CHAPTER-V

CONTENT OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Internet has introduced a new concept Citizen Journalism in India. Web 2.0 facilitated the participation of the people. Earlier people used to participate through letter to editor. Gradually internet provided many facilities to share the views. Now citizens are independent to participate in the journalism on any issue. The user/Citizen generates one’s own content and uploads on the citizen journalism websites like Merinews in India.

The content is not barred from the gate keepers, every content will be broadcasted unlike professional media. Though the content posted by the user have been checked for the authenticity and language mistakes. That’s why citizens feel satisfied since they are not dependent on professional media. Everyone/Every Citizen has their own different issues and content. There are millions of people and millions of issues (Mr. Upadhayay, CEO of Merinews)

Sonwalker and Allan (2007) have described the role played by citizen journalism in North –East India, an area consisting of seven independent ‘tribal’ states that have been locations for various ‘insurgencies’ and independence movements against the Indian government. One of the major issues in the region is that of ‘impunity’ and the Indian army.
Citizen Journalism in India has had an impact mainly in situation of crisis (tsunami, earthquake, rains, terrorist attacks). There is a citizen journalism website called Merinews in India where citizens submit the content. This citizen journalism website looks like professional news websites. Sonwalker and Allan (2007) have described the active role played by citizen journalists in Northeast India, consisted seven tribal states.

Manipuronline.com, E-pao.net, kanglaonline.com, and the Sangai express, worked for social cause. There are more multilingual websites like white drums.com. But Merinews is the most popular citizen journalism website in India. It encourages people to participate in their local language. Though In India, citizens are involved in citizen journalism through SMS polls and talk shows on Television and Radio.

This study examines posts made by citizens to Merinews during June 2014 to August 2014. A content analysis showed significant correlation between stories posed on Merinews and stories covered by professional media (Times of India). The top stories covered by professional media were not the same stories written by citizen journalists. This study contributes in exploring and to understand the agenda-setting relationship between professional media and citizen journalism web sites along with its issues as well.

In a study of the 2004 US presidential election Sweetser, Golan and Wanta found that candidate blog posts were influenced by reports from professional media, reinforcing findings from previous studies that show professional media continue to
set the agenda. A study by Lanosga showed an agenda-setting effect between professional media at a local level and local bloggers. There was a strong correlation in this study between what professional media covered and then the posting of a reaction and/or discussion about the report on the blogs studied.

This study examines the issues and content of citizen journalism and professional media. The relationship between Professional media and citizen journalism is an important one to understand as citizen journalism web sites become an increasingly popular way for citizens to express themselves. This study is the first one to look such relationship between the both media citizen journalism and professional journalism in India in my knowledge and review of literature collected for the research.

The practice of sound bite politics and politicians focused only on the image they portrayed through the media was also of concern. The growing discontent among citizens that sparked the civic journalism movement, along with the development of new technologies that allowed people to easily publish information online, led to the emergence of the citizen journalism movement. Citizen journalism is the idea that news content is produced by ordinary citizens with no formal journalism training. As more and more citizens go online and engage in content creation the number of citizen journalism web sites continues to grow. While it is difficult to track how many citizen journalism web sites are in existence.
This study aims to extend the role of agenda-setting into the realm of citizen created content, specifically posts on Merinews, a citizen journalism web site. In this study Professional media is defined as the media organizations which have their own staff and professionals. Merinews is used in this study as an exemplar of a citizen journalism web site. This study also focuses on issues of Merinews, which is important to examine because it can play an important role in shaping public perceptions of the news.

In order to compare the issues, and agenda-setting effect of citizen journalism posts to professional media, content analysis data collected by the researcher from Merinews. Com was compared to data collected by the Times of India.

A content analysis was conducted on 1500 stories from Merinews, User-generated content site and 1500 stories from the Times of India. The stories were posted to the site (randomly selected stories) from June 1 through 30th August, 2014; these dates were not taken for any specific reason. It was taken any random months to analyze the issues and to assess the agenda setting effect.

All the stories examined on the Merinews web site were tagged and grouped into the categories. A total of 1500 stories were randomly selected in order to achieve a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.
All the stories examined on the Times of India web site were tagged and grouped into the categories. A total of 1500 stories were randomly selected in order to achieve a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

This study compared stories posted on Citizen Journalism website Merinews to stories covered by Professional media website times of India from 1st June 2014 through 30th August, 2014.

The section begins with an examination of whether there is a significant correlation between the stories covered by Merinews and Times of India using chi square test. The section concludes with an analysis of eleven distinct issues/events during the time period examined in this study that served to drive professional media coverage and how that coverage related to reporting by citizen journalists.

Hypothesis

**H1: There is a agenda setting relationship between stories covered by professional media and citizen journalism websites in India.**

Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda- Setting theory was put forth by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in public opinion quarterly. They originally suggested that the media sets the public agenda. This theory is intended to apply to news media and messages which are transmitted to audience. Media may tell the people what to think about.
According to agenda-setting theory there is a correlation between how much media covers the certain issues and whether people perceives the issues as being important. Agenda-setting among different news outlets posits that media outlets can influence the pattern of coverage by other media outlets. Intermedia agenda setting has not just been studied among mainstream media. It has also been studied, although to a lesser extent, in the online news environment.

Lim found that prominent online newspaper had a strong impact on agenda of another online newspaper and an online news service. In another study of agenda-setting, Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo studied agenda setting theory in many cases the posts were made 1 to 7 days from the time that traditional media covered a story. In a study of the 2004 presidential election Sweetser, Golan and Wanta found that candidate blog posts were influenced by reports from mainstream media, reinforcing findings from previous studies that show traditional media continue to set the agenda.

A study by Lanosga showed an agenda-setting effect between traditional media at a local level and local bloggers. There was a strong correlation in this study between what traditional media covered and then the posting of a reaction and/or discussion about the report on the blogs studied.

In a study that explored the perceptions of bloggers who post political stories online Tomaszski, Proffitt and McClung found that those surveyed saw their role not as generators of original content, but as those who comment and provide insight on stories reported by traditional media outlets. In a similar study of political bloggers
Wallsten found they use their blogs to “express their political beliefs, to interact with like-minded people, to inform their readers, and to influence the political world around them.” Political blogs are often a mix of fact and opinion, links to material produced by others, and attempts to sway readers.

Citizen Journalism allows members of the public to engage in agenda setting not merely by producing original content but also by rendering the agenda setting processes of established professional media outlets radically malleable and susceptible to critical intervention (Goode 2009). Agenda-Setting has systematically sought to document the effects of mass media on the audience’s cognitions (Meraz, 2009).

The theory formulated when traditional media entities owned the tools of content creation and content distribution, remains largely untested in the new, interactive media age (McCombs, 2005) where the rise of citizen journalism is encouraging hitherto passive consumers of information to become active producers of information.

The study seeks to understand this influence of citizen journalism produced media on professional media through a content analysis and comparison of stories are framed in citizen media organization Merinews and the Times of India (India’s most widely circulated newspaper).
Stories that are deemed newsworthy become popular as public opinion. ‘Media’ priorities often become the priorities of the public and policy makers.” (Slawen & Stacks)

Citizen Journalism and Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting theory is the most ever lasting theory of mass communication. It explains the how the media’s agenda is set by sources and Intermedia agenda setting explains the flow of influence among media organizations. Singer et al (2005) found that traditional media outlets are more authorized than Citizen media.

Merinews: Citizen Journalism website

In 2006, the first Indian website wholly devoted to citizen journalism was set up named Merinews (My news) and with the motto “Power to people” it hails itself as “Indian’s first citizen journalism news portal” Six months into its operation, it won the manthan award for publishing the best e news content in India for the year, and in 2007 it was an official honor at the webby awards.

Upadhayaaya (2008) the sites founder and editor calls Merinews a product with mission: a people ‘s news platform of the people, for the people, providing power to people and empowering democracy”. It also runs a campaign to create a citizens manifesto for India’s next 60 years. A Blueprint for the future of the nation –which is also meant to reinvigorate citizens participation in the political process.
The idea is to provide a platform for issues and opinions of people who may not find space in the mainstream news India and in the process, further democratize India’s public sphere.

The website publishes news content that is written by citizens as well as journalists keen to highlight issues that are neglected in the mainstream news media.

Websites such as Merinews have taken up reporting such beats to highlight the plight and problems of developing India even though its impact is not yet clear. In a society that was until the early 1990s served by the relatively stand and most officially driven print media, citizen participation is gradually transforming traditional –top down official led definition of journalism.
Merinews Picks

Delhi police arrests Arvind Kejriwal's law minister Jitendra Singh Tomar in fake law degree case
In a huge embarrassment to the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi, its law minister Jitendra Singh Tomar has been arrested today by Delhi police in the fake law degree case.

Dornier aircraft of Indian Coast Guard goes missing with 3 crew members on board
Indian Coast Guard’s Dornier aircraft CG-79, which was deployed for surveillance along the Tamil Nadu coast and Palk bay from the most recent air

Tamil Nadu wants Karnataka to stop polluting Cauvery river: It's like pot calling the kettle black!
Fittingly on the World Environment Day, the Tamil Nadu government moved the Supreme Court seeking to restrain Karnataka from letting untreated sewage and industrial

Source: Merinews.com
The Times of India : Newspaper

The Times of India is the largest newspaper in India by circulation and largest selling english language daily in the World. It was established and owned by Bennett, Coleman and Co Ltd in 1838 which is owned by Sahu Jain Family. Times of India was ranked 100th among India’s most trusted brands.

According to Audit Bureau of Circulations (India). According to the Indian Readership Survey 2012, The times of India is the most widely read english newspaper in India with a readership of 7,643 million. Around 12000 employees are working in Times Group.

The first edition of Times of India was issued on 3rd November 1838.In 1850 it began to publish daily editions. Robert Knight editor in 1860 bought the Indian shareholders then it merged with the rival Bombay Standard, and started India’s first news agency. It wired Times dispatches to papers across the country and beame the Indian agent for Reuters news service. In 1861, It changed the name from the Bombay Times and Standard to Times of India. Knight fought for a press free of prior restraint or intimidation, frequently resisting the attempts by governments, business interest, and cultural spokesman and led the paper to national prominence.

The Times of India is published by the media group Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. The company, along with its other group companies, known as The Times Group, also publishes Ahmedabad Mirror; Bangalore Mirror; Bangalore Times, Delhi
Times; The Economic Times; Ei Samay, (a Bengali daily); the Maharashtra Times, (a Marathi-language daily broadsheet); Mumbai Mirror; the Navbharat Times, (a Hindi-language daily broadsheet); and Pune Mirror.

The Times of India has its markets in major cities such as Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Aurangabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Calicut, Chandigarh, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Kolhapur, Kolkata, Madurai, Patna, Puducherry, Pune, Kochi, Lucknow, Nagpur, Nashik, Panaji, Mysore, Hubli, Mangalore, Raipur, Ranchi, Surat, Trichy, Trivandrum, Varanasi, Vizagavada and Visakhapatnam.
Delhi law minister Jitender Singh Tomar resigns

TOP STORIES
- Delhi law minister Tomar sent to police custody
- Delhi law minister’s arrest: Top 10 developments
- Poll: Is Delhi minister Tomar’s arrest justified?
- Fresh crackdown: 4,470 NGDs licence cancelled
- Convert unconfirmed rail ticket to air ticket
- By executing 150 in 6 months, Pak beats S Arabia
- Kohli ‘ready with his vision’ for Indian cricket

Manipur ambush: Army strikes back at NE militants inside Myanmar, kills 15
- Manipur ambush: NIA registers case against NMSC (K)
- Army launches massive hunt operation in Manipur
- Violation of SOP to blame for Manipur ambush

ENTERTAINMENT
- 5 reasons why ‘Dil Dhadakne Do’ is a must watch
- PIC: Ranbir in the balcony of his new home
- Singer sued for wearing revealing outfits
- PIC: Imran-Avantika’s daughter Imara turns one
- Twinkle: We shave our moustaches off everyday
- REVEALED: Sonam Kapoor’s big birthday plans
- Shahid’s wedding rituals between July 5 and 8?

Source: Times of India.com
Content of Merinews

India’s largest citizen journalism portal, Merinews, is often cited for its role in extending access and enabling dialogue. While there is lot of discussion on the site including attempts to create a citizen’s charter, one of the issues is whether it really is nothing more than another channel for middle class opening making rather than a space for inclusive deliberation on key issues facing the nation.

Merinews online is accompanied by a monthly publication that includes the best of Merinews. A cursory scan of the Merinews website (6 Feb 2009 revealed the following:

1. The web-page layout and sections – world, India, sports, business, entertainment, lifestyle, potpourri, reviews – and the news under each of these sections are ‘mainstream’. It would seem that it is organized to compete with mainstream online news providers.

2. While there is a section on citizen journalism and how to submit articles, so it is clear that Merinews accepts articles on all sorts of issues from citizens, if one were to be cynical this is relatively inexpensive way of filling in the web pages.

There is little indication of its role in advocacy or whether it contributes to the making of a more democratic society in India. While Merinews was involved with the World social forum that was held in Delhi in 2006.

The unit of analysis was each story or post that fell within the frames selected during this time period. All the stories from the Merinews and Times of India within
the selected time period amounted to 500 each. The number of stories from Times of India exceeded those of the Merinews by a large number. Thus stories were selected randomly from the times of India home page and all stories were taken from the Merinews website.

Stories on Merinews were coded for story content into a number of categories that coincided with the categories used in its own website.

**Hypothesis 1** which examined the correlation between the stories most frequently covered by the two professional and citizen journalism websites. Stories from the both websites were coded and analyzed. To characterize the content on Merinews and Timesof India detailed coding was done looking for the subjects that dealt issues with Business, Health, Entertainment, International, Lifestyle, social news, political, sports and technological issues.

Stories in Business category were coded for SME, corporate, economy, mutual fund, global market and trade, e-commerce and debate section. Stories about the health were classified on the base of awareness, WHO related fitness and awards and recognitions, treatments and medicines and studies. Hence the study used these broad themes to code for the frequent topics. Chi –square analyzed there is a significant difference between the both websites.
Table 5.1

Issues of Merinews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merinews</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local News</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; culture</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1 depicts the list of categories. A Spearman’s rho computed for the homepage stories covered by two Times of India and Merinews websites, showed significant correlation between the two lists, <.001

Table shows the issues on which people participated in citizen journalism websites in the month of June, July and August 2014. From the total 1500 sample 120 citizens participated on business issue in Merinews. While 35 citizens participated on the entertainment issue. 48 citizens participated on the health issue and 228 participated on the lifestyle issue. 323 citizens participate in local news while the largest no of the sample 364 participated on the political issue.

Citizens are more keen to participate on the political issue on the citizen journalism website. 43 Citizens of the sample write reviews on the website and 56 citizens of the sample participate on social and culture issues. 87 citizens of the sample participate on the sports. The smallest number 22 of the sample participates on technology issue.
## Table 5.2

### Issues of Times of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times of India</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local News</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; culture</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table shows that on the professional media website times of India On which issues people participated. 201 Citizens of 1500 stories participated on business issue. 212 citizens on the entertainment, 37 citizens on health while 234 on international issue. 149 citizens of the sample participate on the lifestyle issue. While 42 citizens participate on the local issue.

The largest number of the sample 336 citizens of the sample participate on the political issue. Only 2 people participated on the reviews. 38 citizens of the sample participate on the social and culture issue. While 193 people participated on the issue of sports. 53 participated on the issue of technology.

**Table 5.3**

**Issues of Merinews & Times of India**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Merinews</th>
<th>Per cent (%)</th>
<th>Times of India</th>
<th>Per cent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>9.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local News</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>21.53</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>24.26</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; culture</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>12.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td></td>
<td>1500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table shows the issues of both the websites Times of India and Merinews. This table compares the professional media website and a citizen journalism website. On the business issue, 8 percent on citizen journalism website and 13 percent on the times of India professional media website.

There are only 2 per cent citizens who participated on the entertainment issue on the citizen journalism website while 14 per cent citizens participated on the times of India. On health issue, 3 per cent citizens of the sample participated on citizen journalism website and 2 per cent on the professional news website. On the International issue, 11 per cent citizens participated on citizen journalism website and 15 per cent on the professional media website.

On the lifestyle issue, 15 per cent of the sample participated on citizen journalism website and 10 per cent on the professional news website. On this issue lifestyle professional media website got more participation from the citizens. On local news stories, 21 per cent citizens of the sample participated on citizen journalism website while only 2 per cent of the sample participated on professional media website. On political issue, 24 per cent citizens of the sample participated on the citizen journalism website while 22 per cent of the sample on the professional media website. On reviews, 2 per cent Citizens participated on citizen journalism website and 0 per cent participated on the professional media website.

On socio and culture issue, 3 per cent citizens participated citizen journalism website and 2 per cent on the professional media website. On the sports issue, 6 per
cent on citizen journalism website and 13 per cent on professional media websites. On technology, 1 per cent citizens of the sample on technology participated on citizen journalism website and 3 per cent on the professional media website.

The findings reveal that on the citizen journalism websites citizens participated on the local issues more than professional media websites.

There is made a comparison of both the citizen journalism and professional websites. It shows that on the professional media website there are a lot of issues of entertainment and business while on the citizen journalism website life style and health issues are taken more than professional media websites.
The chi square test has been applied to compare both of the websites. There is found significant correlation between both of the websites. This shows that the issues of professional media is correlated with citizen journalism websites. This shows that there is agenda setting relationship between professional journalism websites and citizen journalism websites.

The study shows that professional media adapts the issues of citizen journalism websites. And citizen journalists also write on the issues which are raised by professional media. Moreover, citizen journalism is mostly done on the local issues. Agenda setting is seen mostly at local level.
Discussion & Conclusion

Internet has contributed towards many forms of emancipatory communications via blogs, citizen journalism and other technologically mediated means. However, in India there are any number of applications under the citizen journalism umbrella and it is not clear whether these, taken in their entirely, contribute significantly to the cause of public journalism. User generated content and networking offer opportunities to extend the quality and reach of citizen journalism, but the internet in India resolutely remains an urban medium. Rather Citizens have become more aware to participate. Citizens get instant information and have become active audience.

Analyzing the agenda setting between Citizen Journalism website Merinews and Professional news website Times of India. Study shows that Times of India influences the agenda of media in India. It reveals that citizen journalists are not part of professional news rooms. Scholars

On professional websites the largest number of sample participated on political issues. On the citizen journalism websites the largest number of sample people participated on local issues. Now –a – days professional media is also opting citizen journalism.

Limitations

1. Times of India newspaper is an enduring organization and Citizen Journalism website is newer in comparison of Times of India.

2. Stories were taken from the home page only.
References


2. Berelson, Bernard,(1952) Content Analysis in Communication Research , Free Press, Illinois ,

