.7
Local news	18.2
Entertainment/ Amusements	14.5
Classified Advertisements	5.5
Total	100



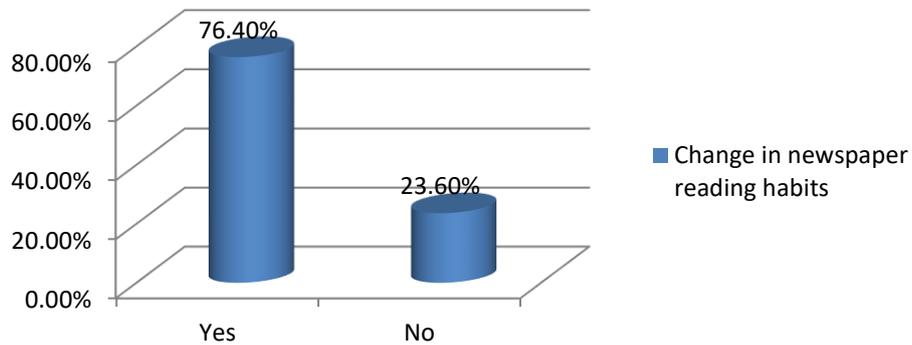
**Figure 4: Type of news read in the newspaper**

## 13. Change in newspaper reading habits during COVID-19/ lockdown

Table 13 and figure 5, both depict whether there is any change in newspaper reading habits of the students during COVID-19/lockdown. It is portrayed that there has been change in reading habits of 76.4% students whereas there is no change in remaining 23.6% of the students.

**Table 13: Change in reading habits**

<b>Change in reading habits</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	76.4
No	23.6
Total	100



**Figure 5: Change in reading habits**

#### **14. Role of newspapers in providing crucial information which is otherwise not possible**

Table 14 reveals if the students believe that newspapers provide crucial information which is otherwise not possible and it is found that 29.1% students believe this to be very true, true in case of 45.5% students, neutral in case of 21.8% students and 3.6% students found this to be untrue.

**Table 14: Newspaper provide crucial information**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Very true	29.1
True	45.5
Neutral	21.8
Untrue	3.6
Very untrue	Nil
Total	100

#### **15. Overall experience of newspaper reading**

Table 15 tells us about the overall experience of newspaper reading among the students. It is evident from the table that the experience ranges from being excellent to fair. The experience

of 30.9% students is excellent, very good, good and fair for 34.5%, 29.1% and 5.5% students respectively.

**Table 15: Overall experience of newspaper reading**

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Excellent	30.9
Very good	34.5
Good	29.1
Fair	5.5
Poor	Nil
Total	100

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is concluded from this study that majority of readers prefer both print as well as e-newspaper. There are students who never read newspaper (5.5%), so it is recommended to those students that they should inculcate the habit of reading them. Average time spent while reading newspaper is found to be less than 30 minutes (with 76.4% respondents). Nearly half of the students (49.1%) consider keeping cuttings of news articles. They favour the fact that newspaper reading builds vocabulary. To remain updated with current affairs comes out to be the main aim behind reading newspaper. The reading habits of 76.4% readers have been changed during COVID-19/lockdown period. The fact that newspapers provide crucial information is also supported by them. The overall experience of students of newspaper reading is found to be very good.

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