



Effects of Covid-19 Lockdown on Indian Print Media, Television & Sports Media

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Introduction :-

COVID-19 has rapidly affected our day to day life, businesses, disrupted the world trade and movements. Identification of the disease at an early stage is vital to control the spread of the virus because it very rapidly spreads from person to person. Most of the countries have slowed down their manufacturing of the products. The various industries and sectors are affected by the cause of this disease; these include the print media industry, television sector, tourism, Information and electronics industry. This virus creates significant knock-on effects on the daily life of citizens, as well as about the global economy. Not surprisingly, COVID-19 has also upended the sporting calendar, with professional leagues everywhere suspending their activities to limit the spread of the virus. Even the Summer Olympics, typically one the world's most-watched sporting broadcasts, has been pushed back a year.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the effect of Covid-19 lockdown on Indian newspapers.
2. To study the effect of Covid-19 lockdown on television shows.
3. To study the effect of Covid-19 lockdown on sports media.

Impact of covid-19 lockdown on Indian newspaper industry:

The Indian Newspaper Society (INS) has urged the government to provide a strong stimulus package to the newspaper industry which it said has lost over Rs 4,000 crore and is likely to suffer further losses of up to Rs 15,000 crore in the next six to seven months, if relief is not provided.

In a letter to the Information and Broadcasting Secretary, the INS said the newspaper industry is among the worst affected in India with hardly any revenues coming in from either advertising or circulation amid the nationwide lockdown in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. "The newspaper industry has already lost Rs 4,000-4,500 crore in the last two months. Since economic activity has nearly collapsed and there is no likelihood of advertising from private sector, the losses are expected to continue at the same rate for the next 6-7 months (implying an additional loss of Rs 12,000 - 15,000 crore over the next 6-7 months)" unless a strong stimulus is



implemented by the government at the earliest, the letter signed by INS president Shailesh Gupta said. INS also urged the government to withdraw five per cent customs duty on newsprint.

The losses already incurred have had very severe repercussions for the 30 lakh workers and staff who are directly and indirectly involved in the newspaper industry journalists, printers, delivery vendors and many others, said INS, which represents over 800 newspapers. According to INS estimates, newspapers provide direct and indirect employment to almost nine to 10 lakh people and over 18-20 lakh people respectively.

Impact of covid-19 lockdown on television shows:

Classics never go out of style, and the viewership data of some of Doordarshan's older programmes proves just that. The flagship channel under public broadcast Prasar Bharti saw was the most watched channel in India in the week start March 28 according to data released by the Broadcast Audience Research Council of India (BARC). Reruns of the mythology shows Ramayan and Mahabharat have garnered maximum eyeballs with an average of 545.8 million and 145.8 million impressions in the week respectively. DD has also reintroduced shows like Buniyaad, Byomkesh Bakshi, Shaktimaan, Shriman Shrimati, Dekh bhai Dekh, and Circus. This has led to a spike in viewership in the time bands when these shows are being telecast. Private broadcast channels have also fallen back on this strategy, and it has worked in their favour. Star Plus is currently running repeats of Mahabharat and Siya Ke Ram and the time bands have seen increase in viewership as compared to the preceding week. Zee's entertainment channel &TV also saw spike in viewership for the time band airing a rerun of its version of Ramayan. Incidentally, all private channels seem to have turned to mythology for reruns.

The popularity of classics transcends into non-fiction as well with reruns of popular cricket and wrestling matches leading to a 21 per cent growth in week 13 as compared to the previous week. Overall TV viewership saw 4 per cent growth in week 13 (over week 12), led by a spike in viewership of movie channels across languages. Hindi movie channels surpassed Hindi general entertainment channels in terms of viewership in week 13.

Average daily reach grew from 622 million to 627 million week on week, while the total viewing minutes grew from 1.21 trillion to 1.26 trillion. The daily average time spent per viewer also showed an increase from 4 hours 39 minutes to 4 hours and 48 minutes week on week. Week 13 also saw more people (47 per cent) watching TV all seven days of the week as compared to week 12 (44 per cent). "For the last several weeks, due to the above severe losses and choking of cash flows, the newspaper establishments are finding it very difficult to even disburse salaries to employees and payments to their vendors," said the letter dated April 20. "In our various communications we have requested for withdrawal of five per cent customs



duty on newsprint. Newsprint cost accounts for 40 to 60 per cent of the total cost for publishers. The removal of the five per cent customs duty on newsprint will have no impact on domestic manufacturers or any "Make in India" efforts," it said.

INS also urged the government to provide two year tax holiday for newspaper establishments, 50 per cent increase in advertisement rate of Bureau of Outreach and Communication and 100 per cent increase in budget spend for print media. It called for immediate settlement of payment towards all outstanding bills of advertising, from BOC (Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity) as well as various state governments.

Impact of covid-19 lockdown on sports media:

There are three main income streams for sports leagues: broadcasting (sales of media rights), commercial (sponsorship and advertising partnerships) and match day revenue (ticketing and hospitality). Professional sports leagues are analogous to entertainment companies, where each team in a league is like a different channel. The teams have their own identities, employees and fan bases, but the overall 'programming schedule' (the rules of the game and the fixture list) are set by the leagues. This comparison may not please the purists, but the reality in both sports and entertainment is that the more eyeballs on the product, the more valuable it is.

The major sports are all reliant on broadcasting income, as demonstrated by revenue data from the biggest leagues over the last five years. The global value of sports media rights is around \$50bn but 60% of that is accounted for by just 10 sports leagues. Each sport monetizes differently, but the general principle is that the organizing body distributes its total income between its participating clubs. This is usually structured as minimum guaranteed payment with performance- and/or competition-related bonuses on top. Individual clubs are of course able to generate their own income, by competing in other tournaments, signing their own sponsorship agreements or developing their own direct-to-consumer (D2C) media subscriptions. But fundamentally, the financial success of any individual club relies on its involvement in an overarching league. The collective power of these leagues to sell media rights is incredible. The NBA's current TV deal is worth \$24 billion over nine years. The English Premier League agreed a new contract with broadcasters' last year equivalent to \$12 billion over three years. Major League Baseball has a seven-year media arrangement worth over \$5 billion.

Some have questioned the sustainability of these deals, considering the acceleration in "cord-cutting" as media consumption increasingly moves online. But they underline the importance of sports rights as a "linchpin" holding many traditional television bundles together. Anything longer than a temporary shutdown would see the leagues unable to meet their commitments to broadcasters, limiting their ability to distribute income back to the clubs. The impact on the industry would be



dramatic: no games mean no TV deals and no match day income; no income means no clubs.

What strategies is the industry adopting in response to the disruption?

The industry is trying to capitalize on the spike in media consumption by finding new ways to engage consumers. In the absence of live games, this means deepening the pool of content available to fans. For example, sports broadcasters such as ESPN and Fox Sports are showing classic games, archived content, documentaries, e-sports and niche competitions in a bid to keep consumers watching. Individual leagues are doing the same. The NFL is making every game since 2009 available for streaming on its direct-to-consumer channel Game Pass, a strategy which led to a 500-fold increase in daily sign-ups for the service.

Mark Tatum, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer of the NBA described the league's strategy to the World Economic Forum: "We have launched an NBA 2K competition [an e-sports form of the game] with players streaming from their homes. We have expedited production to bring forward the release of a Michael Jordan documentary. We are hosting live quarantine parties on social media with current and former players, and we're showing classic games every night – all things to continue to engage our fans during this time."

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