

Online Media and the Winds of Change in Indian Sports Journalism: An Evaluation

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Abstract: *This study is an attempt to assess the overall impact of internet driven online media on sports journalists and sports journalism in the context of Indian print media. It primarily focuses on how sports news is being reported by the journalists across India after the advent of online media. Further, it tries to explore how the role of a sport journalist has changed by the ever increasing availability of information on the web and poses existential questions on the role of gatekeepers that they have played over the years, in this age of interactive media. It endeavors to investigate the quality of sports text in the digital age and explores a possible relation with the impacts of online media. Finally, it also attempts to explore the relations and interaction of the journalists, fans and athletes in this age of internet.*

I. Introduction

The advent of online media has completely changed the media landscape, especially in the way news is being handled by the journalists over the world. Perhaps, no other field had a bigger impact than the arena of sports. The real time availability of information in internet has changed the way sports journalists go about their job. The scenario of sports journalism has changed considerably, especially in the way sports journalists handle different events and issues.

The rapid advancement of online media and the burgeoning number of blogs, websites like espnricinfo.com, and social media websites such as twitter and facebook have brought about a huge change in the way sports is covered by journalists and consumed by the masses. The new media tools have changed the role of sport journalists, who need to embrace new skills to cater to the consumers who are accessing various media platforms apart from traditional media for news and information.

In the last couple of decades, internet has completely revolutionized the way information is gathered, stored, processed, published, searched and consumed. It has affected not only businesses and industries but also changed the media industry.

After the introduction of Google, social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter has been the most potent tool of communication. These social media sites driven by Internet is a platform which blend text, video, pictures, and thus assumed an important role in journalism as it is changing the ways in which journalists interact, communicate, and engage with their audiences.

This change in media landscape also affected the news consumption pattern of people. News consumption “was previously limited to reading the newspaper or listening to a news bulletin on radio, or watching it on television. Today, however, audiences can get an 'instant helping' of the latest news on the Internet, or receive updates on their mobile phone, in their email inbox or on their social network pages” (Stassen, 2012).

The general public, who first shifted from newspapers to 24-hour television are now turning to internet driven sites to get their daily dose of happening around the world. This growing number of readers, viewers and listeners, who are tuning into online media for their news and entertainment has posed a huge challenge for traditional newspapers industry as they have to constantly compete with these interactive online media.

The real time availability of information in internet has changed not only the way sports journalists go about their job and also impacted their interactivity with athletes and sports fans, besides bringing a change in their role as media gatekeepers.

Sports Journalism in Print Media

Sports journalism is much more than the “toy box” or “sand box” of the newsroom. Sports journalism in recent times, have great abilities of transcending cultures and societies. Sports journalism has adopted a global language that brings a stable and steady common ground. Sports are obviously how professionals in their respective sport, make their bread and butter, but that bread may be getting a bit molded for those that report on sports. To avoid this molding or survive through it, journalists must prepare themselves for the fresh, new brand of bread. That preparation may include many ever-changing things, but the most important thing is being willing and able to adapt to the changes.

Print Media vs Online Media

Print has been around for hundreds of years and well-established media houses have a massive reader base, even at the age of Online Media or Internet. These are people who prefer to hold their favorite magazine or newspaper while they sip on their coffee or tea every morning. Printed media are particularly easy to use in many locations and almost every environment, without recourse to any special equipment. Nevertheless, the information content of print media is static/ fixed and cannot be quickly changed interactively.

The internet has been considered as a threat to traditional media, prompting traditional media players to invest online to defend their core business. According to Sindile Gubedu, people are more addicted to online media compared to the print media. The rapid increase in online media usage has led to a decrease in the popularity of other media sources especially the print media, during the last few years in many developed countries. People are more connected to the internet through the online media and have ignored the traditional media because they think it is too slow for them to get the quicker information.

Interactivity between Sports Journalists and Athletes

The scope of interactivity between sports journalists and athletes has widened in the recent years. Previously, only land phones and emails were available whenever a journalist wanted to interact with any sports celebrity. Now-a-days, any time, the journalists or even the celebrities can interact and share views with the help of social media network. With Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter – no doubt, the interactivity level has widened to a great extent. Athletes used to be the most privacy protected celebrity figures but those days have come to an end.

A major challenge for traditional newspapers is to adapt to the rising number of online media and the constant shift of readers to the web for news. The rise of bloggers and civic journalists has also posed enough challenge for the traditional journalists.

According to a news reporter Brian Macarthur, “Journalists’ working practices have changed drastically ... reporters and subs [editors] seem increasingly tied to their desks ...” Furthermore, he describes a scenario where: People would spend hours – seven, eight, often more, sitting in front of screens, tapping energetically away, gazing lugubriously at them or, occasionally, making a telephone call. (Macarthur, ‘The Sound of Two-finger Typing’, p. 15)

Saf Fahim says that the walls of a typical workplace are coming down. Fahim envisages the newsroom of the future as a studio shielded “by a screen displaying the status of each group’s page or individual assignment, so that the newspaper in effect wallpapers the newsroom”. (Saf Fahim, cited in Sally Jackson, ‘Convergent Views’, Australian, ‘Media Supplement’, 28 June-4 July 2001, p. 12.)

New York Times Sports Editor, Tom Jolly says digital evolution has had a big impact on the news cycle. Print newspapers have traditionally been once-a-day news mediums. They have now become 24/7 news machines, constantly updating and breaking news online and to mobile devices.

As such, demands on sports journalists have never been greater. With a once-a-day news cycle sports reporters would write one or two stories for the next day’s paper. Now, at the New York Times at least, they are required to write stories for the web, update those stories throughout the day, write another updated story for the print paper and perhaps write a blog item or tweet an update. (Tackling the Digital Future of Sports Journalism, Jerrie Andrew 2011)

The fact that the masses can also use these media tools to create sports content has fuelled fears that internet may make obsolete the traditional role of sports journalists. Social media scholars like Mathilda (2004), Katz (2006), Mcquail (2005), Pateno and Burnett (2006), allege that the new social media can push the old media into oblivion. They contend that journalism as a profession seems to be threatened as the public allegedly adopts the role of journalists, bridging the professional sphere with those of amateurs.

According to Banda (2010), many broadcasters now invite ordinary people to become ireporter and encourage them to send video images which the broadcaster transmits. This is a threat to professionalism knowing citizens have not acquired journalistic skills, hence referring to them as amateurs is justifiable.

Raymond Boyle (2009) (Power Play Sport, the Media and Popular culture, p 171) says “digitization has clearly impacted on journalism in various forms. Within the arena of sports journalism, it has seen the emergence of an increasingly sophisticated battle for control of sports and how they are delivered, reported and made sense of for readers, listeners and viewers.”

Globalization, digitization and marketisation have brought sweeping changes in the media organisations, which are restructuring their brand of journalism to keep up with the changes.

“With the pressure on time and resources sports journalists and journalists in general increasingly find that the internet has become an important source for information. Not only does this process of data gathering require you to maintain the journalistic rigour of checking material that appears on the web for its accuracy, but also this reliance on the web, can often be at the expense of getting out of the office and speaking with people.

This inability to 'get out of the office' is a developing trend that some commentators feel is an increasingly impoverishing aspect of contemporary journalistic practice (Marr, 2004: 115)"

Peter Dahlgren adds: The advent of cyberspace will inevitably impact on the factors which shape how journalism gets done – and may well even colour how we define what journalism is. The literature suggests that the essential characteristics of online journalism are interactivity, customization of content, hyper-textuality and convergence, or, rather, multimodality. (Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996; Singer, 1998; Deuze, 1999)

Michael Meadows (Michael Meadows, cited in Natasha Bitá, 'Is Cyberspace Bad News?', Australian, 'Media Supplement', 22-28 March 2001, p. 6.) claimed that the Internet allows journalists to "reinvent" their craft. Furthermore, Meadows stated that: The Internet is offering innovative and creative ways in which journalists can reinvent themselves and present information in a much more interesting and interactive way.

Joseph Lichterman (June, 2014) says "Social media has allowed journalists to build personal brands and establish themselves as experts on the teams and sports they cover. The game story has lost importance to the small update or the smart analysis."

The digital landscape also has posed quite a few ethical questions for the sports journalists. "For sports journalists they suggest that some of the wider ethical dilemmas faced by their colleagues at the so called 'hard news' end of the journalistic spectrum about reporting on issues that are commercially sensitive to media organizations are becoming more difficult to avoid." (Raymond Boyle: Sports journalism: context and issues 2006).

The changing landscape has also influenced the level of interaction between athletes, fans and journalists. In 'The New Online Arena: Sport, Marketing and Media Converge in Cyberspace', Joseph E. Mahan and Stephen R McDaniel says: "The internet or World Wide Web, offers a global multimedia platform with the potential for interactivity and personalization that is highly appealing to its users, whether they be commercial or non-commercial entities. As was the case with the diffusion of traditional media, the web has essentially changed the ways in which sport media is produced, distributed, and consumed."

This boom in Sports communication underscores the relationship development between organizations, players, fans, and third parties. (Pedersen, Laucella, Miloch, & Fielding, 2007, p. 196) define sports communication as the "process by which people in sport, in a sport setting, or through a sport endeavor share symbols as they create meaning through interaction."

Sanderson and Kassing (2011) assert that blogs and Twitter have revolutionized sports media by giving athletes and teams an active role in content production. Mass media outlets appear to be losing their edge in sports media due to professional athletes' progressive engagement in social media.

Twitter has brought fans closer to their sport heroes because it allows athletes to communicate as openly and honestly as they wish without any third-party mediation. This type of open communication, "peels back the curtain on an athlete's existence, showcasing personality layers never seen at press conferences," (Johnson, 2009).

Among Indian sports celebrities, Virat Kohli is the most followed Indian sportsman on social networking site Twitter with a base of 4,870,190 followers, followed by Sachin Tendulkar, holding the number two spot a year after his retirement. Tendulkar has 4,869,849 fans, followed by Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni at the third spot with 3,327,033 followers as on Dec 24, 2014.

Sport fans thus can get a real, unmediated look into the lives of their sport heroes and, in the process, possibly develop a greater appreciation for the talent, dedication to their sport, and day-to-day lives of these athletes (Kassing & Sanderson, 2009; Sanderson, 2008).

Sports journalists and other sports media personnel also utilize these mediums to reach audiences, but the public, professional teams and athletes now have the ability to bypass traditional media outlets through social media platforms (Sanderson & Kassing, 2011).

The emergence of social media in sport has important implications; Phua (2010) noted that the Web, through its ability to be a major socializing agent and communication channel for sports fans, will continue to play a vital role, eventually superseding traditional media such as broadcast and print.

Singer (2006), refers to today's journalists not as gatekeepers but as "sense-makers" who interpret for citizens "what is both credible and valuable" (p. 12). As Singer (2006 a) points out "The Internet defies the whole notion of a 'gate' and challenges the idea that journalists... should limit what passes through it."

There also have been concerns about the language of sports text in the digital age. According to various media theorists and experts (and Steven Barnett as quoted by fellow author Kevin Williams), "the growth of media and cultural industries and the rise of the information society coincides with a 'pervasive sense of declining cultural, educational and political standards' or 'dumbing down'" (Williams, 2003, p. 229).

Said Colin Sparks (also cited in Williams): While there may be more information available, the quality of this information as well as public understanding is declining. Public ignorance and apathy is growing as the serious, challenging and truthful is being pushed aside by the trivial, sensational, vulgar and manipulated. (Williams, 2003, p. 230)

Today, according to author Elizabeth Bird, the label of tabloid is most often used to represent the sensational tabloid the paper whose stock in trade is the human interest, graphically told story, heavy on pictures and short, pithy, highly stereotyped prose. (Bird, 1992, p. 8).

Hughes claims news articles either edify or entertain, and this either/or split has become a taken for granted, if constantly qualified, assumption in American journalism. (Bird & Dardenne, 1988, pp. 68-69). Infotainment is hardly considered news at all and is often pointed to as examples of dumbed-down news content for consumption by the masses.

According to an analysis by Schmalenbach (2009), sports journalism in Germany has lost in many cases its credibility due to the fact that speculations instead of facts are making the headlines. Furthermore, sports journalists in Germany have been criticized for being biased regarding individual players or athletes and rather following the public opinion than being critical (Schlegel, 2007)

Infotainment is believed to be lacking in quality, hard informative and useful news. Says Bird in support of the tabloid-infotainment connection, “Tabloids do not claim to be fiction, even if they do claim primarily to be entertainment. They do report on real people and events and their staff members are journalists” (Bird, 1992, p. 104).

Study Objectives:

- 1) To understand the role of sports journalists in print media with the advent of online media.
- 2) To understand whether there is any language change in sports journalism of print media with the penetration of internet.

II. Methodology

This study is a combination of both Audience Survey and Textual Analysis. As part of the survey sports journalists from print media were sent a questionnaire and the response from the 100 respondents was considered for analysis.

Additionally, Textual Analysis was done focusing on the coverage of two of the biggest sporting event – Football World Cup and Cricket World Cup, across two eras (2002 vs 2010/2003 vs 2011) by three national dailies, namely The Times of India, The Hindustan Time and The Indian Express. The study aims to understand the impact of internet on the language on the sports text.

This study thus employs both quantitative method of audience survey and the qualitative method of textual analysis to understand the impact of internet on the role of a sports journalist and change in language of sports stories respectively.

The headlines in this study, have been analyzed in terms of linguistic devices also like presupposition. Taking the newspaper headlines as a kind of persuasive writing, these devices are of special importance in that they enhance the effect of persuasion.

Presupposition “is any proposition whose truth is accepted by the speaker . . . but not asserted by the utterance” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 273). Linguistically, they are marked by using certain grammatical structures and lexical items. Presuppositions “allow speakers and writers to make claims without actually asserting them, and, moreover, take specific beliefs for granted although they might not be” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 273). They in fact provide the writers with a kind of a “linguistic device that can be used at word/phrase level to manipulate readers” (Huckin, 2002, p. 161).

III. Findings

Changing role of sports journalists in digital age In this section, the researcher tries to answer the following points with the help of the below tables:

- Are sports journalists becoming superficial due to the constant presence of internet and dependent on net?
- How do the journalists face challenges posed by internet?

Table No.1

Do you think that the understanding of sports and their rules have gone down among journalists because of real-time updates of scores in the websites?

Sl. No.	Answers	Total number of respondents out of 100	Percentage %
1	Yes	5	5%
2	No	90	90%
3	DN/CS ¹	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

¹ DN/CS – Don't Know/Can't Say

Table No.2

Do you think the easily available information in internet has made the sports journalist lazy and superficial?

Sl. No.	Answers	Total number of respondents out of 100	Percentage %
1	Yes	30	30%
2	No	60	60%
3	DN/CS	10	10%
	Total	100	100%

Table No.3: Do you think sports journalists are under pressure like never before and face the challenge of offering something new to readers who have seen the action live given that new media offers live coverage of almost all sports around the world?

Sl. No.	Answers	Total number of respondents out of 100	Percentage %
1	Yes	95	95%
2	No	0	0
3	DN/CS	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

Table No.4: Do you think the role of sports journalist as a mediator between the fans and the sports personalities is on a down swing?

Sl. No.	Answers	Total number of respondents out of 100	Percentage %
1	Yes	35	35%
2	No	60	60%
3	DN/CS	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

Table No.5: Do you think in the digital age sports Journalists no more set the agenda and is done by the sports persons themselves with the help of social media websites?

Sl. No.	Answers	Total number of respondents out of 100	Percentage %
1	Yes	0	30
2	No	95	65%
3	DN/CS	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

Table No.6: Do you think sports journalists will lose their relevance in another 20 years?

Sl. No.	Answers	Total number of respondents out of 100	Percentage %
1	Yes	35	35%
2	No	60	60%
3	DN/CS	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

This section tries to understand how the role of a sports journalist has changed in the internet age in terms of the understanding the game, source building, agenda setting and what sort of challenges that Indian scribes face and if the sports journalists are losing their relevance.

The above tables make it amply clear that despite the spoon-feeding by Internet and Televisions in the form of live streaming and commentary, almost all sports journalists believe that it has not affected their knowledge and understanding of the sports and they are more than happy to go out in the field than cover the sport from the comfort of their office cubicles with high speed internet.

Most journalists don't believe that social media has helped them to grow their sources and contacts. Despite incidents of a few breaking news on social media sites such as Twitter, they firmly believe that they are still setting the agenda and hold a strong position as a mediator between the fans and the sports personalities. The respondents were almost unanimous in agreeing that they are facing immense pressure to dig out something new in the times of internet which brings the sports events to the audience with a click of the mouse. However, despite the challenge, at least 60 per cent of the respondents still believe sports journalists in India won't lose their relevance in the next 20 years.

Textual Analysis

Two striking headlines from each of three national dailies, i.e., The Times of India, The Indian Express and The Hindustan Times during the Football World Cup (2002 and 2010) and the Cricket World Cup (2003 and 2011) respectively were considered for the textual analysis.

Football World Cup 2002 by The Times of India

Danes leave French black and blue

The writer uses alliteration in 'black and blue' in the headline to grab attention. The writer says that French were 'dramatically dumped out' and how they went 'spinning to a defeat' and describes it a 'disastrous campaign' and 'humiliating exit' and 'worst record' for any defending champions. The tone of the first paragraph itself seems to ignite some sort of emotions among the readers. The writer also describes this loss as 'bringing an 'end to an unprecedented era of success for Les Bleus'. Here Les Bleus is a metonymic usage referred to the France team. There were other hyperbolic expressions such as 'French challenge was snuffed out' and Denmark 'smothered life out' of opponents which clearly describes the intention of the writer to dramatize.

Koreans set to attack aristocratic Halieans

The writer describes the match as 'the most important game in the co-hosts history' and how it will be '11 of Italy against 47 million of South Korea'. It suggests a deliberate attempt to sensationalise. The copy has a bias towards Korea as it describes how it can 'fluster the aristocratic Azzuri'. Hyperbolic Expressions such as 'ruffled the feathers of Portugal' and how

'Hyundai-backed Koreans will look to outstrip the Ferraris of Italy' gives it a different connotation as mentioning the names of the companies were not required in the copy. It shows commercialisation of sports. The writer also says how Korea will 'erect a wall of noise' and turn the stadium into a 'sea of red'. The copy also mentions how Italy will remember 'happenings of 1966', referring to the 'red-tomato reception' which Italy received after losing 0-1 to North Korea in 1966.

Football World Cup 2010 by The Times of India

Tevez lights up Argentina's night, Scores twice to set up QF clash with Germany

The writer uses a hyperbolic expression when he describes Tevez's goal as 'Tevez lights up Argentina's night' in the headline. The writer uses metaphor while saying how Mexico found 'wind from their sails disappearing' and Argentina 'stamped their indelible authority' and put 'a dagger in Mexico's heart'. The writer also uses other expressions such as 'blow for blow', 'thick in the heat of battle', 'snuffed out', 'withered away', besides words like 'shocked', 'robbed' and 'pounce' in the copy which hints at attempts to sensationalise.

Ole! Spain reigns Beat 10-Man Dutch 1-0 in extra time; Euro to World: Match of the Red Army

The writer uses Spanish word 'Ole' to connect to the fans, describing their journey from European championship to World Cup win as 'March of the Red Army'. Here red army is a metonymic usage. The writer uses adjectives such as 'classic' and 'stunning', besides military words like 'battle', 'threat', 'bruising' and 'rescue' in the copy. The plethora of expressions such as 'squeeze all the creativity', 'lost his appetite', 'killer-like persona', 'by the skin of his teeth', 'etch his name into immortality', 'most audacious gatecrash' and 'bruising blur of final' shows the change in language in sport text to enhance readership.

Football World Cup 2002 by The Indian Express

Biggest upset: Defending champions lose face in a sensational start against their former colony. The Empire's strike leaves France reeling

A closer look at these headlines reveals several layers as it seems the text used in the headline took into consideration the political history of the two nations rather than just providing information. It is interesting to note that Senegal had one of the oldest and most complicated relationships with France. Senegal was France's oldest colony in black Africa, before the former earned its independence On April 4, 1960. The sports journalists draws from this colonial past of the two countries as he mentions "Old wounds are likely to be ripped open" in the headline of the preview and 'former colony' in this headline. France, the defending champions had come into the 2002 World Cup with a lot of hope of winning back-to-back crowns but their loss to Senegal, a nation ranked over 40 places below them, saw them draw a lot of flak.

Suspense steams at the cusp of the Cup

The writer describes the final between Brazil and Germany as a "gladiator duel" and "clash of styles". The reference to the team sponsors -- Nike vs Adidas and their motos also suggests commercialisation of sports. The writer also goes on to say that Brazil are "custodian of the game" who have "cast their spell" on Japan and how they "lifted them out of gloom" after they exited the world cup. The writer uses many idioms in this preview copy of the final with expressions such as "it all boils down to", "Throw the form books away", "skin of their teeth", and uses metaphors such as "Brazil take the field with paint brush, Germany with set-squares and six-inch rule". There was also alliteration usage in "moment of magic". In short, the writer used a good number of literary tools to dramatise and appeal to the readers.

Football World Cup 2010 by The Indian Express Germany seek revenge for euro 2008

Here once again, the headline writer plays with the emotion of hurt and pain to describe the match as an opportunity to get back to Spain, who had beaten them in the 2008 Euro final. The writer describes the match as a “thrilling encounter”, “exciting clash” and “battle” where Germany will be “looking for revenge”. The writer also writes how Germany “crushed” Argentina and describes David Villa as “deadly”.

Flying Dutchmen face never-say-die Uruguay

The writer says how the Holland and Uruguay will be “fighting it out” in the match and then digs up the history of the teams, saying how Uruguay’s “national identity draws heavily on their victories of 1930 and 1950” and then semifinal results in 1954 and 1970 showed it was “not flash in the pan”. The writer refers to history possibly to raise the level of expectations for the team among the fans. Similarly, the writer also gives references from Dutch soccer history, saying how each player operates “under long shadows” of the past players and how they were “cast as chief bridesmaid” in 1974 and 1978 where they lost against West Germany and Argentina. The writer further ups the expectation saying how Netherland is likely to “leave egg on the face of those writing them off” and how after “weathering an early onslaught” against Brazil, they are fearless now. There were idioms such as “pulling the string” used to describe Wesley Sneijder’s role and how Arjen Robben is a “key weapon”. The writer uses “terrorising” to describe Uruguay player Luis Suarez’s dominance on Holland.

Football World Cup 2002 by The Hindustan Times Beckham or Ronaldo: Who’ll bury ghosts of 98?

The writer describes how Ronaldo and Beckham face the ‘ghosts that plagued them in France in 1998’ and how the match was a chance to ‘exorcise their respective ghosts’. The writer describes the match a clash between the two players and goes on to describe their childhood and style of play, which suggests a deliberate attempt to dish out what the fans would expect. The writer compares and contrasts Beckham’s ‘devastating first touch’ with Ronaldo’s ‘kill you with last’ and goes on to describe the style and strength of each player. The writer also talked about the star power of the players and how Ronaldo could have been a big brand if he could have scored in the finals against France in 1998. The writer uses a metaphor when he says ‘Ronaldo played the final like a jellyfish with a shadow hanging over it’ and how his head probably ‘imploded under the weight of expectation’ ahead of the match. The writer also describes Beckham’s failure in 2002 group stage match against Argentina and how he ‘suffered metaphorically equivalent of public stoning’ after his failure. The writer ends with that only one man can ‘exorcise the ghost’ but ‘exchanging their shirts’ after the match like Pele and Bobby Moore did in 1970, they can prove that modern football is not a ‘zero sum game’.

Fired-up England douse Danish flame

The writer mocks at Denmark team, starting the copy with how it was supposed to be a ‘suffocating, tight and finger-biting tense’ match but ‘unfortunately no one told Danish defence’ and how their ‘comical’ defending ‘gifted’ the match to England. The writer says that Denmark was ‘nervous during the national anthem’ and used metaphor when he wrote ‘such butterflies dissipate at opening whistle’ but rather it intensified. There were other expressions such as how if the Denmark team had not missed the chances they could have ‘bolted upright instead of groping to the floor’ and how they were ‘killed off’ by Emile Heskey’s goal.

Football World Cup 2010 by The Hindustan Times Mexico block Diego’s march Latin Heat: Mexico face Argentina in the pre-quarters in a repeat of Germany 2006, looking to avenge their 1-2 defeat

The writer uses ‘Latin Heat’ to describe the match between Mexico and Argentina and also refers to the 2006 World Cup and says how Mexico will look to ‘avenge’ their defeat. In the report, the writer says how Mexico will try to ‘pull something special out of the bag’ and ‘create an upset’ to ‘avenge their defeat’ against their ‘illustrious opponents’. The writer uses alliteration in the expression ‘frontline firepower’ and uses phrases such as ‘prove a bridge too far’, ‘prized scalp’ and ‘attacking prowess’ in the copy, besides words like ‘stunning’, ‘sealed’, ‘danger man’ and ‘talisman’.

Oranje samba on Friday Calculating Brazil show South American compatriots Chile the door, face Holland in the quarterfinals

‘Show the door’ is the idiom used in the headline here. While the expression ‘Oranje Samba’ was used to describe the quarterfinal match between The Netherlands and Brazil. The writer used many emotive words like ‘dismantled’, ‘cruise’, ‘havoc’, ‘fired’, ‘showboating’ in the copy. The writer describes the match as ‘lip-

smacking tie', where Brazil 'mesmerised their way' with 'calculating and ruthless' football and how 'smart teams pick their fights'. The writer uses alliteration in phrases like 'samba soccer', 'profligate among parsimonious' and 'jumped with joy'.

Cricket World Cup 2003 by The Times of India Indians falter at final hurdle

Here 'falter at final' is an alliteration use in the headline. In the report, the writer describes India as 'men in blue' who 'ran into a blizzard of oz' as their 'Dream run in world cup faltered', while Australia 'smashed their way to a record'. The writer uses hyperbole describing Australians as 'supermen from planet krypton', while how Indians were playing like 'mere mortals'.

The wicket was described as 'dead as a dodo track', while how the Indian team looked 'sapped, trapped and zapped' and it was a 'body blow for India'. There were many emotive expressions used by the writer in the copy such as 'rescue from the massacre', 'back in demolition business after rain', 'blunder of his life' 'ended in mayhem' and 'climbing Mount Everest could have been easier'. There were other words such as 'astonishing', 'audacious', 'belligerent', 'profligate' and 'slaughter' used in the report by the writer.

Super Sunday at Supersport park

The writer uses alliteration in the headline to grab the attention early on. In the copy, the writer starts with hyperboles such as Indian team must have 'drunk down a relish of adrenaline and testosterone' and served a 'heady mix of brutal power, terrifying speed and raw emotion', and describes the match as an 'stomach churning epic thriller' and 'titanic struggle' and how Indian and Pakistan team were the 'Athens and Sparta of world cricket'. The writer says that India put Pakistan 'out of misery' and continued their 'strangehold on old rivals'. He uses hyperbolic expressions saying how it was an 'electric atmosphere' which could 'charge every device on the ground'.

The writer uses another hyperbole 'hunter became the hunted' to describe how Akhtar's pre-match announcement of targeting Tendulkar backfired as he scored with 'such ferocity that it begged for intervention'. The writer goes on to say that Tendulkar 'smashed around the park' and batted with 'so sublimely that sporting divinities must have nodded in approval' and how for Akhtar 'regimental duty in Kargil could have been more pleasant'. Talking about Yuvraj's innings, the writer says that Yuvraj was 'growing from boy to man on world biggest stage' and how Indian team will 'party until the cows come home'. There were other expressions such as 'India's familiar nemesis' which was used to describe Saeed Anwar and 'jangling nerves', 'see-sawed and made you giddy' and 'claw back'.

Cricket World Cup 2011 by The Times of India An Awesome victory! India end Australia's cup reign with inspired team performance

The writer describes how the India and Australia match was 'billed as blockbuster' and 'explosive clash' between 'arch-rivals' and how it 'lived up to expectations'. The writer goes on to describe the Indian players as 'knight in shining armour' who 'rising to the challenge' 'turned on the screws' on Australia by 'fighting fire with fire'. The writer uses emotive expressions such as 'intense drama', 'point of no return', 'down the throat' and 'set the stage'. The writer uses words such as 'venom', 'gutsy', 'slammed', 'dashed' and 'thundering' in the copy.

Mohali serves up Mumbai masala: Indian halt Pak charge on road to final against Lanka

The writer uses alliteration in the expression 'Mohali serves up Mumbai masala' to grab attention. For a match between two neighbouring nations who have been at war in the past, the writer using the expression 'Indian halt Pak charge on road' seems an attempt to connect with the history of the two countries. The writer describes the match as 'high-intensity' and how 'stakes are high' and how even the 'bravest go weak in knee'. The writer uses idiomatic expressions such as 'lost the plot', 'kept their poise', 'brain freeze', 'rose like phoenix', 'raise the bar', 'blur of euphoria' and 'frenzy of celebration' in the report to appeal to the readers, besides using words such as 'imploded'.

Cricket World Cup 2003 by The Indian Express Aussie bowlers blow Indian challenge away

At the start, the writer describes how 'India avoided complete humiliation' despite posting their 'worst-ever world cup performance' as they went down without a 'semblance of a fight'. The writer uses alliteration while mocking at Indian team describing them 'Boys in Blue' and labelled the match as 'centurion shame'.

The writer also describes their next match against Zimbabwe as 'salvage operation' to 'revive battered 2003 world cup dreams'. The loss to Australia was interpreted by the writer as India team having 'no longer

interest in this world cup'. There were other phrases such as 'business as usual', no 'backbone to offer', 'matter of survival' and 'shame-faced' and words like 'fight', 'attack' and 'onslaught', which were used by the writer.

Advantage India, but beware of complacency

The writer describes the India-Pakistan match as 'gladiatorial contest' and how pressure will 'fire up' Pakistan. Fast bowlers were described as 'speed batteries' and how Shoaib Akhtar had announced in 'WWF-style' his intentions against India.

The writer also uses many idioms such as 'On a high', 'shooting off his mouth', and 'it boils down to', besides military terms like 'tormented', 'haunted', 'rocked', 'rescue', 'battle', 'destructive' and 'attack' in the preview copy.

Cricket World Cup 2011 by The Indian Express

India cross swords with Australia in epic battle

The preview of the match between India and Australia thrives on hyperbole, jingoism and metaphor as the writer uses words such as 'blows', 'clash', 'spearhead', 'scalps', 'fight', 'encounter', tipping it as a 'high-voltage epic battle' between 'arch-rivals' and how it will have 'jangled nerves' and 'pressure-cooker' situation as India look to end the 'ruthless dominance' of the Australians. The writer uses expressions such as 'Indian fans baying for Australia blood' and 'India looking to end aura of invincibility' to create a sensational picture in the reader's mind.

World Cup blockbuster: It's India vs Pakistan

Blockbuster is used generally to describe an entertainment show which has great commercial value but the writer uses the word to describe the match between Arch foes India and Pakistan match. Terms such as explosive clash, charged-up encounter, mother of all battles and face off were used by the writer to describe the match between the two teams who were playing for the first time since the 26/11 Mumbai attack. The report talks about the fascinating rivalry and how India will have to soak in intensity at the biggest stage.

Cricket World Cup 2003 by The Hindustan Times

It's finally here: India vs Pakistan

The writer describes the match as a 'contest of a lifetime', which fans will expected to be an 'enthraling, dramatic contest' and how a defeat will mean 'end of the world'. The writer talks about how the past matches between India and Pakistan in the world cup 'never lived up to their grandiose build-up' though it had 'dramatic, tense and joyful moments' and how it has been 'a war minus the shooting'.

The writer says Pakistan look like a side 'fighting self-created inner demons' and describes them as 'greatest under-achiever'. The writer also uses words such as 'fight', 'clash', 'wrath', 'fire', 'crumble' in the report.

We did it. Now for the Cup Sachin blitz wrecks Pakistan

Here 'blitz' and 'wreck' are the key words in the headlines which the writer used to appeal to the readers. The writer uses many hyperboles and metaphors in the report such as 'could have asked for moon and Tendulkar would have obliged' while describing Tendulkar's innings and how 'the little master orchestrated a tense, seven-hour drama of skill and nerves' with 'stunning strokeplay and intriguing twist'.

The writer goes on to say how the match 'hung in suspense' even as Tendulkar 'played one of the riveting counter-attacking inning ever seen in World Cup history' and how he 'stunned Pakistanis by smashing relentless attack'.

Expressions like 'expression of genius' and 'wielded the baton with panache' were used to describe Tendulkar. The writer also uses expressions like 'nerves of steel', 'stood like a rock', 'played with grace and power' to describe Mohammad Kaif, Rahul Dravid and Yuvraj Singh's innings.

Cricket World Cup 2011 by The Hindustan Times

Choke's on us India crumble: From 267-1, India lost nine wickets for 29 runs to manage only 296; South Africa seemed to be headed for another close defeat till Nehra conceded 16 runs in the last over

The writer uses 'Choke's on us', twisting the expression 'joke on us'. The word 'choke' has been used many times to describe the failure of South Africa cricket in World Cup where they have always lost from winning positions. The writer uses war-inspired words such as 'firepower', 'capitulation', 'hammering', 'attack' and 'assault' in the match report.

The writer describes how the match was full of 'dramatic twists and turns' and how the 'batting firepower' of India and its 'fragility came to the fore' in the match. The writer describes how India were 'Hammering the attack' and 'brought the bowlers almost down on their knees' and were 'set for final assault' before they lost wicket which the writer terms as 'capitulation'. The writer also says how the fans were 'waiting to go berserk expecting fireworks'.

The writer also uses expressions like 'sanity to be restored', 'fragility come to the fore', 'shocking collapse' in the copy, besides using alliterations in 'lessons to be learnt' and 'passage of play' to appeal to the readers.

Y for Yuvi, V for Vendetta Sweet revenge: India knock the defending champions out, avenge the 2003 final loss

The writer uses alliteration and reference in the headline to grab the attention. Here V for Vendetta is a graphic novel written by Alan Moore and illustrated by David Lloyd, which was made into a political thriller film in 2005 directed by James Mc Teigue. The writer describes the match as 'sweet revenge' and how it 'avenged the 2003 final loss'. The usage of the words 'revenge' and 'avenge' in the headline, hints an attempt by the writer to hammer down the point.

The writer describes the match as a 'test of nerve and character' for the Indian team and how Yuvraj had a 'heart of steel' and how after the win, the crowd 'erupted in waves of ecstasy'.

The writer uses expressions such as 'characteristic flamboyance' and 'exhibition of resolute batting', 'blazing bat' and 'countered fire with fire' while describing Indian batting, specially Yuvraj's innings.

There were also some military expressions such as 'sniffed blood' and 'launching a final assault' used by the writer to sensationalise. The writer uses many phrases such as 'faint-hearted', 'inglorious exit', 'unwarranted gallantry', 'keep alive a billion dreams', 'not-so-intimidating' in the copy. There were also emotive words like 'fiercely', 'intense', 'brave', 'emphatic', 'glorious', 'cruising', 'wobbly' and 'robust' in the report.

IV. Conclusion

The researcher found that despite the overflow of information in internet, almost all sports journalists believe that it has not affected their knowledge and understanding of the sports and they are more than happy to go out in the field than cover the sport from the comfort of their office cubicles with the help of high speed internet.

Most journalists do not believe that social media has helped them to grow their sources and contacts. Despite incidents of a few breaking news on social media sites such as twitter, they firmly believe that they hold a strong position as a mediator between the fans and the sports personalities. They were almost unanimous in agreeing that they are facing immense pressure to dig out something new in the times of live streaming and commentary in internet.

The role of a sports journalist is undergoing a drastic change in developed countries such as USA, UK, and Australia and there is a wind of change in India too as the response of the sports journalists in the survey suggests. But the fear of becoming irrelevant as sports journalists in the next 20 years has not yet touched most journalists in India.

The textual analysis of the striking headlines considered from the three national papers – Times of India, Hindustan times and Indian express, shows an explosion of creativity in the language. The use of alliteration, idioms, adjectives and references to films and literature show how sports journalists are using creative language tools to compete with the 24-hour news media.

However, it can't be denied that there is also an emergence of persuasive technique that leans towards sensationalism in the language used to cover the cricket and football world cup in the given years. The use of words such as 'bury', 'revenge', 'strike', 'attack' in the headlines shows the attention-grabbing tactics used by the traditional newspapers, which are considered "serious" publications.

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