

**CHAPTER 5**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA AND**

**CHANGING PARADIGM**

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This chapter analyses the changes in the functional and motivational patterns in the operations of PTI in India. Chapter is based on the opinions collected from various journalist of PTI and experts of the field. The interview was conducted in an open format with aim to interpret qualitatively.

PTI collects process and convey news to subscribing institutions around the India world. It is important to remember that PTI is not only the largest organization with the biggest infrastructure for newsgathering, but also plays very significant function in news processing and transmission. PTI technically produces raw information, but also more elaborate pieces of ready to print news reports, analysis and comment, which subscribing news organizations can freely reproduce, fully or in part, introducing any alterations or rewriting they consider necessary, without even acknowledging the source in the journey of its service to the newspapers, media organizations and other subscribers PTI has gone through several changes in its working philosophy, work culture, work patterns and work environment. These changes or progress can be named as the paradigms in the life of PTI.

### **5.1 FROM AGE OF MONOPOLY TO AGE OF COMPETITION**

PTI is no more the only provider of news in India. When news agency business was got its pace in free India, it was huge demand from growing newspaper industry that accelerated the business of news agencies in general and PTI in particular. In the first two decades after independence most of newspapers were small and their dependence was very high on the news agencies for getting news.

PTI was leader in the trade with more than 90% market capture. Slowly- slowly with emergence of other agencies like UNI, and coming of Television News competition increased in the news market. After liberalization when private news channel started their operation, they became main source of news for viewers. Most of TV channels have developed their own source and thus the demand of agency news downed.

FDI and opening of doors of news media business for other country's news organizations also negatively affected the monopolistic position of PTI in the market.

Number of media houses developed strategic cooperation with foreign news organizations and became able to get their news by themselves.

With the proliferation of mobile communication technology and social media, news agencies no longer hold a monopoly over the fastest mass communication of breaking news.’ (<http://journalismresearchnews.org/report-new-challenges-for-news-agencies/>)

## **5.2 TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT**

In the last two decades, the professional organization and operation of news agencies have been challenged and affected by 24-hour news TV channels and ever increasing web-based modern media. This has placed strong rivals before the professional operation of news agencies. In such a context, news agencies have adopted strategies to maintain status, survive, and compete as well as to be adaptable with the modern technology.

Since their creation, news agencies have had to invest strongly in technology to secure ever faster news transmission. PTI played a pioneering role in the use of new technologies such as the telegraph and information technology, which have significantly altered the very nature of news, and technological innovation continues to be a major area of competition between the PTI and other news agencies. Technology adaptation has taken by PTI as important step for its survival.

In the early days Teleprinter was the main technology used by PTI to send news to its subscriber. Now in the age of ICT satellite and Internet technology has changed the mechanism of news transmission. PTI is sending news to its subscribers with the help of modern ICT technologies. Subscribers are connecting with PTI and after visiting website of the agency by using login and password they can download the news of their preference. Technology has changed the working culture also as now the deadline is reduced and reporter has to update information more frequently. First they send the news to New Delhi headquarters where editor after have a look pass it for open circulation.

“Being associated with PTI since last forty years, I have seen tremendous technological and operational changes in the news publishing industry and in our organisation as well. The approach of readers is being influenced with generation

change in the society. Facilitating the process of news coverage, the technological advancements have effectively been enabling the content providers to offer what readers generally like to read. As our subscribers required more news stories related to Hollywood and Bollywood, and sports, etc. And accordingly, we had to expand our offerings in these segments. Similarly, the liberalization of Indian economy in 1990s and subsequent fast economic development in the country generated the increase in demand for economic and business news. Resultantly, even in New Delhi, PTI had to deploy 55 journalists for committedly covering business and corporate news, who are currently feeding around 200 news stories every day,” said Razdan elaborating the changing scenario during his association with PTI.

(<http://www.allaboutnewspapers.com/july10/article1.htm>).

### **5.3 INTERNET IS THE GAME CHANGER FOR COOPERATIVE OPERATIONS**

The Internet enables newcomers to construct brand in far less time, in competition against established players. How long can established agencies rely on client loyalty? Founded in 1949, PTI has the advantage of being owned by a cooperative of leading Indian newspapers, with 450 domestic newspaper clients. Formed during national independence, it symbolizes freedom from dependency on the imperialist’s information monopoly, Reuters, which had controlled PTI’s immediate predecessor.

The Internet’s contribution to PTI is restricted by low penetration in developing countries; for India. The rate of advance attracts considerable business interest. Portals offer news services, subscribing to agencies like PTI, sometimes supplemented with their own reporting networks.

PTI’s owner newspapers, suffering first from broadcasting and now the Internet, hit back with their websites. These have brand names associated with credibility, but compete in turn with PTI’s own site. Agencies do not enjoy the visibility of newspapers. Having computerized operations in the 1980s, PTI established its website in 1999, responding to competition from other news sites.

PTI’s site provides free access to major national, international, sports and commercial news, and its principal purpose is promotional. All services - text, pictures, graphics,

data - are available to media and non-media subscribers by e-mail. The web is an additional delivery vehicle that extends the range and reach of services. Diversification does not depend on but is facilitated by the web.

Diversified services include PTI Features, PTI Mag (write-ups on political, social and other subjects), PTI Data India, PTI Economic News and PTI Science Service. PTI BHASHA distributes PTI Mag for Hindi subscribers. The Hindi language market grew more important following the financial collapse of previous agencies that had served the 'language press' in competition with PTI, namely Samachar Bharati and Hindustan Samachar. PTI's Hindi service generates less revenue than the English: Hindi newspapers are smaller, attract less advertising, and pay lower subscriptions. The agency has added a photo and a screen-based news-update service (News Scan) together with financial news services such as Stock Scan. PTI TV produces televised news and corporate feature stories.

The agency distributes services internationally to the U.S., U.K., Australia and U.A.E. Other new services include a domestic PR Wire Service and a news service for mobile phone users. Such diversification strategies often involve alliances. Asia Pulse, for example, is a consortium involving PTI and four other media organizations; together these provide a global on-line industry data bank. Asia Net is a joint venture of Asian information vendors for world-wide circulation of press releases. PTI distributes international news in India from AP and AFP, as well as AP Photos and International Commercial Information. It has exchange arrangements with 100 news agencies, including NANAP and OANA.

Such new services draw on PTI's established reputation for accuracy, objectivity, and credibility, and on its infrastructure of personnel and communications networks. These include a staff of 1,600, of whom 400 are journalists; 100 bureaux country wide and nine in international capitals, 30 stringers at home and 35 part-time correspondents abroad. The agency's owners, representing a wide variety of different newspapers, languages and political leanings, underpin PTI's reputation. Recent diversification reflects the opening up of the Indian economy but is also driven by a sense of insecurity about the traditional client base as print newspapers cope with their own economic woes.

#### **5.4 SERIOUS AND FACTUAL REPORTS TO COLOURS**

PTI had been famous for reporting factual news without interpretations. But in the later stage it adopted new policy for news writing and reporters were allowed to use colours in the news as emphasis shifted from only serious news to the feature, human interest, sports and celebrity news. The approach of readers is being influenced with generation change in the society. Facilitating the process of news coverage, the technological advancements have effectively been enabling the content providers to offer what readers generally like to read. As PTI's subscribers required more news stories related to Hollywood and Bollywood, and sports etc, and accordingly, PTI had to expand its offerings in these segments.

#### **5.5 THE ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION AND FOCUS SHIFT TO NEWS OF COMMERCE**

The liberalization of Indian economy in 1990s and subsequent fast economic development in the country generated the increase in demand for economic and business news. Resultantly, even in New Delhi, PTI had to deploy 55 journalists for committedly covering business and corporate news, who are currently feeding around 200 news stories every.

In the same way, globalization has created much interest in global news. So, PTI have to expand their global footprint. Resultantly, while earlier PTI had only half a dozen correspondents overseas, now they have placed twenty correspondents in leading capitals and important business and administrative centres across the world, apart from having exchange arrangements with several foreign news agencies. They are collaborating with 50-60 news agencies, but maximum content shoring goes with the US-based Associated Press. However, in the overall exchange arrangement, PTI shells out more money as the international news requirements always remain high by their subscribers.

#### **5.6 FROM SERIOUS TEXT TO DATA, GRAPHICS AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

Info graphics art is being used to present data which can easily be understood. Such types of graphics include bar charts, pie charts, and pictographs. The graphics picture

is given even of those photographs which are easily available in order to have a fresh test of picture. They are important in those stories where photos do not project exact and correct picture of the scene.

This practice is often seen in case of political personalities in all newspapers. Similarly, graphics can also be seen in case of those stories in which photos are not available, but the news is important. Graphics are often used even as filler for blank space. It has become very convenient for reporters to present various kinds of information. For example, some of the graphics which are very commonly used include mobile, court, electricity, economics and other areas. Graphics are used on the basis of imagination about medical, environment, education subjects.

The emblem and logo may also be given in some cases, with increasing commercial activities and demand for such data graphics have become important part of the PTI coverage. This trend is even increased after coming of economic liberalization. Such inclusion has affected the presentation of information by agency journalists. PTI launched its graphic services in August 1993 to fulfil the increasing market demand and since then it is one of the regular and popular service of PTI. Prior to this launce PTI started its photo division in the year 1987. After starting separate photo division spectrum of PTI service widen and added colour into the basket of PTI.

### 5.7 Milestones of PTI

Year	Event
1910	Birth of Associated Press of India, PTI's forerunner floated by K C Roy, often called the first Indian news agency
1919	Reuters takes over operations of API but still uses API credit line
1945	API registered as a private limited Indian company wholly owned by Reuters
1947, August 27	Press Trust of India incorporated in Madras
1949, February 1	PTI begins news services, taking over operations from API but still maintains links with Reuters.
1953	PTI becomes a free agent, independent of Reuters
1976	PTI Economic Service is launched

1976, February	PTI, UNI, Samachar Bharati and Hindustan Samachar merge under pressure during emergency to become 'Samachar'
1978, April	PTI and the other three news agencies go back to their original units to restart independent news operations
1980, July	PTI Feature Service launched
1981, October	PTI Science Service launched
1982, November	PTI launches Scan, on-screen news display service
1984	PTI service launched for subscribers in United States
1985	Computerisation of news operations starts PTI service launched for subscribers in UK
1986, February	PTI-TV launched
1986, April	PTI-Bhasha launched, making it bi-lingual, a concept started by Samachar Bharati
1986, August	Experimental broadcast of news and pictures via Insat IB begins, Computer system made fully operational
1987, August	Stockscan I launched
1987, October	PTI photo service launched
1992, August	PTI Mag launched
1993, August	PTI Graphics service launched
1995, March	PTI launches StockScan II
1996, February	PTI invests for the first time in a foreign registered Company, Asia Pulse, which provides an on-line data bank on economic opportunities in Asian countries
1997, December	PTI introduces photo-dial up facility
1999, March	PTI celebrates Golden Jubilee. PTI goes on Internet
2003, September	PTI launches internet delivery of its news and photo services
2007, July	PTI KU-Band VSAT system for delivery of its news and photo services launched
2010, March	PTI launches News View for delivery of its news (.txt and .xml) and photo services



## **5.8 CULTURE CHANGE IN WORK**

PTI is a cooperative organization, a non-governmental body that serves the purpose of supply news to the news organizations. In opinion of most of experts and journalists major changes have been opted in the work culture of PTI. Due to technological advancement and to improve economic viability in its operations PTI has gone through several changes in work culture. ICT based system of sending information has influenced journalist to change of pattern of their reporting. Now internet feed is most common option of sending information. In recent years PTI has closed number of its bureau offices and reduced the supporting staff's number.

After coming of internet role of other supporting staff is reduced. For example, as it was mentioned by experts also, earlier engineers had a great role in dissemination of news. Journalist and engineer combo was responsible for sending news. Engineers were responsible to maintain wire services and teleprinters therefore their support of needed in news operations. But nowadays with the help of laptop journalists compose their assignments and upload on the address that is finalized by editors. The delivery pattern and subscription pattern is also changed. Now agency has also adopted system of delivery of news contents through modern ICT technology as it is being delivered through its website, and sometimes through emails.

## **5.9 CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the above analysis the chapter can be summarized into the following points-

1. PTI is one of the leading news agencies of Asia.
2. It is leader in the news business in India.
3. PTI is run by a Board of Directors with the Chairmanship going by rotation at the Annual General Meeting. The day-to-day administration and management of PTI is headed by the Chief Executive Officer.
4. Press Trust of India (PTI) is India's premier news agency, having a reach as vast as the Indian Railways.

5. It employs more than 400 journalists and 500 stringers to cover almost every district and small town in India. Collectively, they put out more than 2,000 stories and 200 photographs a day to feed the expansive appetite of the diverse subscribers.
6. PTI subscriber base includes the mainstream media, the specialised presses, research groups, companies, and government and non-governmental organisations.
7. Currently, PTI commands 90 per cent of new agency market share in India.
8. News agencies are facing competition from other sources.
9. The reporting and news writing pattern of agency news is changed and now it is not restricted to factual reporting only. Nowadays agency journalists also add analysis and interpretations in reporting.
10. Technology has changed the functional mechanism of agency journalism in India. PTI has shifted its working from old teleprinter or wire services to Internet based service.
11. Computer has become most important equipment in the offices of PTI.
12. Journalists prefer to use laptops and sometimes mobile phones to send the news.
13. Due to technological advancement and to improve economic viability in its operations PTI has gone through several changes in work culture.
14. PTI now prefers to deliver its news contents through the internet and email services.
15. PTI uses social media platforms also and it has accounts on twitter and facebook.
16. PTI has widened its coverage area and apart from major national and international happenings it also covers business news with same seriousness.

17. PTI does not knowingly accept unsolicited submissions including, without limitation, submissions of scripts, story lines, articles, fan fiction, characters, drawings, information, suggestions, ideas or concepts.
18. PTI has included subjects like lifestyle news, human interest news, Bollywood and Hollywood news in its news coverage.
19. PTI improving itself on the front of technology and variety to face the competition in the market successfully.
20. PTI keen in launching specialised services and apart from incident based news it provides photo feeds, data and graphics, visuals, share market rates etc.