



NEWSPAPER READING PREFERENCES OF UNDER GRADUATE AND POST GRADUATE STUDENTS OF SALEM SOWDESWARI COLLEGE: A STUDY

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Abstract

The print newspaper, once a major source of news across the globe has been going through turbulence due to the challenges thrown by competition from varied sources such as Television, Internet etc. This challenging trend in certain parts of the world has apparently resulted after the emergence of new technology in news and information intake. This trend is more pertinent in western countries, whereas in Asian countries, the newspaper industry still continuing to grow in terms of number of copies and revenue. Having witnessed these contrasting trends necessitates newspapers to have a closer look at the markets, its readers' choices and preferences etc. This study opines that newspapers must undertake studies to understand the reader preferences and their response vis-à-vis with other sources of news. Regular indulgence in such studies not only results in providing relevant content to the reader but also to have a closer watch on the impact of other media.

Key Words: Newspaper, Students, News And Media.

Introduction

This study is intended at learning about the newspaper reading preferences of Under Graduate (UG) and Post Graduate (PG) students of Salem Sowdeswari College, Salem. And also to study the impact of place of schooling, education and language newspaper on the students' newspaper reading. The primary data required for this study was collected through questionnaire from Under Graduate and Post Graduate students of Salem Sowdeswari College in Salem.

Mainstream of the students prefer reading vernacular newspapers and the newspaper reading happens at home. While newspapers' coverage on education / career is considered good, their coverage on political news / entertainment news is considered not up to the mark. Television, is popular news medium than other media referred in the study in connection with news related activities. It is preferred mainly for entertainment, sports, and political news, and it is also considered as easy to access and cost effective. According to the students, the main drawback for the television is that its coverage on 'education and career' and also news presented in television is less reliable than that of a newspaper. Internet as another source of news also been evaluated and found that the main purpose with which students access internet is to check for e-mails and for social networking. Internet as a source of news is not so popular among students. According to them career and education articles are covered best on internet, with speedy news updates.

Given this backdrop, the future of newspapers does not seem as alarming as it is in the western parts of the globe. While this study has made a beginning in understanding the innate needs and motives of news consumption of students, the fast changing socioeconomic and technological environment necessitates that many such studies in more geographical areas at regular intervals, for the larger benefits of the Indian newspaper industry.

Newspaper

Over the years, the world has seen umpteen newspapers and periodicals in various languages. However, the genesis and growth of newspaper will be discussed in the later pages of this chapter. The developments and innovations in the printing and communication technology have widened the scope for the newspapers. The newspapers went on becoming the major source of news and information in many parts of the world.

Newspapers have had the advantage of the most ancient and widely read means of news. The recent advancements in the communication technologies have posed a serious threat to the existence of newspapers. With the changing lifestyles and coping with the demands of a fast paced life, the present day readers are flooded with news and information from multiple sources, which have a distinct advantage of being extremely faster in reach and widely available.

Given this scenario, the major challenge for newspaper organizations is to keep the product up-to-date with the requirements of the readers and compete with other electronic and digital media. Many newspaper organizations are finding various means of engaging with the readers and make newspapers more relevant to them by adding value to their products and services, to make them more relevant for their readers. This study is aimed at studying various underlying news and information needs of the students in order to revitalize the newspapers.



History of print Newspaper

In ancient times, the rulers used to disseminate important information to the people as proclamations, inscribed in metal or stone. These can be considered as the foundation for today's form of newspapers. For centuries, civilisations have used print media to spread news and information to the masses. The Roman Acta Diurna, which appeared around 59 B.C, is the earliest recorded "newspaper"⁵. Julius Caesar, wanting to inform the public about important social and political news, ordered forthcoming events to be sent to major cities. Huge boards of white in colour were displayed with news written on them, at popular places, the Acta kept citizens informed about government outrages, army campaigns, hearings and executions. In China during 8th century, the first newspapers appeared which was hand-written sheets of paper and distributed in Beijing.

The printing press was invented by Johann Gutenberg in the year 1447. Gutenberg's machine enabled the free exchange of ideas and the spread of knowledge. During this era, newsletters were supplied to a growing merchant class with news relevant to trade and commerce. Manuscript newsheets used to be circulated in German during the late 15th century.

In Renaissance Europe, handwritten newsletters⁶ circulated privately among the business community which used to contain information ranging from social issues to economy to wars. The first printed newspapers dates back to 14th century when the news got printed in the form of pamphlets. Around the same period, the corantos⁷, small news pamphlets were printed as means to inform a noteworthy happening. While the first successively published title got printed during 1622, the year 1966 had witnessed the first major newspaper in English, the London Gazette.

In the first half of the Seventeenth century, newspapers were released more regularly. The first-generation of modern newspapers were from western European countries like Germany (Relation, 1605), France (Gazette, 1631), Belgium (Nieuwe Tijdingen, 1616) and England (London Gazette, 1665).

These periodicals used to consist mainly the news from Europe, and intermittently incorporated information from America or Asia. They rarely covered domestic issues.

Newspaper content began to shift towards 'local issues' in the latter half of the 17th century. The invention of the telegraph in 1844 transformed print media, ease in transferring information facilitated prompt and relevant reporting. In the year 1870, Japan had its first daily newspaper Yokohama Mainichi Shimbun. By the middle of the 19th century, newspapers have become the primary source of news and information. The period 1890-1920 is known as the "golden age" of print media, as William Randolph Hearst, Joseph Pulitzer, and Lord Northcliffe built huge publishing empires. Newspapers have also played a role of propagating revolutionary information, Iskra (The Spark), published by Lenin in 1900, is one notable example for this.

Review of Literature

The report on Youth Media DNA (2008) finds that majority among those who stopped reading newspapers said that they have stopped at the age of 18-19 years. Hence young adult segment is crucial and hence newspapers need to find ways to engage young readers. According to this study, Television and Internet are the most frequently used media of young people. Even in the total media time spent, Television has a 37percent share of young people's media time, against 10percent for newspapers.

The study of Dr. Shaukat Ali (2011) felt that newspapers must add value, attract and leave a feeling of "worth-reading" in readers. This study had concluded that "there is increase in the readership of newspaper due to various subscription schemes by both English, vernacular newspapers and also due to improved literacy rate. Developing customer loyalty and retaining readership is a huge challenge for publishing business due to the increased number of news sources.

"News Plurality in a Digital World" (2012) a study by Robin Foster, found that television continues to be the main source of news in United Kingdom (UK) even while the penetration of internet is at 80 percent level. According to Newman, Reuters Institute Digital News Report, 2012 around 75 percent of the people access news through Television, 74 percent access web content and 43 percent access print media.

Angela M. Lee (2013) study suggested that different people have different kinds of news motivations. Age is the most important predictor of all the age groups. Older adults read news for the purpose of information needs, whereas younger adults follow for entertainment and social needs. Highly educated people and women will consume news for information and opinion. This study has explained in detail about the 'why' factor of preferred news medium for news consumption. It is also observed that 60 percent of the respondents are not willing to pay for the online content and only 6percent are prepared to pay for it.



Objectives of the Study

1. To study the newspaper reading preferences of UG and PG students of Salem Sowdeswari College, Salem.
2. To understand other media consumption patterns of UG and PG students of Salem Sowdeswari College, Salem.
3. To know whether there is a relation between the students' newspaper reading and other aspects such as place of schooling, education, language newspaper.

Limitations of the study

1. Due to economic and time constraints of the researcher the number of respondents are limited to 60 students.
2. The study is confined to Salem Sowdeswari College, Salem only. Hence the finding cannot be generalized to other.

Area of the study

1. This study covers Newspaper reading preferences of Under Graduate (UG) and Post Graduate (PG) students studying at Salem Sowdeswari College, Salem.

Period of the study

1. The period of the study covers one month during 1st October to 31th October 2017.

Data collection

Primary Data: Through a well designed questionnaire was prepared to collect the primary data.

Secondary Data: Secondary data were also employed in the study. It was obtained from website, reports, journals and books.

Sample size: 60 Samples have selected for the study.

Tools used for analysis

For the analysis of data and its interpretation various tools are employed. Without which the analysis and interpretation of the data will be difficult to identify the problems and also suffer from many errors. This may be solving through the analysis and give suitable results. Major tools used to the purpose are,

1. Simple Percentage Analysis
2. Ranking Procedure As Per Likert Scale

1. Simple Percentage Analysis

In this study of the percentage analysis is used.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{No. of Percentage}}{\text{Total No. of Respondent}} \times 100$$

2. Ranking Procedure As Per Likert Scale

To measure the scale of various responses by the respondents against the statements, the Likert's scale was adopted. After measuring the individual statements in each dimension the total score was calculated with the help of statistical tool viz.

Ranking procedure as per Likert Scale:

Response	Very Frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Weightage points	5	4	3	2	1

For the above distribution, the scores were calculated as detailed below:

$$\text{Score} = (\text{No of responses} \times \text{Weightage points}) \div \text{Total respondents}$$

Table.1: Distribution of Sample Respondents

Education	Under Graduation		Post Graduation		Students
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Arts	19(63%)	11(61%)	04(57%)	02(40%)	36(60%)
Science	11(37%)	07(39%)	03(43%)	03(60%)	24(40%)
Total	30(100%)	18(100%)	07(100%)	05(100%)	60(100%)

Source: Primary Data

Inference

The total sample of 60 has been distributed among various categories such as Gender, PG/UG, Arts/Science. The sample was collected from respondents by following equal sampling method, to ensure equal distribution of sample among all categories mentioned above. Equal numbers of respondents were chosen from Salem Sowdeswari College, Salem-6.i.e, 60 respondents.

Table 2: Age Wise Distribution Of Sample Respondents

Age	Students		Total
	Under Graduation	Post Graduation	
<20 years	44(92%)	02(17%)	46(77%)
20 to 25years	04(08%)	08(66%)	12(20%)
>25years	-	02(17%)	02(03%)
Total	48(100%)	12(100%)	60(100%)

Source: Primary Data

Inference

The above table shows that majority 92% of the respondents fall under the age group of <20 years age group,8% of the respondents fall under the age group of 20 to 25 years age group. Out of 60 respondents in UG category. Majority 66% of the respondents are in the age group of 20 to 25 years where as in PG category,17% of the respondents are in the age group of <20 years,17% of the respondents are in the age group of >25 years age group.

Chart: 1: Age-Wise Distribution Of Sample Respondents

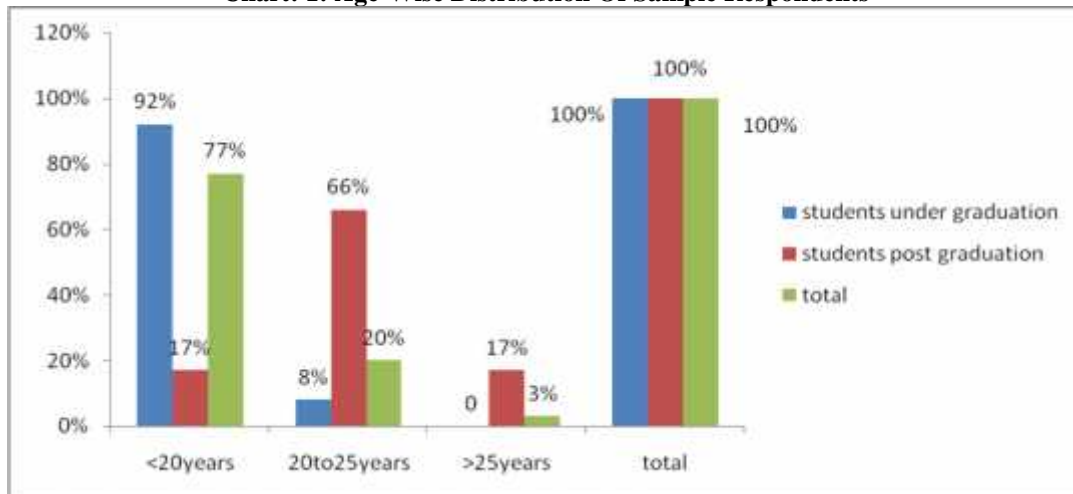


Table 3: Distribution Of Sample Respondents By The Place Of Their School Education

School education	Students		Total
	Under graduation	Post graduation	
City	15(31%)	04(33%)	19(32%)
Town	12(25%)	03(25%)	15(25%)
Village	21(44%)	05(42%)	26(43%)
Total	48(100%)	12(100%)	60(100%)

Source: Primary data

Inference

The above table shows that under graduation of 44% of the respondents had their schooling in village,31% of the respondents had schooling in city,25% of the respondents had schooling in town.post graduation of 42% of the respondents had schooling in village,33% of the respondents had schooling in city,25% of the respondents had schooling in town.

Chart 2: Distribution Of Sample Respondents By The Place Of Their School Education

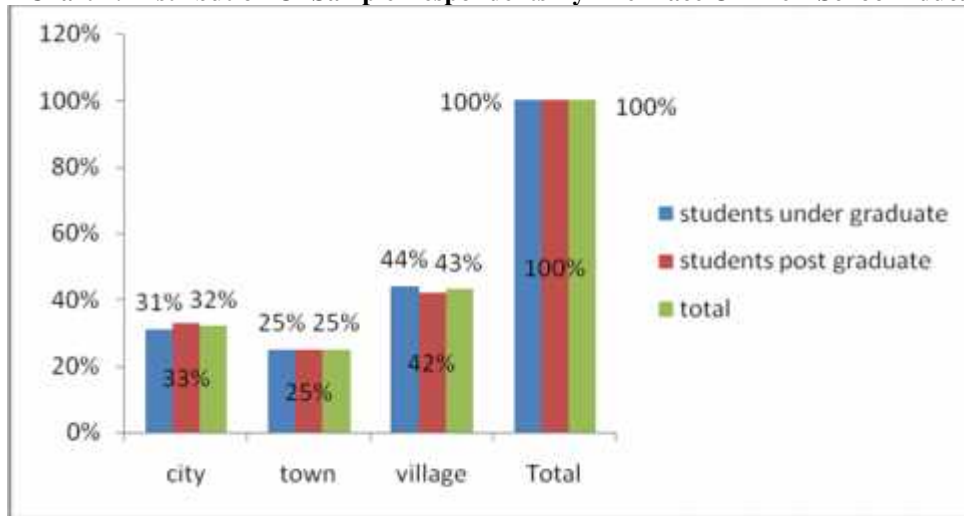


Table 4: Keep up-to date with the information

Keep up-to date	Students		Total
	UG	PG	
Browse Internet	05(10%)	05(42%)	11(48%)
Read Newspaper	24(50%)	04(33%)	28(47%)
Watch TV	12(25%)	02(17%)	14(23%)
Social Media	07(15%)	01(08%)	07(12%)
Total	48(100%)	12(100%)	60(100%)

Source: primary data

Inference

The above table shows that Under Graduation of 50% of the respondents are Read Newspaper, 25% of the respondents are watch tv, 15% of the respondents depend on Social Media, 10% of the respondents are get updates Browse Internet. Among PG students 42% get updates from Browse Internet and 33% of the respondents get updates from Read Newspaper, 17% of the respondents generally Watch TV, 08% of the respondents are updates from Social Media. The above table indicates the most of the respondents generally Read Newspaper to keep up-to date with information.

Chart3:Keep up-to date with the information

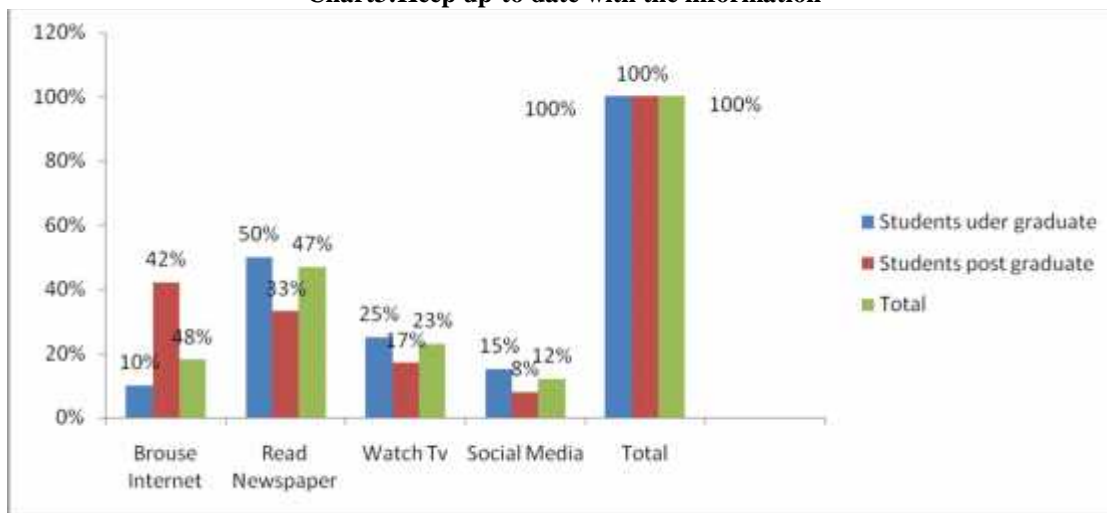


Table 5: Preference in Reading Language Newspaper

Language	Students		Total
	Under Graduation	Post-Graduation	
Tamil	38(79%)	9(75%)	47(78%)
English	10(21%)	3(25%)	13(22%)
Others (Specify)	-	-	-
Total	48(100%)	12(100%)	60(100%)

Source: primary data

Inference

The above table shows that 79% of the UG respondents prefer Tamil newspapers, 21% prefer English newspapers, where as in PG category of respondents, nearly 75% of the respondents prefer Tamil Newspapers, 25% of the respondents prefer English Newspapers. Therefore the above table infers that most of the students prefer Tamil Newspaper.

Chart 4: Preference In Reading Language Newspaper

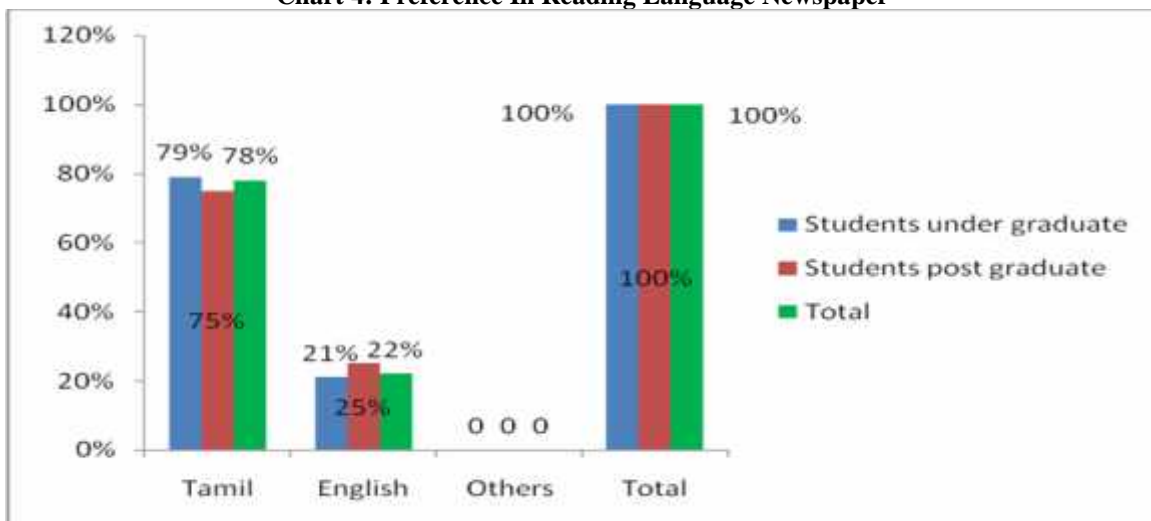


Table 6: Source /Pattern Of News Consumption

Sources of News Consumption	Very Frequently Weightage 5	Frequently Weightage 4	Sometimes Weightage 3	Rarely Weightage 2	Never Weightage 1	Weighted Score	Rank
Reading Newspaper At College Library	19	05	20	11	05	3.365	1
Reading Newspaper At Friends Place	06	19	14	11	10	2.9986	2
Reading Newspaper While Travelling	10	09	21	06	14	2.9163	4

Reading News On Websites (Through Mobile Phone)	10	11	18	10	11	2.982	3
Reading News On Websites (Through PC)	08	05	15	08	24	2.415	5

Source: primary data

Inference

The above table shows that Majority of the respondents (Weighted average of 3.365) Reading Newspapers at College Library, 2.9986 points of the respondents Reading Newspaper at Friends place, Reading News on Websites through Mobile Phone stands at 2.982 points and Reading Newspapers While travelling 2.9163 Points and Reading News on Websites through PC 2.415 points, respectively with an average rating of 2,3 and 4 respectively.

Table 7: The Purpose and Frequency in Access to Internet by UG and PG Students

Purpose Of Internet Usage	Very Frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Weighted Score	Rank
	Weightage 5	Weightage 4	Weightage 3	Weightage 2	Weightage 1		
Access Internet For Social Networking	27	06	18	06	03	3.8	1
Access Internet For Applying Job	11	16	12	06	15	3.034	5
Access Internet For Reading Newspaper	11	17	13	09	10	3.1666	2
Access Internet For Reading Academic Books	08	13	23	08	08	3.0837	4
Access Internet For Playing Games	15	10	15	08	12	3.1337	3
Access Internet To Send & Check E-Mails	07	14	17	13	09	2.949	6
Access Internet For Online Shopping	09	10	15	10	16	2.7667	7

Source: Primary Data

Inference

The table indicates that Majority of the respondents use Access internet for Social Networking. Next popular activity among the respondents on the Access Internet for Reading Newspaper, followed by Playing Games, Academic Books, Applying for jobs, Send & Check E-Mails, Online Shopping, for analyzing this table, the calculations were made by giving weightage to 5 different frequency levels in the Likert scale questions. Weighted averages were taken for arriving at ranking for each activity.

Table 8: Ranking Of Newspaper Coverage of Various Features of News

Newspaper	Extremely important	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Unimportant	Weighted score	Rank
	Weightage 5	Weightage 4	Weightage 3	Weightage 2	Weightage 1		
Front page news	24	16	13	04	03	3.8997	3
General news	15	20	20	05	-	3.7497	9
Direct news	13	14	24	07	02	3.482	10
Political news	10	15	14	12	09	3.083	13
Foreign news	10	10	19	13	08	3.0163	14
Employment news	21	19	13	06	01	3.8837	4
Technology news	17	22	11	09	01	3.7501	7
advertisement	09	10	18	12	11	2.9	17
Weather news	14	09	26	07	04	3.3667	12
Spiritual news	08	12	17	14	09	2.9334	16
Small stories	09	14	17	09	11	3.016	15
Education news	28	17	12	02	01	4.1497	1
Cinema news	13	09	10	15	13	2.9	17
Business news	17	22	12	07	02	3.75	8
Sports news	21	18	12	06	03	3.8	5
Agriculture news	20	16	18	04	02	3.7997	6
Daily news	24	21	12	02	01	3.0834	2
Crime news	15	19	09	11	06	3.4334	11

Source: primary data

Inference

The table describes various characteristics of news and their coverage in 'newspapers' has been mapped on the likert scale. Weighted average has been calculated to ascertain the most liked aspect which is covered best in a newspaper. According to the respondents, Education news which is best covered in newspapers, followed by other bests such as Daily news, Front page news, Employment news, Sports news and Agricultural news. While analyzing this table, the calculations were made by giving weightage to 5 different frequency levels in the Likert's scale questions. Weighted averages were taken for arriving at ranking for each activity.

Findings

1. Most of the respondents are of Male.
2. The majority of the respondents are coming under the age group of less than 20 years.
3. 43 percent of the respondents have completed their schoolings at 'Village'.



4. 47 percent of the UG and PG students generally indulge in Read Newspaper in order to keep themselves up-to-date.
5. 78 percent of the respondents prefer reading Tamil language newspaper.
6. Majority of the respondents reading Newspapers at college library.
7. Majority of the respondents are accessing internet for social networking.
8. Newspaper scored maximum for parameters such as Education news, Daily news, and Front page news.
9. It was found that the students prefer to read newspaper in the morning and they believe that news consumption is beneficial for them and they aspire to be aware of the happenings around the world.
10. According to this study, it has been found that, newspapers have an edge over other media in aspects such as – coverage of local and regional news, sports news and analyses, reliable news content and in some cases easily accessible, when compared with other media. Students prefer content related to personality development / career guidance, they are least interested in topics such as movie news, celebrity gossip and religious information.

Suggestions

1. Awareness of daily newspaper is at satisfactory level and they are willing to recommend others, hence it is suggested that the awareness strategy has to be maintained.
2. Since the readers opined the price of daily newspaper is attractive highly to motivate for their buying, it has to be maintained.
3. Concentrate on coverage of news which may uniformly attracted by all categories of readers. Hence the same strategy to be continued.
4. Provide informative advertisement that will increase the circulation level. The same tempo may be maintained.
5. Give some modification in the distribution that will increase the satisfactory level of reader in getting their news paper.
6. The Newspaper may avoid some unnecessary advertisements and may provide more information for UG & PG students.

Conclusion

News Paper is very much useful to know about the day to day politics, economic activities, world news, sports, news etc. They also give information about Job Opportunities; current issued etc, so people can update their general knowledge. Now a day's newspaper provides opportunities for the public to give opinion about any issues. So people can avail such opportunities to give their views. Newspaper is one of the best media which has direct communication with people. Newspapers not only provide current news, they also contain thought-provoking and informative article, features, editorial and sub-editorials, analyses and observations. In today's highly competitive world, newspapers could equip students with necessary information, knowledge and insights which will give them the much needed edge for being successful not only competitive examinations or job interviews, but also in their professional and social life. Newspaper reading also improves the communication skills and creative faculties and help the readers achieve an unbiased and informative worldview.

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