



Scrolling for Truth: Digital Transformation and the Credibility Crisis of Hindi News Channels

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Abstract

The evolution of digital technology has profoundly reshaped the news ecosystem, altering how information is produced, distributed, and consumed. This study examines the impact of digital transformation on the credibility of news channels, with a specific focus on leading Hindi television news outlets. While 24-hour TV channels once defined the gold standard of timely journalism, younger audiences now increasingly turn to digital platforms and social media for news. Using quantitative content analysis and survey data, this research investigates how major global and Indian news channels engage audiences on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Findings reveal that television news organizations often replicate traditional formats online without adopting platform-specific strategies, leading to credibility concerns. While YouTube mirrors TV content, Facebook mainly drives website traffic, and Instagram is used more for branding than news delivery. Survey results suggest that although TV channels still retain some trust, audiences increasingly verify information digitally and perceive fake news to be more prevalent on online platforms. This study highlights the urgent need for TV news organizations to adapt strategically to digital ecosystems while upholding journalistic ethics. The research contributes to understanding how credibility is shaped in India's dynamic media landscape and offers insights into sustaining audience trust in the digital age.

Keywords:

Digital news channels, Hindi TV news, news credibility, fake news, fact-checking, viral content, digital transformation

Introduction

Over the last few decades, digital technology has transformed journalism in unprecedented ways. Once dominated by traditional 24-hour television news channels, the media industry has now entered an era of democratized news distribution, where social media platforms and digital outlets are powerful gatekeepers of information. This democratization has widened audience access but also posed critical challenges—particularly in the area of credibility.

Where television channels were once regarded as authoritative and professional, their credibility is increasingly questioned amidst the rapid rise of digital content and user-generated news. The instantaneous nature of digital news, coupled with viral misinformation, has complicated audience trust in legacy media institutions.

This research explores how digital transformation affects the credibility of Hindi TV news channels. It focuses on the interplay between digital platforms, social media, and public trust, while also considering how fake news and shifting news consumption habits shape audience perceptions. Given the dominance of platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram in India, this study highlights the ways in which television channels are adapting—or failing to adapt—to new digital dynamics.

Literature Review

Scholars have extensively studied how digital technology disrupts journalism and redefines credibility. Smith et al. (2018) highlight the impact of digital platforms on audience trust, while Jones and Wang (2019) emphasize the role of social media in shaping perceptions of credibility. Chen and Lee (2020) focus on user-generated content and its influence on trust, and Johnson et al. (2017) stress strategies to combat misinformation. Similarly, Smith & Brown (2021) argue that media literacy initiatives are critical for strengthening credibility.

Other studies address broader structural shifts: Nechushtai (2017) warns of corporate influence from platforms like Google and Facebook; Kumar et al. (2018) examine the role of sentiment in news engagement; Shchepilova & Kruglova (2018) show how Russian broadcasters fail to adapt interactively on social networks; and Swart et al. (2017) demonstrate how social media reshapes everyday news use in Denmark.

Despite global insights, there remains a gap in research on the credibility of Hindi TV news channels in India—a market where digital transformation and mass television viewership intersect uniquely. This study aims to fill that gap.

Research Objectives & Questions

The study focuses on the credibility of the top Hindi TV news channels—Aaj Tak, ABP News, India TV, Zee News, and News18 India. The research questions guiding this work are:

Does channel activity on digital platforms strengthen credibility?

Do channels compromise journalistic ethics in pursuit of digital engagement?

Is there effective regulation or censorship of digital news content?

What proportion of digital output qualifies as genuine news content?

Methodology

A structured survey was conducted among news consumers to examine preferences, habits, and credibility perceptions. The survey included questions on frequency of consumption, preferred platforms, credibility assessments, fake news perceptions, and verification practices. This empirical approach provides a data-driven perspective on the shifting dynamics of trust in Hindi news channels.

Survey Results & Analysis

➡ Primary News Source:

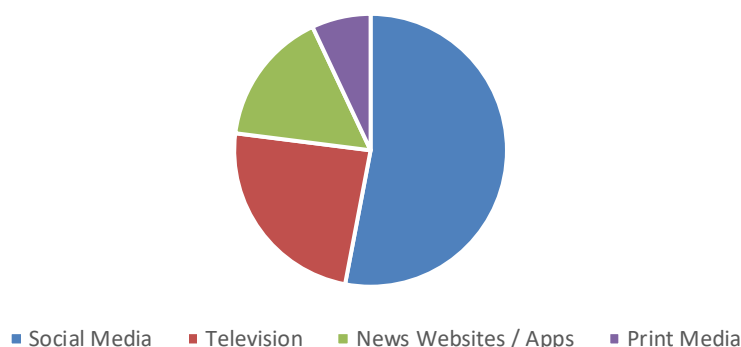
Social Media: 53%

Television: 24%

News Websites/Apps: 16%

Print Media: 7%

Primary News Source



➡ Social media dominates as the main news source.

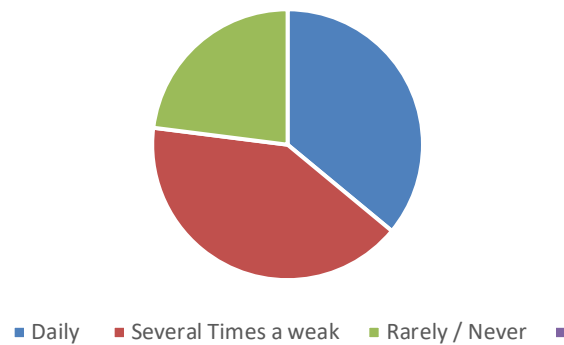
Frequency of TV News Consumption:

Daily: 36%

Several times a week: 41%

Rarely/Never: 23%

Frequency of TV News Consumption



TV still has a strong but declining audience base.

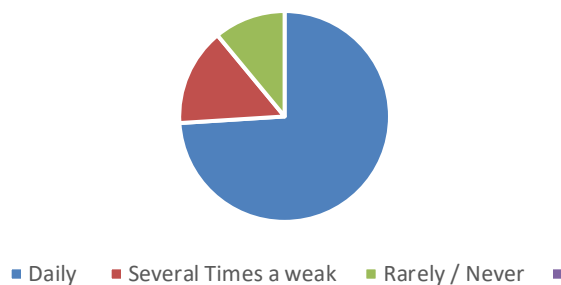
Frequency of digital news consumption:

Daily: 74%

Several times a week: 15%

Rarely: 6%

Frequency of Digital News Consumption

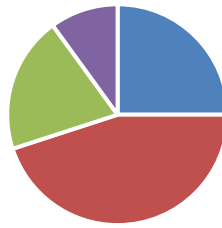


Analysis: Social media dominates as the primary source for news, reflecting the **shift toward digital platforms**, especially among younger audiences. TV remains significant, but its influence is declining relative to online news sources.

Credibility of TV news channels:

- Very credible: 25%
- Somewhat credible: 45%
- Not very credible: 20%
- Not credible at all: 10%

Credibility of TV news channels

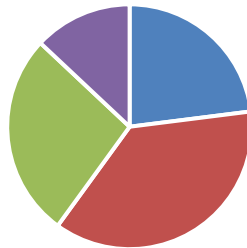


■ Very Credible ■ Somewhat Credible ■ Not Very Credible ■ Not at all credible

Credibility of digital news platforms:

- Very credible: 23%
- Somewhat credible: 37%
- Not very credible: 27%
- Not credible at all: 13%

Credibility of digital news platforms



■ Very Credible ■ Somewhat Credible ■ Not Very Credible ■ Not at all credible

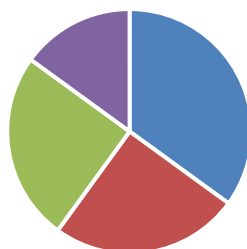
Analysis: While TV channels retain higher trust (70% find them very or somewhat credible), **digital platforms show mixed credibility**, with 40% expressing doubt.

Platform Accuracy & Video Quality

Most accurate news platform:

- Television: 35%
- YouTube: 25%
- Facebook: 25%
- Instagram: 15%

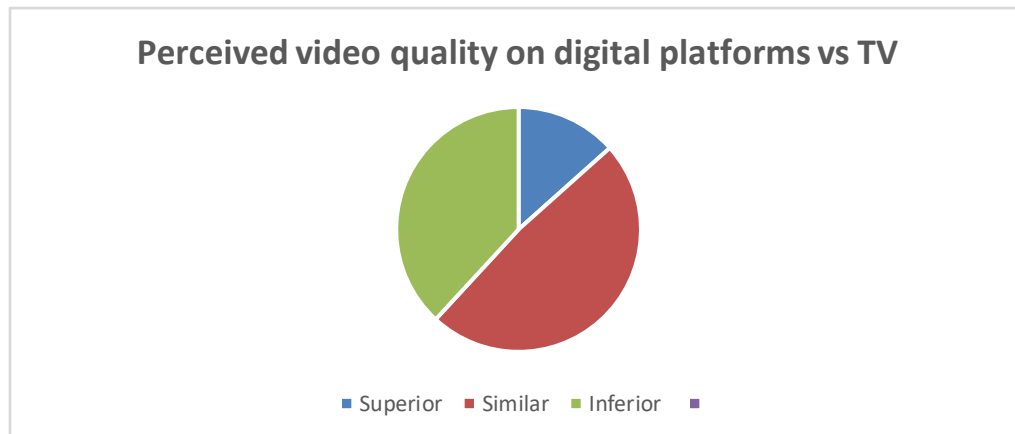
Most accurate news platform



■ Television ■ Youtube ■ facebook ■ instagram

Perceived video quality on digital platforms vs TV:

- Superior: 13%
- Similar: 47%
- Inferior: 37%



Analysis: TV is still seen as the most reliable news source, but digital platforms are rapidly gaining credibility. Quality of digital news videos often **fails to match TV standards**, affecting trust.

Verification and Fake News

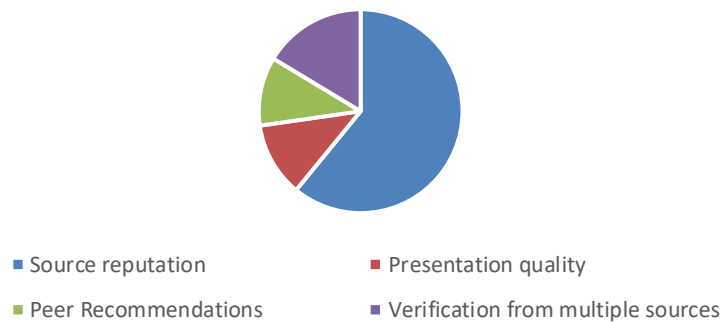
- Likely to verify TV news digitally: 70% (very or somewhat likely)
- Fake news prevalence: Digital platforms 76%, TV 14%
- Most effective platform to combat fake news: TV 45%, YouTube 25%, Facebook 18%, Instagram 12%

Analysis: Audiences actively **verify news** using digital tools. Digital platforms are perceived as **hotspots for misinformation**, highlighting the need for robust fact-checking and ethical practices.

Trust Determinants

- Source reputation: 67%
- Presentation quality: 13%
- Peer recommendations: 12%
- Verification from multiple sources: 8%

Trust Determinants



Analysis: Reputation remains the **most influential factor** for credibility, reinforcing the importance of ethical journalism and consistent reporting standards.

Findings

TV news channels still retain audience engagement but are losing exclusivity as digital sources dominate.

Credibility is increasingly linked to professional standards, source reputation, and verification.

Fake news is perceived as a digital-first problem, but it indirectly erodes trust in TV channels as well.

Social media and digital platforms are not fully trusted, yet they remain the preferred daily source of news.

Conclusion

This study underscores the shifting credibility dynamics in India's news ecosystem. While 24-hour Hindi TV channels remain relevant, their authority has been weakened by digital competition. Social media platforms dominate daily consumption, but they also fuel credibility concerns due to fake news and inconsistent production standards.

For Hindi TV news channels to sustain trust, they must:

Adapt digital strategies tailored to each platform.

Uphold journalistic integrity despite the lure of sensationalism.

Strengthen fact-checking and verification practices.

Leverage professional production quality as a marker of reliability.

Ultimately, credibility remains the lifeline of journalism. As digital transformation accelerates, Hindi news channels must reinvent themselves to remain trustworthy sources in a fragmented and fast-evolving media landscape.

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Indian Hindi Tv News channels social presence:

Aaj Tak

Website: aajtak.intoday.in

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aajtak/>

Twitter: <https://x.com/ajtak?mx=2>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ajtaktv>

ABP News

Website: abplive.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/abpnews/>

Twitter: <https://x.com/abpnews>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/abpnewstv>

India TV

Website: indiatvnews.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaTV/>

Twitter: <https://x.com/indiatvnews>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/IndiaTV>

Zee News

Website: zeenews.india.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ZeeNews/>

Twitter: https://x.com/ZeeNews?ref_src

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIvaYmXn910QMdemBG3v1pQ>

News18 India

Website: hindi.news18.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/News18India/>

Twitter: <https://x.com/news18india?lang=en>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPP3etACgdUWvizcES1dJ8Q>

