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News reading Pattern of University students in Guwahati: A case study of two universities

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Abstract

In recent times, there are numerous findings which showed an increasing adoption of daily news by students in their academic life. Along with this came the advent of highly interactive social media where anything is available at the tip of the finger. Nevertheless, there are numerous reports as to the reliability of print media over other forms of media. However, academic discourse on the subject with special attention on university students is missing. This particular paper intends to shed light into the largely untouched domain of news reading patterns among university students of Guwahati; the influence and effects in their academic life.

Keywords: Media, Guwahati, Newsreading patterns, academic career, social media

Introduction

The term "media" refers to a variety of communication tools and channels that are used to disseminate information, news, entertainment, and other types of content to a large audience. Print (newspapers, magazines), broadcast (television, radio), digital (websites, social media), and other platforms are all included in the definition of media. Media's main goals are to inform, educate, amuse, and engage their audience. It acts as a link between people and the outside world, giving access to knowledge and allowing users to stay informed about current affairs, popular culture, and social issues.

Among various platforms, print media has a significant impact on public opinion formation and the dissemination of news and information. It consists of printed periodicals like newspapers, magazines, and other publications that are sent out to readers all over the

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nation. In the northeastern state of Assam, the first printing press and the newspaper came into being by the Christian missionaries and colonial officers. Since the introduction of the printing press, the Assamese language underwent intense development with the publication of books and journals in Assamese.

In 1846, the first journal Orunodoi was published from Sivsagar. It was a monthly edited by Dr. Nathan Brown and published by Oliver Thomas Cutter. Other editors included A.H. Denforth, Miles Bronson, William Ward, and Ms. Susane. However, it was closed down in 1883 (Sultana, 2021). The magazine also took the initiative to invent new words in the Assamese dialect rather than using ones from other languages. Only through this magazine did the Assamese population learn about the western world, which paved the way for modern literacy in Assam.

Although evangelization was its primary goal, it primarily included a variety of news stories related to current affairs, science, astronomy, history, and trivia. Although Orunodoi was short-lived, it marked the beginning of journalism in Assam. Since then, print media and undergoes different stages of development which continues to grow strong till today (Saikia, 2019).

The publishing environment for newspapers and magazines in Assam underwent a significant transformation in the 1980s with the introduction of desk top publishing and offset printing. Newspaper satellite editions soon followed, and this changed the way that distribution was done. The transportation of newspapers from Guwahati to other locations is no longer necessary because editions of one newspaper are now printed concurrently at several locations. Guwahati is the publication hub for up to ten Assamese and five English dailies.

Dainik Asom, Dainik Janambhumi, Axomiya Pratidin, Khabar, Niyomiya Barta, Dainik Gana Adhikar, Janasadharan, Agradoot, Ajir Dainik Batori, and Amar Asom are Assamese publications, along with some defunct publications like Aji, Ajir Asom, and Edinor Sangbad. The Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, The Telegraph, The Hills Times, and Times of India are some of the English-language newspapers published in Guwahati. Daily publications in Bengali and Hindi include Purbottar Prahari, Hindi Sentinel, and Dainik Jugasankha.

Significance and Methodology of the study

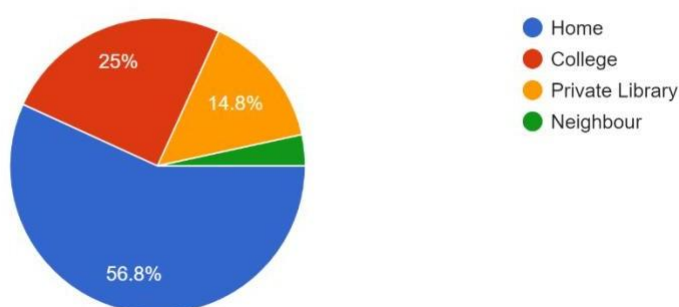
While there are multiple studies related to the use of media by students in learning, specific study on university students in Guwahati has been missing. In this paper, a survey is conducted from students belonging to Gauhati University and Cotton University to find the news preference among students, the type of media, reliability and the reason behind the

adoption of print media. The study was conducted during the first half of 2024. Altogether a data of 44 each was collected from social science students using a simple random method.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Mode of Accessing Newspapers

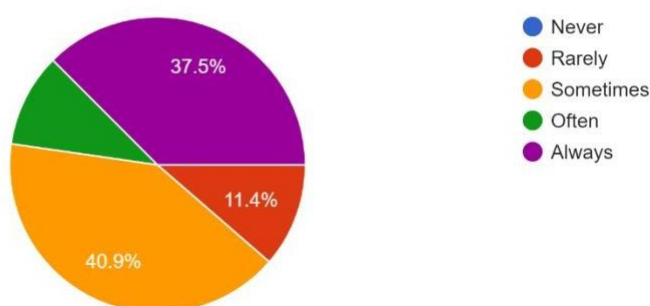
Where do you read newspaper ?
88 responses



In the above fig 1.1 we find 56.8% of the total students read newspaper in home, followed by 25% of respondents who read newspaper in colleges and 14.8% read newspaper in the private libraries. Lastly 3.4% students read newspaper in neighbour. It is hence seen that the students mostly read newspaper at home.

Frequency of New Reading

How frequently do you read newspapers
88 responses

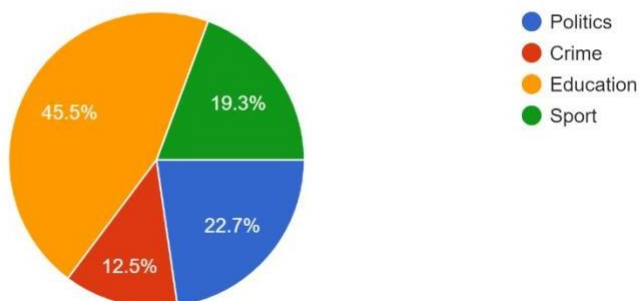


In the above charts fig 1.3 represents the percentage of people who have been frequently reading newspaper. The results were such that 37.5% of the student's were daily newspaper readers. while 11.4% students read rarely. Most of all ,40.9% of the students were found to read newspapers only sometimes, they mentioned that it was difficult to read newspapers due to lack of work or time. Around 10.2% of the students reported that they read newspapers often.

Content Preferences in newspapers

Which section of news content is your favourite ?

88 responses

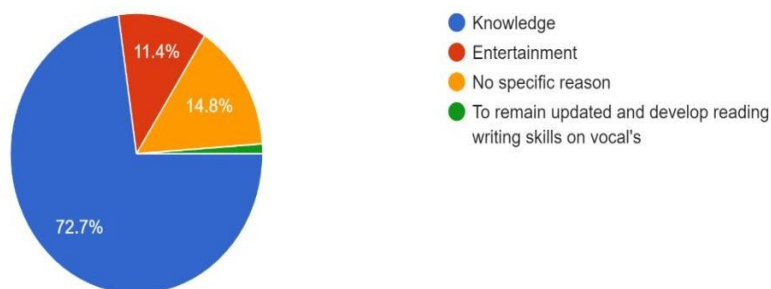


In the above chart fig1.4 we find that 45% of the total students when asked which section is their favourite news contain, they mostly read the education section, while 19.3% of students chose sports and 22.7% for politics. This also shows that 12.5% students' were interested in the crime section. It is hence seen that the students mostly read the education section.

Reason behind news reading

Why do you read newspaper ?

88 responses

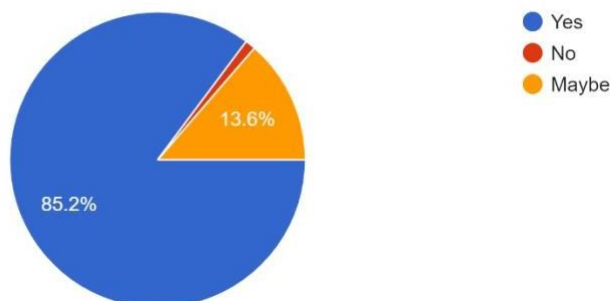


In Figure 1.4 above, we find that 11.4% students preferred to read the entertainment section, and 1.8% learners read newspapers for no particular reason. Also, 1.1% of students read newspapers to improve their reading and writing skills on vocal's. The figure above shows that 77% of students read newspapers for educational purposes. This shows that newspapers have made a significant contribution to education and have been chosen by students as a tool for acquiring knowledge.

Relation between news reading and academic performance

Do you think news reading helped you in your studies ?

88 responses

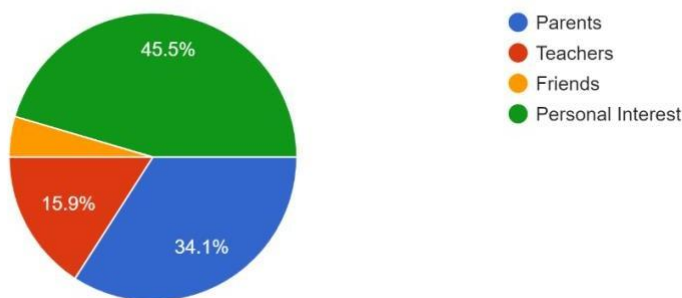


In the above charts fig 1.6 I found out that 85.2% of the students agreed that news reading helps in their studies, The charts also shows that 1% students answered that they do not think that newspapers help in education and 13.6% of the students are uncertain. This research showed that a high percentage of students think that newspaper reading help in theie study.

Support and motivation in news reading

Who encouraged you to read newspaper ?

88 responses

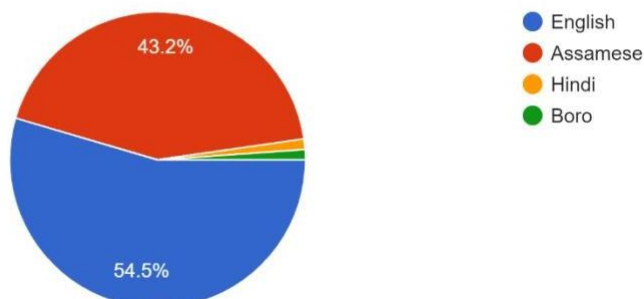


According to the above data, 1.7 When ask about who encourages them to read or follow the newspaper, it was found that 45.5% of students read newspapers for personal interest, 34.1% from the encouragement by their parents and 15.9% of students read newspapers with the encouragement from teachers. While 45.5% of students read newspapers from the encouragement of friends.

Medium preferences

Which medium of newspaper is your favourite ?

88 responses

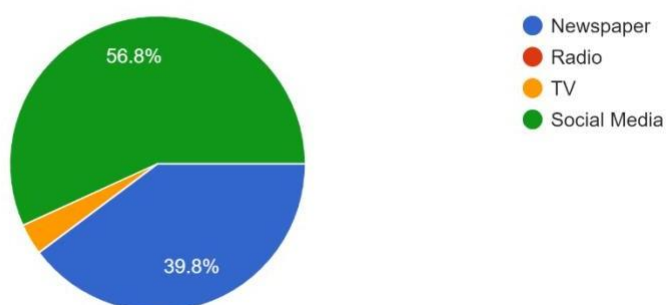


The above data shows that 43.2% of the students read the Assamese medium newspapers, as a large number of students in Assam study in Assamese medium schools moreover, Assamese is also the mother tongue of Assam. Around, 1.1% of students enjoy read newspapers in Hindi medium, while 1.1% of students enjoy studying boro language newspapers, as boro language is a dialect of Assam and therefore bodo students like to read news in Boro language. According to the above data, 54.5% of the highest students like to read newspapers in English language, and the Assam Tribune a well-known newspaper in Assam which is an English newspaper. provides many useful information related to education so the students prefers the English medium.

Favorite platform to access news

What is your favourite platform of accessing news ?

88 responses



As mentioned in the above data, 56.4% of the students have chosen social media as their favorite platform to get news. as we get the news in a very short time and quickly, moreover 39.8% of the students have chosen newspapers as their favorite platform as the

news are true or accurate in newspapers. Also based on the data, very few 3.4% of students have chosen television as their favorite platform. We can watch or read news on social media or newspapers whenever we want, but it is difficult to gather news on television. Therefore, fewer students have chosen television as their favorite platform.

Conclusion

The above survey has thrown some light to the emerging trends of media consumption by university students. In many cases it is evident that students' preference to print media has lessened as the younger ones opted for more interactive social media platforms. It is also notable that majority of the students have access to newspapers at home. The fact that their parents encourage them to read newspapers to get them updated reminds the role of parents in inculcating the habit of reading.

Above all, one of the most promising outcomes was the increasing reliance on newspapers to get them updated and informed of what has happened around the globe. By being adequately informed, students will be empowered to make decision and act on what is morally and legally right. This will in fact make them a better citizen of the country.

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