

## **Internet Penetration and Diffusion - A Comparative Study of Online and Offline Newspaper Reader's Preferences**

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**Abstract:** Newspapers have become a way of life. People read it, be it at home or office. It is estimated that 2.7 billion people around the world read newspapers in print (WAB-IFRA). [1] However, the mode of reading a newspaper has changed over a period of time and particularly with the internet penetration. Developing economies, like India, which are ahead in the internet distribution and its utilization has given newspaper readers multiple options to satisfy their urge for information.

In the western countries the statistics reveal that printed newspaper circulation on an average continue to decline. However, globally daily print newspaper circulation has grown by 5 percent in 2016-17. The increase of 5 percent in Global Print market is largely the result of robust print markets in India and other countries in Asia. [1] Research has shown that developed countries preferred to read the online version of print media.

The current study is taken up to understand a. consumer's inclination of online-offline newspaper readership, b. consumer's language preference of newspaper online and offline, c. the ease of reading between online and offline newspaper among readers. The methodology adopted is online questionnaire survey which was held among general readers.

**Keywords:** online newspaper, offline newspapers, internet penetration, reader's preferences

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### **Introduction**

Indian media industry is growing, be it print or online. The growth rate is high in comparison to other countries in Asia. In India, over 16,000 newspapers and about 94,700 periodicals are registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India. This shows an increase of nearly 5,400 publications in the year 2015-16. According to the report 'Indian Readership Survey' released by IRS, in January 2018, 39 percent of Indians above the age of 12 plus years read newspapers. [2]

A report published by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) Kantar IMRB, revealed that the number of internet users in India is expected to reach 500 million by June 2018. In December 2017 the number of Internet users stood at 481 million, an increase of 11.34% over December 2016. [3] This gives an indication that there will be a substantial rise in the readership of online newspapers in future.

In western countries, on the other hand, statistics reveal that printed newspaper circulation is on the decline. However, globally daily printed newspaper circulation has gone up by 5 percent in 2016-17. [1] The increase of 5 percent in the Global Print market is largely the result of robust print markets in India and other countries in Asia. Research has shown that readers in developed countries prefer to read online version of print newspapers. India is the only large global market that continues to record double-digit growth of its internet user base even as growth tapers off in the rest of the world, says Mary Meeker in the 2016 edition of the annual Internet Trends report. With over 400 million people having access to the Internet, India has the largest internet user base in the world after China. [4]

The statistics discussed earlier presents a clear picture of the current newspaper readership in India. Print and Digital media are a major source of information, yet it is interesting to know the preference of newspapers reading among Indian readers.

The current study is taken up to understand the reading habits with regards to gender and different age groups, educational background, occupation and monthly income. The study aims to understand the relationship between an online-offline newspaper readership considering the language, content, type of news preferred by readers.

### **Literature Review**

According to a study done by Lee & Delli Carpini (2010), it is found that, "people of a particular age group choose offline over online media, and people belonging to another age group will choose vice versa. This choice is driven by their habits as has been observed by in their research." [5] Brock 2013 Brock, George (2013) in their study highlight the behavioral changes and its impacts on online-offline newspaper reading habit. According to them, "Newspapers have been negatively affected by changes in audience behavior, with falls in

the circulation of their printed editions as consumers have invested more of their finite attention in other media, such as television and the internet.”[6]

Peiser (2000) states that age as a determinant of newspaper consumption at the use of newspapers over different stages of people’s lives [6] According to another study, “Age has been found to be one of the most important determinants of newspaper use,” Lauf (2001). [7]

More than one-third of US adult internet users go online for news, according to a report by Pew Research Center Pew(2016),“a majority of U.S. adults 62% get news on social media, and 18% do so often. Particularly college graduates prefer to read online every day, compared with 11 percent of those with a high school education or less. As per World Association of Newspaper, it is found that younger generation use internet as their first choice for news and information”. [8]

In a field study conducted by Siddhesh Thadeshwar and Prof. Amol Joglekar(2016) it was found that people prefer to switch to online news, because they trust the online news media as much as they trust offline news media. A major positive factor for this change is the convenience of online news media. They said, “A total of 94.5% prefer newspapers because they trust the accuracy of the news and information, whereas from those people who selected Online News a total of 93.1% said that they prefer news apps because they trust the accuracy of the news and information.” [5]

There is difference in choice of reading between male and female. From a report published by the Newspaper Association of America it is revealed that “a greater percentage of men read news than women. Nearly 2 million more men are reading news in the US, despite the fact that there are nearly 8 million more females than males in America. Women, however, are more frequent readers of Sunday edition news than men.”[9] The report also includes that, “Men more closely follow sports, science, technology, business, international, political, and consumer news, while women more closely follow religion, health, entertainment, community, arts and culture, crime and weather news.” The choice of content in reading newspaper is different between male and female.

## Objectives

Keeping the above discussion in view, the following objectives of the study designed

1. To find out the inclination of online-offline newspaper readership.
2. To examine the language preference of newspaper readers.
3. To examine the ease of reading between online and offline newspaper among readers.

## Methodology

A questionnaire was designed to collect data from respondents with regards to preferences in online-offline newspapers reading habits. The structured survey questionnaire was designed on the Google Forms and a link was sent to general newspapers readers. The questionnaire included 7 questions that explored, *reader’s online-offline language preferences, reader’s mode of reading newspaper and benefits of online-offline reading newspaper*. For the statistical analyses chi-square was employed to find out the significant of difference between age, gender and educational qualification with regards to preferences in language and mode of selection. The Chi-square was applied as the data is discreet and non-parametric in nature. Besides the study describes the sample findings and is non-inferential in nature.

## Analysis of data and Interpretation of findings

**Table1: Sample profile**

Demographic Variable	Classification	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Age	18-27	66	56.89%
	28-37	29	25.00%
	38-47	10	8.62%
	48-57	04	3.44%
	58and above	07	6.03%
Gender	Male	63	54.31%
	Female	53	45.68%
Education	Up to the school level	23	19.83%

	Graduate	30	25.86%
	Post-Graduate	62	53.45%
	Diploma	01	0.86%
Income	Less than 15000	52	44.8%
	150001-25000	10	8.6%
	250001-40000	15	12.9%
	400001-More	39	33.6%
Occupation	Government Service	11	9.5%
	Private Service	39	33.6%
	Own Business	17	14.7%
	Others	49	42.2%

A total sample of 116 respondents was used for the purpose of the study and the results are given below. The table 1 reveals that out of 116 respondents, 56.9% belongs to the age group of 18-27, 25.00 % are in the age group of 28-37, followed by 8.62% from 38-47 age group, 3.44% from 48-57 age group and 6.03% of the respondent are above the age group of 58. According there are 54.3% male and 45.7% are female respondent. The table also revealed that 53.45% are post-graduates, 25.86% of the respondent are graduates and 19.83% belonged to the category of up to the school level and a small percentage of 0.86% were diploma holders. Income data shows that 44.8% respondent earn less than 15000, 8.6 % respondent earn 150001-25000, 12.9% earn 250001-40000 and rest are more than 400000. The occupation of the respondent includes- 9.5% respondent are from government services, 33.6% doing some private job, 14.7% have their own business and 42.2% have other occupation.

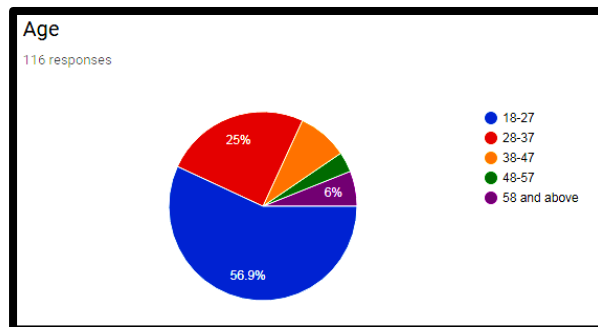


Figure 1: Age Group

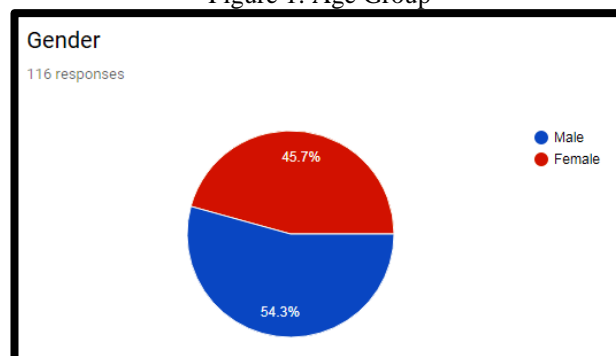


Figure 2: Gender

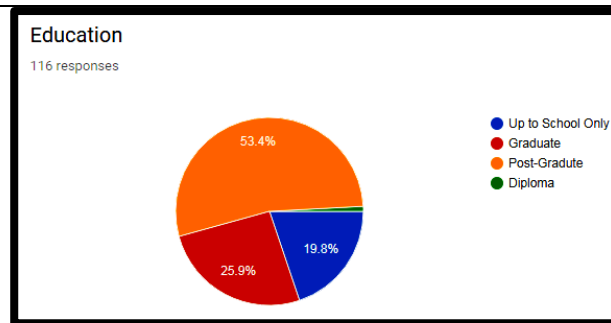


Figure 3: Education Qualification

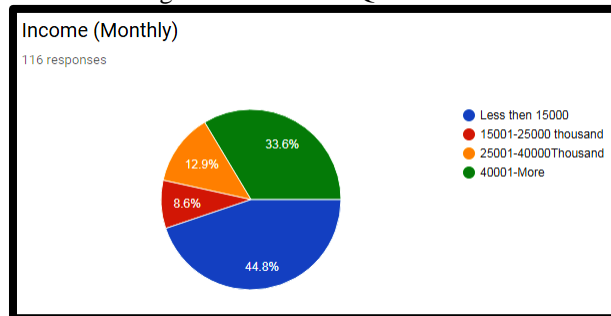


Figure 4: Monthly Income

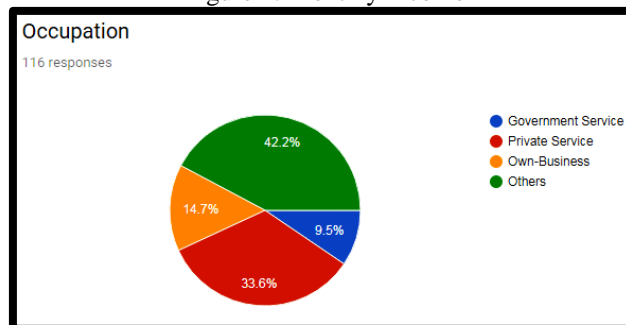


Figure 5: Occupation

**Table 2: Questionnaire**

Questions	Options
Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? (Online)	Hindi
	English
	Both
	Other
Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? (Offline)	Hindi
	English
	Both
	Other
Which one is the most ease in reading a newspaper?	Online
	Offline
	Both
What benefits you see reading a newspaper online?	Immediately accessible and convenient
	Constant Update

	Variety of choices
	Availability at Phone
	Ease of search
	Video & Audio News
	Sharing & Downloading Option
What benefits you see reading a newspaper offline?	Become a habit
	Prefer to read print
	It is cheap
	Status Symbol
Where do you read newspaper online?	Laptop
	Mobile
	Desktop
	Other
Where do you read newspaper offline?	Home
	Office
	While Travelling
	No specific Place

The below figure presents the language preference in reading online and offline newspapers. The most preferred language in both online and offline mode of newspaper is English. According to Indian Readership Survey (IRS), “English newspapers (28 million) is now fourth highest circulated newspaper in India, after Hindi (176 million), Tamil and Marathi (34 million each) dailies.”

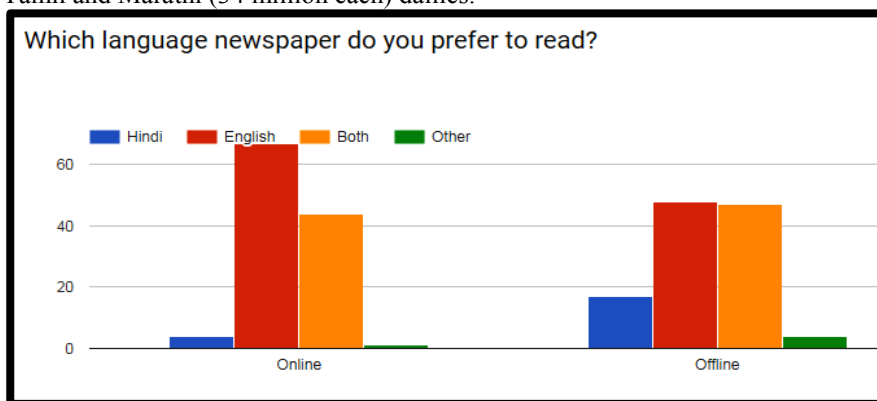


Figure 6: Language preferred to read online and offline

		Gender of the Respondent			
		Male	Female	Total	
Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? [Online]	Hindi	Count	4	0	4
		% of Total	3.4%	0.0%	3.4%
	English	Count	35	32	67
		% of Total	30.2%	27.6%	57.8%
	Both	Count	23	21	44
		% of Total	19.8%	18.1%	37.9%
	Others	Count	1	0	1
		% of Total	0.9%	0.0%	0.9%
Total		Count	63	53	116
		% of Total	54.3%	45.7%	100.0%

**Table 3:** Distribution of Preference of Language by Male and Female in Reading Online Newspaper

The above table shows the language preferences among male and female with regard to online newspaper reading. Accordingly, 30.2 % of male prefer reading English language when compared to 27.6% female. With regards to preference of Hindi newspaper only about 3.4% males preferred. A fact which can not to explained, particularly in a Hindi language speaking area.

However, 19.9% and 18.1% of the respondent prefer reading both the newspaper online. The data also showed that 54.3% of the readers were male and 45.7% readers were female with regards to online newspaper reading. In total 57.8% of the respondent read English newspaper and 37.9% read both languages together. A mere 3.4% of the respondent read Hindi newspaper.

A chi-square test was employed to find out the significance of difference between male and female with regard to language difference in reading online newspaper. The data analyzed is presented below.

**HO:** There is no significant difference between male and female with regard to language preferences in reading online newspapers

**H1:** There is significant difference between male and female with regard to language preference in reading online newspapers.

The calculated chi-square value is 4.396 at 3df. The table critical value at .05p level for 3df is 7.82. In order to reject the null hypotheses of no significant difference the calculated chi-square value shall be equal to or greater than the table critical value at .05p.

The analyses show that the calculated chi-square value is far below the table critical value, hence the null hypotheses is no significant difference is not rejected. Thereby, accepted that there is a no difference with male and female in language preference in reading online newspaper.

**Table 4:** Distribution of Preference of Language by Age in Reading Online Newspaper

Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? [Online] * Age of the Respondent Crosstabulation			Age of the Respondent					Total
			18-27	28-37	38-47	48-57	58 and Above	
Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? [Online]	Hindi	Count	3	0	0	0	1	4
		% of Total	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	3.4%
	English	Count	34	17	6	4	6	67
		% of Total	29.3%	14.7%	5.2%	3.4%	5.2%	57.8%
	Both	Count	29	11	4	0	0	44
		% of Total	25.0%	9.5%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	37.9%
Others	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1	
	% of Total	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	
Total	Count	66	29	10	4	7	116	
	% of Total	56.9%	25.0%	8.6%	3.4%	6.0%	100.0%	

The above table-4 shows the data of 116 respondents according to their age group. The 18-27 age group has the highest number of participants by 56.9%, followed by 28-37 age group with 25.0%, 35-47 age group with 8.6% and 48-57 age group respondent with 3.4% participation. The data collected randomly shows 6.0% participation by 58 and above age group.

Accordingly, most preferred language with regards to reading online newspaper is English, 57.8% respondent from different age groups selected the official language of the world as their first choice to read online. The data reveals that 66 respondents out of 116 belongs to 18-27 age group that prefers to read English (29.3%). In total, 37.9% respondent prefers to read both languages online when compared to Hindi 3.4%.

**HO:** There is no significant difference between age with regard to language preference in reading online newspaper

**H1:** There is significant difference between the age with regard to language preference in reading online newspaper

The calculated chi-square value is 13.89 at 12df. The table critical value at .05p level for 12df is 21.03. The calculated value is less than the value .05p. Hence, null hypothesis is not rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis.

**Table 5:** Distribution of Preference of Language by Gender in Reading Offline Newspaper

Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? [Offline] * Gender of the Respondent Crosstabulation					
		Gender of the Respondent		Total	
		Male	Female		
Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? [Offline]	Hindi	Count	9	8	17
		% of Total	7.8%	6.9%	14.7%
	English	Count	27	21	48
		% of Total	23.3%	18.1%	41.4%
	Both	Count	24	23	47
		% of Total	20.7%	19.8%	40.5%
	Others	Count	3	1	4
		% of Total	2.6%	0.9%	3.4%
Total	Count	63	53	116	
	% of Total	54.3%	45.7%	100.0%	

Table 5 presents data of n=116 respondent out of which 63 are male and 53 are female with regards to the preference of language by gender in reading offline newspaper. The data shows that 23.3% male and 18.1% female prefer to read English in print when compared to Hindi newspaper selected by 7.8% male and 6.9% female respondent. Accordingly, when compared to reading online newspapers with offline, only 3.4% respondent prefer to read Hindi online, however the above shows that 14.7% respondent selected Hindi to read offline. Female respondent recorded to be more comfortable in reading Hindi newspaper offline. In total 6.9% respondent prefer to read Hindi offline when compared to 3.4% online. In total, 41.4% respondent took English and 40.5% prefer to read both languages together. A mere of 3.4% selected to read other language newspaper.

**HO:** There is no significant difference between male and female with regard to language preferences in reading offline newspapers

**H1:** There is significant difference between male and female with regard to language preferences in reading offline newspapers

The calculated chi-square value is .975 at 3df. The table critical value at .05p level for 3df is 7.82. The analyses shows that the calculated chi-square value is far below the table critical value, hence the null hypotheses is no significant difference is not rejected. Thereby, accepted that there is a no difference with male and female in language preference in reading offline newspaper.

**Table 6:** Distribution of Preference of Language by Age in Reading Offline Newspaper

Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? [Offline] * Age of the Respondent Crosstabulation								
		Age of the Respondent				Total		
		18-27	28-37	38-47	48-57		58 and Above	
Which language newspaper do you prefer to read? [Offline]	Hindi	Count	10	4	1	1	17	
		% of Total	8.6%	3.4%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	14.7%
	English	Count	25	11	3	3	6	48
		% of Total	21.6%	9.5%	2.6%	2.6%	5.2%	41.4%
	Both	Count	30	12	5	0	0	47
		% of Total	25.9%	10.3%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	40.5%
	Others	Count	1	2	1	0	0	4
		% of Total	0.9%	1.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
	Total	Count	66	29	10	4	7	116
		% of Total	56.9%	25.0%	8.6%	3.4%	6.0%	100.0%

The data presented in table 6 highlights the distribution of preference of language by age with regards to reading offline newspaper. The result shows 18-27 age group respondent are more interested to read both the languages together offline.

A report published by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India in 2017 shows that “India has the relative advantage at present over other countries in terms of distribution of youth population. As per India’s Census, the total youth population increased from 168 million in 1971 to 422 million in 2011. India is seen to remain younger longer than China and Indonesia, the two major countries other than India which

determine the demographic features of Asia.”The data presents that the younger generation in India is actively involved in media in any of its form.

The data highlights that 3.4% respondent selected to read other language newspaper in print. According to the reports, Malayala Manorama, a popular daily newspaper in Malayalam language, is the fourth largest distributed newspaper in India.

**HO:** There is no significant difference between age groups with regard to language preferences in reading offline newspapers

**H1:** There is significant difference between age groups with regard to language preferences in reading offline newspapers

The above table shows Chi-square value 13.89p at 12df. The table critical value at .05p level for 12df is 28.30. The analyses show that the calculated chi-square value is less the table critical value, hence the null hypotheses are no significant difference is not rejected. Thereby, accepted that there is a no difference with age in language preference in reading offline newspaper.

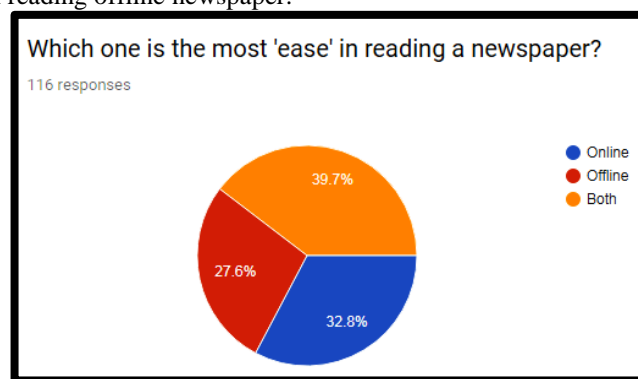


Figure 7: Choice of Reading

**Table 7:** Distribution of Preference of Reading Newspaper Online or Offline by Age Group

Which one is the most 'ease' in reading a newspaper? * Age of the Respondent								
Crosstab								
		Age of the Respondent					Total	
		18-27	28-37	38-47	48-57	58 and Above		
Which one is the most 'ease' in reading a newspaper?	Online	Count	24 <sup>a</sup>	11 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>a</sup>	38
		% of Total	20.7%	9.5%	1.7%	0.0%	0.9%	32.8%
	Offline	Count	17 <sup>a, b</sup>	5 <sup>b</sup>	3 <sup>a, b</sup>	2 <sup>a, b</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	32
		% of Total	14.7%	4.3%	2.6%	1.7%	4.3%	27.6%
	Both	Count	25 <sup>a</sup>	13 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>a</sup>	46
		% of Total	21.6%	11.2%	4.3%	1.7%	0.9%	39.7%
Total	Count	66	29	10	4	7	116	
	% of Total	56.9%	25.0%	8.6%	3.4%	6.0%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Age of the Respondent categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Table 7 revealed that 39.7% respondent prefer to read newspaper online and offline both. However, online preference is higher 32.8% when compared to offline reading newspaper preference 27.6%. The younger generation is more comfortable in reading newspaper anywhere, at print or digital platforms. The data shows



that 21.6% at 18-27 age group respondent selected both the modes when compared to other age groups- 28-37, 38-47, 48-57 and 58 above age group.

**HO:** There is no significant difference between the age of the respondent with regards to the mode of newspapers reading.

**H1:** There is significant difference between the age of the respondent with regards to the mode of newspapers reading.

The result obtained through chi-square tests gives significant difference in age and mode of reading newspaper. The calculated chi-square value is 11.62 at 8df. The table critical value at .05p alpha level for 6df is 12.59p. The calculated value is slightly less than the value .05p. Hence, null hypothesis is not rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis.

**Table 8:** Distribution of Preference of reading newspaper online or offline by male and female

Which one is the most 'ease' in reading a newspaper? * Gender of the Respondent					
Crosstab					
			Gender of the Respondent		Total
			Male	Female	
Which one is the most 'ease' in reading a newspaper?	Online	Count	18 <sup>a</sup>	20 <sup>a</sup>	38
		% of Total	15.5%	17.2%	32.8%
	Offline	Count	18 <sup>a</sup>	14 <sup>a</sup>	32
		% of Total	15.5%	12.1%	27.6%
	Both	Count	27 <sup>a</sup>	19 <sup>a</sup>	46
		% of Total	23.3%	16.4%	39.7%
Total	Count	63	53	116	
	% of Total	54.3%	45.7%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Gender of the Respondent categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Table 8 shows 17.2% female respondent choose to read online and 12.1% female prefer to read offline. Male respondents 23.3% are more comfortable in reading newspaper at both the platforms. However, 16.4% female respondent preferred to read news online and offline.

**HO:** There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondent with regards to the mode of newspapers reading.

**H1:** There is significant difference between the gender of the respondent with regards to the mode of newspapers reading.

The calculated chi-square value is 1.14 at 2df. The table critical value at .05p alpha level for 2df is 5.99p. The calculated value is below the value .05p. Hence, null hypothesis is not rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis.

**Table 10:** Distribution of Preference of Reading Newspaper Online-Offline by Educational Qualification

**Which one is the most 'ease' in reading a newspaper? \* Education Qualification**

**Crosstab**

		Education Qualification				Total	
		Up to the School only	Graduate	Post-Graduate	Diploma		
Which one is the most 'ease' in reading a newspaper?	Online	Count	8 <sup>a</sup>	12 <sup>a</sup>	18 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	38
		% of Total	6.9%	10.3%	15.5%	0.0%	32.8%
	Offline	Count	9 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	18 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	32
		% of Total	7.8%	4.3%	15.5%	0.0%	27.6%
	Both	Count	6 <sup>a</sup>	13 <sup>a</sup>	26 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>a</sup>	46
		% of Total	5.2%	11.2%	22.4%	0.9%	39.7%
Total	Count	23	30	62	1	116	
	% of Total	19.8%	25.9%	53.4%	0.9%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Education Qualification categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

On the basis of education qualification, table 10 reveals that 53.4% respondents are post-graduates and 22.4% are interested in both online-offline modes in reading newspaper. 25.9% graduate respondent prefer to read online more, 10.3% were interested in reading news at digital platform. In total, 19.8% respondent are up to the school level, out of which 7.8% respondent prefer to read news offline and 6.9% go for online newspaper reading.

**HO:** There is no significant difference between the education backgrounds of the respondent with regards to the mode of newspapers reading.

**H1:** There is significant difference between the education backgrounds of the respondent with regards to the mode of newspapers reading.

The calculated chi-square value is 6.00 at 6df. The table critical value at .05p alpha level for 6df is 12.59p. The calculated value is far below the value .05p. Hence, null hypothesis is not rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis.

A graphic presentation below is chosen to display the response of this particular question which has a list of benefits in reading online newspapers including- Immediately accessible and convenient (1), Constant Update (2), Save Time and Money (3), Variety of choices (4), Availability at Phone (5), Ease of search (6), Video & Audio News (7), Sharing & Downloading Option and Comment and Replay to Particular News. The graph displays that 79 respondent out of 116 found that online reading is good because it is immediately accessible and convenient. Another benefit marked maximum is the facility of constant updates which users can get at their mobile phone and other devices. 47 respondent said online reading saves their time and money.

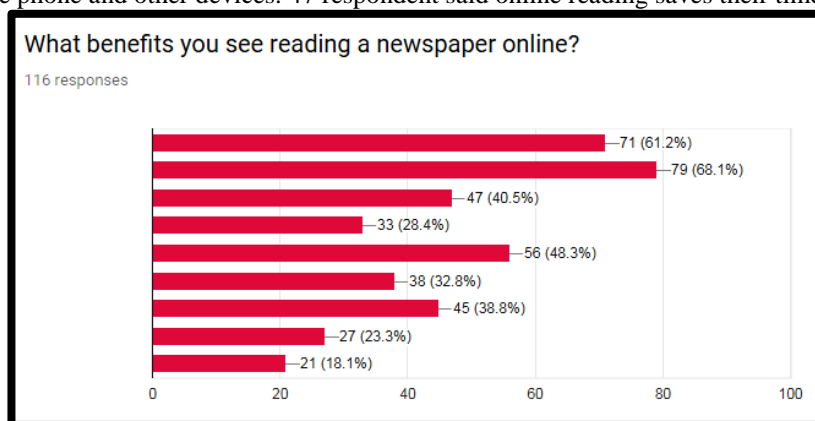


Figure: 8 Benefits of Online Newspapers

Other side, the benefits people found reading a newspaper offline includes (ascending order)-become a habit (63.8%), prefer to read print only (32.8%), it is cheap (20.7%) and status symbol (12.1%).

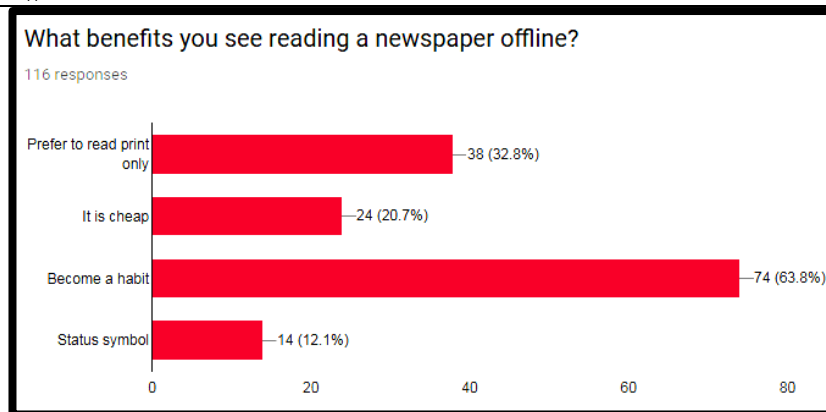


Figure: 9 Benefits of Offline Newspaper

When asked where they read news online, majority 81.9% of them said ‘on mobile’, followed by laptop and other devices.

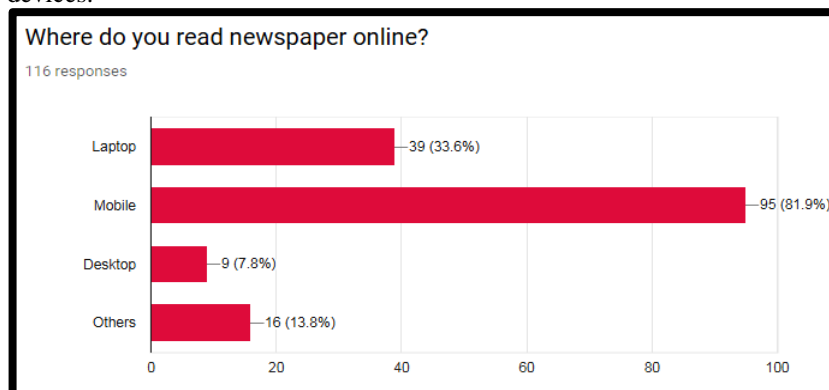


Figure:10 Location to Read Newspaper Online

For reading offline newspaper, home is the most preferred place for most of the respondent. People also prefer to read while travelling and in the office.

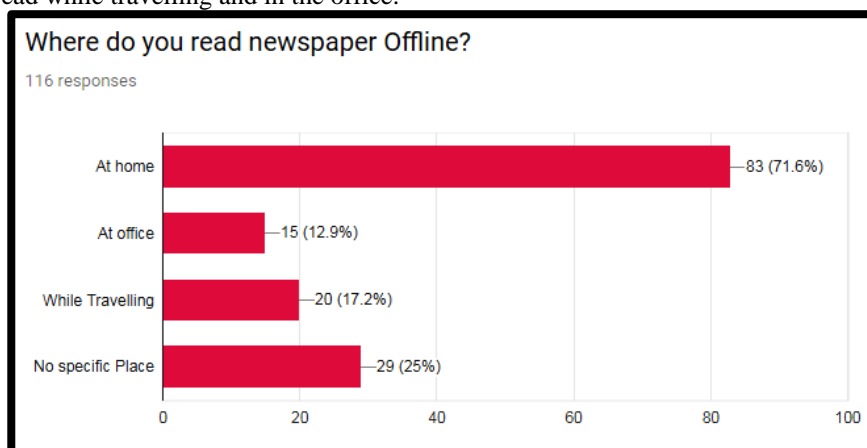


Figure: 11 Location to Read Newspaper Offline

The data shows that reading a newspaper is more important for both male and female than mode of the newspaper. People are more interested in getting knowledge about what is happening around rather than whether they get it in online or offline mode of presentation. At this stage information seeking becomes more important rather than the mode in which the information is provided. Besides, even the place of reading has undergone changes. Readers of newspaper tend to read offline editions while travelling and the online edition in their mobile phones. Response of the people who come from different age group reveals that getting the information is more essential than choice of language.

### Conclusion

In India, newspaper reading is a daily activity that is no more limited to a household but people find their ways to read at office and while travelling. The modes of newspapers reading may be shifting, from print to e-newspapers to mobile news applications, yet the growth is marked in each of these industries. The findings of this survey have also revealed people in India are not going to forgo their habit of reading print newspaper. Respondents find print media, inexpensive yet a status symbol. Readers are also open to use digital platforms to fulfil their urge of information and entertainment. Youth is more interested in the use of internet when it comes to comparison. Gender exhibits marginal difference in reading newspaper in particular language. English is found to be most preferred language among a majority of the readers, followed by Hindi and other regional languages.

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