



Generative AI and the Transformation of Journalism in India

Adoption, Professional Autonomy and Ethical Challenges

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Abstract : Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is transforming journalism by reshaping news production, information verification, content distribution and newsroom workflows. While these technologies offer opportunities to improve efficiency, multilingual communication and data-driven reporting, they also raise concerns regarding professional autonomy, editorial independence, accuracy, transparency and ethical accountability. These challenges are particularly significant in India's diverse media ecosystem, characterised by multilingual audiences, regional news organisations and varying levels of technological readiness. This article aims to critically examine the literature on generative AI adoption in journalism, its implications for journalists' professional autonomy, and the ethical challenges associated with its integration into newsroom practices. Adopting a systematic literature review approach, the study proposes to synthesise relevant scholarly research on AI adoption, editorial decision-making, professional identity and ethical governance. The review further seeks to identify contextual and theoretical gaps in existing literature, particularly concerning Indian and regional-language journalism. Based on the synthesis, the article aims to develop an integrated conceptual framework linking organisational and technological determinants of AI adoption with professional autonomy and ethical accountability. The study is expected to contribute to academic understanding of responsible AI integration and inform newsroom policies, journalist training and governance practices. It emphasises the importance of balancing technological innovation with human judgement, editorial independence and the fundamental principles of responsible journalism.

Index Terms - Generative Artificial Intelligence; Journalism; Indian Media; Professional Autonomy; Editorial Independence; Media Ethics; AI Governance; Newsroom Transformation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is transforming journalism through automated writing, summarisation, translation and data analysis. While these applications improve newsroom efficiency, they raise concerns about accuracy, misinformation, editorial accountability and the changing role of journalists.

GenAI can support journalists by reducing repetitive tasks and facilitating investigative reporting. However, excessive dependence on automated systems may undermine professional autonomy, editorial independence and human judgement. Ethical challenges, including algorithmic bias, copyright disputes, privacy violations and inadequate disclosure, further emphasise the need for human oversight and responsible AI governance.

In India, linguistic diversity, varying newsroom resources and differences in technological infrastructure make AI adoption particularly complex. Regional-language journalism faces additional challenges relating to translation accuracy and cultural representation, highlighting the need to examine AI adoption within the Indian media context.

This article employs a systematic literature review to examine the adoption of GenAI in journalism, its implications for professional autonomy, and the ethical challenges and governance mechanisms shaping its use in India. It addresses four research questions concerning AI adoption, editorial decision-making, ethical accountability, and the organisational and contextual factors influencing their interrelationships. The study aims to develop an integrated conceptual framework that supports responsible AI adoption while preserving journalistic integrity, editorial independence and public trust.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to critically synthesise the literature on generative AI adoption in Indian journalism and examine its implications for professional autonomy, journalistic ethics and newsroom governance.

Objectives:

1. To identify the principal applications, drivers and barriers associated with generative AI adoption in journalism, with particular reference to India.
2. To critically examine the implications of generative AI for journalists' professional autonomy, editorial decision-making and professional identity.

3. To synthesise the ethical challenges and governance mechanisms discussed in the literature and develop an integrated conceptual framework for future research.

III. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

3.1 Generative AI in Journalism

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) refers to systems capable of producing text, images, audio and other content based on learned data patterns. In journalism, it supports research, transcription, translation, summarisation, headline generation, data analysis and content drafting. Its applications range from assisting routine tasks to collaborating with journalists and automating content production.

Despite its potential to improve efficiency and multilingual communication, GenAI may generate inaccurate information, reproduce biases and misrepresent context. Its integration therefore requires human verification, editorial oversight and ethical governance. GenAI should be understood not merely as a technological tool but as a development influencing journalistic practices and the production of public knowledge.

3.2 Professional Autonomy in Journalism

Professional autonomy refers to journalists' ability to exercise independent judgement in selecting stories, verifying information, evaluating sources and making editorial decisions. GenAI may strengthen autonomy by reducing repetitive work and supporting investigative reporting. However, excessive dependence on automated systems, managerial pressure and algorithmic recommendations may restrict editorial discretion and professional identity.

This study examines autonomy through four dimensions: editorial discretion, operational control, independent verification and professional identity. These dimensions help assess whether GenAI complements journalists' judgement or constrains their decision-making authority.

3.3 Ethical Journalism and AI Governance

Ethical journalism is founded on accuracy, fairness, transparency, accountability and independence. GenAI introduces challenges involving fabricated information, algorithmic bias, inadequate disclosure, privacy, copyright and responsibility for errors. Addressing these concerns requires human verification, clear AI-use policies, staff training, data protection and effective correction mechanisms. Ethical governance is essential to maintaining journalistic integrity and public trust.

3.4 Theoretical Foundations

This study draws on three complementary perspectives to examine GenAI adoption, newsroom transformation and professional autonomy.

3.4.1 Technology–Organisation–Environment (TOE) Framework

The TOE framework developed by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990) explains technological adoption through technological, organisational and environmental factors. In journalism, these include AI reliability and compatibility, management support and employee skills, as well as competition, audience expectations and regulatory requirements. The framework helps identify the factors facilitating or constraining GenAI adoption in Indian newsrooms.

3.4.2 Sociotechnical Systems Theory

Sociotechnical Systems Theory emphasises the interaction between technology, people and organisational structures. Accordingly, the impact of GenAI depends not only on its capabilities but also on newsroom culture, editorial routines, professional relationships and management practices. This perspective explains why AI adoption may produce different outcomes across news organisations and highlights the continuing importance of human oversight.

3.4.3 Journalistic Professional Autonomy and Authority

The professional autonomy perspective examines journalists' ability to maintain independent judgement amid technological, organisational and commercial pressures. GenAI may enhance professional capabilities while simultaneously shifting control over content production and editorial decisions. This perspective helps assess its implications for editorial independence, professional authority and accountability.

3.5 Integration of the Theoretical Perspectives

The three perspectives provide an integrated foundation for this study. The TOE framework explains the conditions influencing GenAI adoption, Sociotechnical Systems Theory examines its interaction with newsroom practices, and the professional autonomy perspective evaluates its effects on editorial discretion and authority. Ethical governance cuts across these perspectives through transparency, verification and accountability. Together, they guide the thematic literature review and the development of a conceptual framework linking AI adoption, professional autonomy and ethical accountability in Indian journalism.

IV. THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in journalism focuses on newsroom adoption, professional autonomy, ethical challenges, the Indian media context and responsible AI governance. These themes demonstrate that AI's impact depends on technological capabilities, organisational conditions and professional safeguards.

4.1 Adoption of Generative AI in Newsrooms

GenAI supports journalistic tasks such as research, transcription, translation, summarisation and content creation. News organisations explore these applications to improve efficiency, encourage innovation and strengthen audience engagement (Reuters Institute, 2025). However, adoption depends on technological readiness, management support, staff skills and organisational resources.

Individual experimentation differs from institutional adoption, which requires formal workflows, policies and accountability mechanisms. Although AI may reduce routine workloads, its benefits depend on output reliability and human supervision. Further research should distinguish experimental use from regular adoption and examine smaller and regional newsrooms alongside larger media organisations.

4.2 Professional Autonomy and Editorial Control

Professional autonomy concerns journalists' ability to exercise independent judgement over story selection, verification and editorial decisions. GenAI can strengthen professional capabilities by reducing repetitive work and facilitating information analysis. However, productivity pressures, mandatory automation and dependence on technology platforms may restrict editorial discretion.

Research increasingly views journalism as a sociotechnical system in which technology interacts with professional roles and organisational structures (Barrios-Rubio, 2026). An Indian study involving 18 early-career journalists across 12 English-language newsrooms found varied responses to GenAI, ranging from enthusiasm to aversion. However, further research is required to understand its implications for experienced journalists, regional-language media and smaller news organisations.

4.3 Ethical Challenges of Generative AI

The principal ethical concerns associated with GenAI include misinformation, algorithmic bias, inadequate disclosure, privacy violations, copyright disputes and unclear accountability. Sonni et al. (2024) highlight transparency, data privacy and accountability as important issues in AI-driven newsroom transformation.

AI-generated information may contain factual errors or omit essential context, making independent verification indispensable. News organisations must also establish clear disclosure standards, protect confidential sources, address linguistic and cultural biases, and define responsibility for published content. These safeguards are particularly important in sensitive reporting and multilingual journalism.

4.4 Generative AI and the Indian Media Ecosystem

India's diverse media environment presents distinctive opportunities and challenges for GenAI adoption. National newspapers, regional publications, television networks and digital platforms differ in technological infrastructure, resources and editorial practices. AI-assisted translation and summarisation may expand access to news, but differences in language-model capabilities can affect accuracy and cultural representation.

Kumari, Jha Utpal and Singh (2025) examine AI adoption in Indian and global newsrooms, providing a foundation for understanding these developments. However, further research is needed to examine differences between English-language and regional-language journalism, large and small publishers, and journalists at different career stages. Situmorang (2024) also highlights the importance of greater geographical and cultural diversity in research on AI ethics.

4.5 AI Governance and Responsible Journalism

Responsible AI adoption requires practical governance mechanisms rather than general ethical commitments alone. These include human verification, appropriate disclosure, confidentiality safeguards, staff training and clearly assigned editorial responsibility. Governance should be proportionate to the sensitivity of content and the degree of automation involved.

Formal policies must be supported by effective implementation, adequate resources and regular evaluation. In India, governance arrangements should account for linguistic diversity, organisational capacity and differences in newsroom practices while balancing innovation with editorial independence.

4.6 Research Gaps

The literature indicates that GenAI adoption is shaped by technological capabilities, organisational readiness and professional practices. Its influence on professional autonomy depends on editorial control and human oversight, while ethical implementation requires transparency, verification and accountability.

However, the relationship between AI adoption, professional autonomy and ethical governance remains insufficiently integrated, particularly in India's diverse media environment. Further research should examine regional-language journalism, resource-constrained newsrooms and differences across professional groups. These gaps provide the basis for the systematic review methodology adopted in this study.

V. STATE OF GENERATIVE AI IN NEWSROOM WORKFLOWS

The integration of generative artificial intelligence and large language models (LLMs) into journalism centers on three key facets: **routine task automation**, **workflow implementation pathways**, and **editorial risks regarding accuracy and governance** (Quinonez & Meij, 2024; Brigham et al., 2024; Ahsan, 2025).

Generative AI adoption in news organizations predominantly focuses on routine, text-centric production tasks to improve operational efficiency (Quinonez & Meij, 2024; Roweshed et al., 2026). Surveys show that up to 70% of newsroom staff report using generative tools for drafting, summarization, or research assistance (Wessel et al., 2026).

- Automated headline updating and controlled text generation improve editorial speed while requiring structured awareness for grammatical coherence (Quinonez & Meij, 2024).
- Newsrooms deploy specialized systems to summarize charts, draft structured articles, and tailor narrative styles across social platforms (Quinonez & Meij, 2024; Wessel et al., 2026; Kmainasi et al., 2024).
- Fine-tuned models like LlamaLens expand capabilities to multilingual classification and fact-checking detection across diverse news datasets (Kmainasi et al., 2024).

5.1 Workflow Implementation and Integration

The operational implementation of LLMs varies substantially by institutional resources, progressing from ad hoc desk experimentation to formal algorithmic infrastructures (Harb & Arafat, 2024; Koliska, 2025).

Agency	A	B	Sum
Conversations	62	16	78
Turns	107	41	148

Verified published articles	79	32	111
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- Table 5.1. Evidence of AI-assisted journalism from WildChat (Brigham et al., 2024)
- Most regional and resource-constrained newsrooms exhibit individual-initiated, "trial-at-the-desk" adoption focused on low-risk drafting rather than enterprise integration (Harb & Arafat, 2024; Roweshed et al., 2026).
 - Well-resourced newsrooms deploy proprietary models and automated bots to monitor financial trends and generate breaking news coverage at scale (Quinonez & Meij, 2024; Koliska, 2025).
 - Institutional integration relies on both soft anchoring, such as training workshops, and hard anchoring through codes of conduct (Harb & Arafat, 2024; Koliska, 2025).

5.2 Verification, Ethics, and Governance

- A primary friction point in newsroom adoption is the preservation of journalistic credibility amid risks of hallucination, bias, and diminished oversight (Brigham et al., 2024; Ahsan, 2025; Wessel et al., 2026).
- Generic LLM responses in document-based queries exhibit a 30% to 40% hallucination rate, conflicting directly with verification standards (Wessel et al., 2026; Kmainasi et al., 2024).
 - Real-world usage shows instances where journalists paste confidential source notes into commercial LLMs and publish outputs with minimal manual editing (Brigham et al., 2024).
 - Reader scepticism increases when audiences are aware of AI authorship, particularly in political or emotive reporting (Ahsan, 2025).
- Across these dimensions, current evidence shows that newsrooms increasingly treat generative AI as an assistive drafting tool rather than an autonomous decisionmaker, maintaining human oversight to protect institutional accountability (Quinonez & Meij, 2024; Ahsan, 2025; Roweshed et al., 2026).

VI. GENERATIVE AI IN NEWSROOMS: PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY AND IDENTITY

Research evaluates the intersection of generative AI and journalism across three distinct dimensions: **redefining professional identity**, **negotiating editorial autonomy**, and **exercising controlled change**.

The incorporation of generative AI directly challenges journalism's core jurisdictional tasks, reshaping practitioners' relationships with their labor and institutional independence (Shi & Sun, 2024; Perreault et al., 2025; Lewis et al., 2025).

6.1 Redefining Professional Identity and Boundary Work

- Generative artificial intelligence directly intervenes in linguistic generation and writing, prompting media workers to actively reassert the epistemic uniqueness of human reporting (Van Dalen, 2024; Perreault et al., 2025). Unlike previous waves of news automation that targeted structured data, LLMs challenge tasks long considered inherently human (Van Dalen, 2024; Møller et al., 2024).
- Journalists perform **defensive boundary work** by framing human empathy, critical thinking, and nuanced judgment as capabilities beyond algorithmic reach (Peña-Fernández et al., 2023; Van Dalen, 2024; Møller et al., 2024; , 2026).
 - Professional identity systematically shapes **technological perceptions**, with watchdog reporters focusing on verification and entertainment desks embracing creative efficiency (Møller et al., 2025; Liu, 2025).
 - Journalism students construct an **effort-anchored assistance ethic**, defending manual cognitive diligence and source verification as essential markers of legitimate professional labour (Liang et al., 2026).

6.2 Negotiating Editorial Autonomy and Institutional Dependence

- The deployment of automated systems complicates traditional conceptions of journalistic independence, transitioning individual autonomy into a relational dynamic governed by technological infrastructures (Cools & De Vreese, 2025; Kostiuk & Kostiuk, 2026). Newsrooms increasingly confront friction between technical platform reliance and the defense of editorial integrity (Peña-Fernández et al., 2023; Munoriyarwa & De-Lima-Santos, 2025; Abdallah et al., 2026).
- Commercial platform dependence causes journalistic agency to become contingent on **external corporate policies** and third-party algorithmic architectures (Munoriyarwa & De-Lima-Santos, 2025; Kostiuk & Kostiuk, 2026).
 - Unsupervised newsroom adoption risks **compromised integrity**, documented when staff feed confidential notes into commercial platforms and publish outputs with minor revisions (Lewis et al., 2025).
 - Editorial independence is threatened by **differing internal perceptions**, as non-technical staff frequently misjudge system capabilities compared to specialized data journalists (Cools & De Vreese, 2025).

6.3 Exercising Controlled Change and Governance

- To maintain epistemic authority over public information, newsrooms adopt an operational posture centered on supervision, transparency, and selective technological deployment (Dodds et al., 2025; Van Dalen, 2024; Kostiuk & Kostiuk, 2026). Rather than allowing passive displacement, practitioners implement structural safeguards to preserve final decision-making power (Dodds et al., 2025; Dzineku et al., 2026).
- Media organizations establish **adaptive guidelines** and accountability protocols to evaluate technological fit while enforcing professional ethics (Dodds et al., 2025; Amigo & Porlezza, 2025; Abdallah et al., 2026).
 - Enforcing a mandatory **human-in-the-loop requirement** ensures that complex verification, political analysis, and publication choices remain under human oversight (Cools & Diakopoulos, 2024; Munoriyarwa & De-Lima-Santos, 2025; Dzineku et al., 2026).
 - Outlets utilize **transparent labelling** and multi-source cross-referencing to counteract algorithmic hallucinations and protect audience credibility (Dodds et al., 2025; Ashuri et al., 2026; Amigo & Porlezza, 2025).
- Across these areas, generative AI prompts journalists to defend their autonomy by asserting irreplaceable human judgment over routine algorithmic production (Peña-Fernández et al., 2023; Ashuri et al., 2026; Kostiuk & Kostiuk, 2026).

VII. ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE OF GENERATIVE AI IN JOURNALISM

The ethical integration of generative artificial intelligence and large language models into newsrooms decomposes into three core dimensions: **transparency and audience trust**, **algorithmic bias and content veracity**, and **governance infrastructures and copyright**.

Research shows that while generative systems offer operational efficiency, their adoption creates profound tensions regarding disclosure mechanisms, accuracy, and institutional oversight (Shi & Sun, 2024; Sorrentino et al., 2026; Koliska, 2025).

7.1 Transparency and Disclosure Mechanisms

Newsrooms increasingly deploy disclosure cues and provenance markers to signal algorithmic involvement, yet audience reactions reveal complex trade-offs between ethical intent and credibility (Toff & Simon, 2024; Licensi & Hoxha, 2026).

- A large audit of 186,000 articles across 1,500 American newspapers found that 9% contained AI text, yet only 5% of AI-flagged articles included **explicit disclosures** (Russell et al., 2025).
- A survey experiment found that labeling news as AI-generated reduced **perceived trustworthiness**, an effect counteracted only when publishers disclosed underlying source documents (Toff & Simon, 2024).
- A systematic review of 47 empirical studies established that general AI provenance cues rarely yield an outright penalty, though full automation disclosures without **stated human oversight** increase audience skepticism (Licensi & Hoxha, 2026).

7.2 Algorithmic Bias and Veracity Risks

Generative text models present persistent epistemic challenges in journalism, including demographic misrepresentation, model hallucinations, and the potential manipulation of public discourse (Toff & Simon, 2024; Zhang et al., 2026; Xiao et al., 2025).

- Research in video journalism shows over 80% of surveyed educators oppose synthetic news scenes, citing serious risks of **deepfake generation** and skewed demographic representation (Wenger & Imre, 2025).
- Experimental findings demonstrate that GPT-3 can produce **persuasive propaganda** comparable to human-authored foreign state disinformation, with editorial prompting heightening persuasiveness (Goldstein et al., 2024).
- An investigation into synthetic COVID-19 claims found that AI-generated falsehoods mimic credible reporting conventions, acknowledging uncertainties while degrading **automated detection accuracy** (Zhou et al., 2023).

7.3 Institutional Governance and Infrastructure

Establishing operational accountability requires formal organizational safeguards, shifting newsroom practices from individual experimentation toward structured, verifiable workflows (Harb & Arafat, 2024; Sorrentino et al., 2026; Xiao et al., 2025).

- Unregulated adoption introduces severe **copyright and privacy infringements**, documented by journalists inputting proprietary articles and confidential source transcripts into commercial systems (Shi & Sun, 2024; Zhang et al., 2026).
- Newsroom studies show that relying on commercial third-party platforms creates an external **migration of editorial authority**, binding news processes to opaque corporate algorithms (Voinea, 2025; Sorrentino et al., 2026).
- Integrating a factual accuracy dashboard into an editor-facing summarization tool significantly increased **system trust** among editors while safeguarding human verification (Wessel et al., 2026).

Together, these findings indicate that preserving journalistic accountability requires transparent source disclosure, active bias mitigation, and strict editorial governance to prevent unmonitored commercial dependency (Harb & Arafat, 2024; Sorrentino et al., 2026; Koliska, 2025).

VIII. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The review highlights that Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is transforming journalism by automating routine tasks, supporting content production, and improving newsroom efficiency. However, these benefits depend on the accuracy of AI-generated content, the extent of human supervision, and the policies governing its use. Uncritical reliance on AI may introduce misinformation, factual errors, and biased representations, potentially undermining journalistic credibility.

A key finding is the complex relationship between GenAI and professional autonomy. While AI tools can assist journalists in research, drafting, and analysis, excessive dependence on automated systems may weaken editorial judgement and shift decision-making power towards technology platforms and organisational management. Human oversight therefore remains essential to preserve editorial independence, professional accountability, and the public-interest role of journalism.

The review also identifies transparency, algorithmic bias, privacy, copyright, and accountability as major ethical challenges. These concerns are particularly significant in India, where newsrooms operate across diverse linguistic, cultural, and organisational contexts. Responsible adoption requires context-sensitive policies that balance technological innovation with journalistic values and public trust.

8.1 Theoretical Implication

The review contributes to understanding AI adoption in journalism by integrating the Technology–Organisation–Environment framework with Sociotechnical Systems Theory and the concept of journalistic professional autonomy. These perspectives suggest that the impact of GenAI is shaped not merely by technological capabilities but also by organisational culture, professional norms, and regulatory conditions. The review consequently positions human agency, editorial independence, and ethical governance as central elements in understanding AI-driven journalistic transformation.

8.2 Practical and Policy Implications

News organisations should establish clear guidelines for the use of GenAI, including mandatory human verification of AI-generated content, appropriate disclosure, protection of confidential information, and safeguards against bias and copyright infringement. Journalists should receive regular training in AI literacy, fact-checking, and ethical decision-making.

At the policy level, media organisations, professional associations, and regulators should encourage transparent and accountable AI practices while protecting editorial independence. Such measures should be adaptable to India's multilingual and diverse media environment, ensuring that technological innovation strengthens rather than compromises journalistic standards.

IX. CONCLUSION

Generative AI presents both opportunities and challenges for journalism in India. Although it can improve efficiency and support newsroom innovation, its unregulated or excessive use may threaten factual accuracy, professional autonomy, and public trust. The review indicates that the future of AI-enabled journalism depends on maintaining a balance between automation and human judgement.

Responsible integration requires transparent practices, effective human oversight, AI literacy, and robust ethical governance. For Indian journalism, these measures must also account for linguistic diversity and differences in newsroom resources and capabilities. Ultimately, GenAI should function as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for journalists' professional judgement, editorial responsibility, and commitment to the public interest.

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