

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides the literature available related to the objectives of the study. The study describes evidence from other studies on internet and sports journalism and the effects of the new media on the sports journalism practices.

The chapter contains an analysis of information that has been written on Sports journalism practices in relation to Internet. Most of the works on sports journalism are conducted by authors abroad and research work conducted in the area of internet and Sports journalism in India is very less. The chapter analyses how internet driven new media is affecting sports journalism in terms of the process of sports journalism, role of sports journalists, quality of sports content, interactivity and gatekeeping. The chapter also assesses the change in sports content in this digital age.

A major challenge for traditional newspapers is to adapt to the rising number of online media and the constant shift of readers to the web for news. The rise of bloggers and civic journalists has also posed enough challenge for the traditional journalists.

According to Ramos (2011), who has 25 years of print media experience in the US and now manages the digital operations for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), says sport has been at the forefront of the digital revolution.

People try stuff in sports more readily than they would in other departments, mostly because they're not seen as being quite as serious as news or politics or that people are more ready to let sports people try something new. Blogs took off much better in sports before they worked in other areas of newspapers. Most of the record days on Twitter have been sports related. And partly, I think that's because the whole genre has embraced that more rapidly than the hard news. They've all come along now, but I think a lot of innovation happens first in sports areas.

According to John Pavlik, journalism is now going through its most fundamental transformation since the rise of the penny press of the mid nineteenth century. In 'Journalism and new media', Pavlik (2001) writes the following:

Developments in new media are leading to the development of new storytelling techniques that engage the audience in more contextualized and navigable news reporting. This interactive storytelling embraces a wide range of communication modalities (e.g., text, images, video, graphics), including nonlinear writing—or hypermedia (i.e. links)—and offers possibilities for extraordinary customization and heightened audience involvement.

In his book 'The Rise and Fall of the Press Box' (2003), Leonard Koppett draws on 60 years of observation to analyze how the stature of a national cultural phenomenon--the press box-- was diminished by the onset of 20th Century technology. Koppett delivers a seminal work on sport as a cultural influence in 20th Century America.

In the developed countries, the 1960s saw the increasing rise of sports comment and opinion as a central element of sports journalism. This process was accentuated by the rising popularity of electronic media and sports overall began to exert in the television schedules during this decade. For some journalists this marked a qualitative shift in the practice and nature of sports journalism.

According to a news reporter Brian Macarthur, "Journalists' working practices have changed drastically ... reporters and subs [editors] seem increasingly tied to their desks ..." Furthermore, he describes a scenario where: People would spend hours – seven, eight, often more, sitting in front of screens, tapping energetically away, gazing lugubriously at them or, occasionally, making a telephone call. (Macarthur, 2002 p. 15)

Saf Fahim says that the walls of a typical workplace are coming down. Fahim envisages the newsroom of the future as a studio shielded "by a screen displaying the status of each group's page or individual assignment, so that the

newspaper in effect wallpaper the newsroom”. (Saf Fahim, 28 June-4 July 2001, p. 12.)

According to Brown-Smith and Grove (2010), Sports departments often need to deal with immediacy in news that other departments do not face on a regular basis, not only with full match reports but with blog posts, live game updates and tweeting. They are used to presenting news as it happens, because the demand for that news, particularly sports scores and results, has always been high.

New York Times Sports Editor, Tom Jolly says (2011) digital evolution has had a big impact on the news cycle. Print newspapers have traditionally been once-a-day news mediums. They have now become 24/7 news machines, constantly updating and breaking news online and to mobile devices.

As such, demands on sports journalists have never been greater. With a once-a-day news cycle sports reporters would write one or two stories for the next day’s paper. Now, at the New York Times at least, they are required to write stories for the web, update those stories throughout the day, write another updated story for the print paper and perhaps write a blog item or tweet an update. (Jerrie Andrew, 2011).

The fact that the masses can also use these media tools to create sports content has fuelled fears that internet may make obsolete the traditional role of sports journalists. Social media scholars like Mathilda (2004), Katz (2006), Mcquail (2005), Pateno and Burnett (2006), allege that the new social media can push the old media into oblivion. They contend that journalism as a profession seems to be threatened as the public allegedly adopts the role of journalists, bridging the professional sphere with those of amateurs.

According to Banda (2010), many broadcasters now invite ordinary people to become reporter and encourage them to send video images which the broadcaster transmits. This is a threat to professionalism knowing citizens have not acquired journalistic skills; hence referring to them as amateurs is justifiable.

Raymond Boyle (2009) says “digitization has clearly impacted on journalism in various forms. Within the arena of sports journalism, it has seen the emergence

of an increasingly sophisticated battle for control of sports and how they are delivered, reported and made sense of for readers, listeners and viewers.”

Globalization, digitization and marketisation have brought sweeping changes in the media organisations, which are restructuring their brand of journalism to keep up with the changes.

“With the pressure on time and resources sports journalists and journalists in general increasingly find that the internet has become an important source for information. Not only does this process of data gathering require you to maintain the journalistic rigour of checking material that appears on the web for its accuracy, but also this reliance on the web, can often be at the expense of getting out of the office and speaking with people. This inability to ‘get out of the office’ is a developing trend that some commentators feel is an increasingly impoverishing aspect of contemporary journalistic practice (Marr, 2004: 115)”

Peter Dahlgren (2005) adds: The advent of cyberspace will inevitably impact on the factors which shape how journalism gets done – and may well even colour how we define what journalism is. The literature suggests that the essential characteristics of online journalism are interactivity, customisation of content, hyper-textuality and convergence, or, rather, multimodality.

Michael Meadows (as cited in Natasha Bitá, 2001) claimed that the Internet allows journalists to “reinvent” their craft. Furthermore, Meadows stated that: The Internet is offering innovative and creative ways in which journalists can reinvent themselves and present information in a much more interesting and interactive way.

According to a study by Jennifer Alejandro (2010) conducted on social media usage by sports journalists in news operations, found that sports journalists are beginning to leverage on social media to gather stories and are using news aggregators and subscribing to RSS feeds and blogs to assist them in their work.

Meanwhile, news managers and editors surveyed showed that while Facebook and micro blog Twitter are used for newsgathering especially during breaking

news stories, there is still some hesitancy in using social media platforms to distribute content for fear of losing control of the information.

Joseph Lichterman (June, 2014) says "Social media has allowed journalists to build personal brands and establish themselves as experts on the teams and sports they cover. The game story has lost importance to the small update or the smart analysis."

"Reporters at larger papers covering more high-profile beats are more likely to use Twitter more often. But the researchers found that the younger journalists felt more comfortable interacting with readers on Twitter."

The digital landscape also has posed quite a few ethical questions for the sports journalists. "For sports journalists they suggest that some of the wider ethical dilemmas faced by their colleagues at the so called 'hard news' end of the journalistic spectrum about reporting on issues that are commercially sensitive to media organizations are becoming more difficult to avoid." (Boyle, 2006).

In the digital age, the range of material available to the sports fan continues to grow. This extended and interactive service also intensifies the pressure to offer something distinctive and different to their readers, as Craig Tegurtha is only too aware:

Our coverage has grown because there is more sport on television, through Sky in particular, and this has fed the public's appetite for sport. In newspapers we have responded to this shift. However, the pace of change is dramatic. Sky Digital now means that people can watch highlights of their team on a Saturday night if they want. So, people don't want a match report on Sunday. Sunday papers used to be filled with match reports that were our main task. That has all changed. We need to have more analysis, reaction and additional material that they haven't seen on Sky or heard on the radio.

It is important to recognise the diverse range of journalistic activity and practice that takes place under the umbrella of sports journalism, from the beat reporter through to the sportswriter employed primarily to offer their

comments and thoughts on sport. One of the challenges faced by those sports journalists working in the print media is how to deal with the increasing amount of live sport carried by television and internet. This issue is, of course, not new, and the relationship between different media is one that is continually evolving.

The changing landscape has also influenced the level of interaction between athletes, fans and journalists. In ‘The New Online Arena: Sport, Marketing and Media Converge in Cyberspace’, Joseph E. Mahan and Stephen R McDaniel (2009) says:

The internet or World Wide Web, offers a global multimedia platform with the potential for interactivity and personalization that is highly appealing to its users, whether they be commercial or non-commercial entities. As was the case with the diffusion of traditional media, the web has essentially changed the ways in which sport media is produced, distributed, and consumed.

This boom in Sports communication underscores the relationship development between organizations, players, fans, and third parties. Pedersen, Miloch, and Laucella (2011) define sports communication as the “process by which people in sport, in a sport setting, or through a sport endeavor share symbols as they create meaning through interaction.”

Henry Jenkins, Director of Comparative Media Studies at MIT, talks about a convergence culture where the audience has the power to respond, innovate, experiment and re-contextualize media in new ways. “Convergence culture is a world where every story, every sound, every brand, image and relationship plays itself out across a number of media channels. Collective intelligence or the group as a whole can put together knowledge in a more complex way than an individual is capable of doing.” (H. Jenkins, 2006)

In a 2009 Huffington post interview, Twitter co-founder Biz Stone commented on how surprised he was at how quickly and expertly news organizations like the New York Times, CNN and others began to use Twitter.

They just jumped in and impressed us with how they engaged, and their hybrid approach. Reuters, for example, began watching Twitter for trends, and found it worked. We gave help, support, and even our API (application programming interface) to the Reuters Lab people. Then CNN began using us to access information, and to find and create stories. Rick Sanchez at CNN, for example, is using both Facebook and Twitter and getting real time feedback and the Los Angeles Times took the Twitter feed about the wildfires and put it on their home page. (Rory O'Connor, April, 2012)

According to Kwak, people who have a good social position still read newspapers and watch TV news, therefore the frame of traditional news media remains important. However, for many people, traditional news media is considered an “additional” means to get information. They prefer Facebook and Twitter to the traditional means. He and his Korean group recommend that traditional news media need to strongly integrate with social media such as Facebook or Twitter; the new medium is obviously Internet rather than paper or TV.

Shelley Wigley, Patrick C. Meirick (2008) conducted an interesting study on the impact of interactive media on sports journalists. As part of the study, Sports journalists at daily newspapers (N=393) participated in a Web-based survey and results indicate that sports journalists working at civic-minded newspapers do not place more value on citizen input nor do they pay more attention to sports talk radio and Internet message boards as a source of information or fan opinion. This may indicate that all sports journalists, no matter the type of newspaper they work for, embrace the input of regular citizens. The study produced one counterintuitive finding in that sports journalists employed at civic-minded newspapers reported less interaction with the public.

Sanderson and Kassing (2011) assert that blogs and Twitter have revolutionized sports media by giving athletes and teams an active role in content production. Mass media outlets appear to be losing their edge in sports media due to professional athletes' progressive engagement in social media. The integration of social media into sports communication changes the dynamic of how news and

information is released. This provides opportunities for professional sports teams and professional athletes to better connect with their stakeholders.

Perhaps the most-adopted social-media tool has been Twitter; the entire sports world is obsessed with the micro blogging platform. Twitter has brought fans closer to their sport heroes because it allows athletes to communicate as openly and honestly as they wish without any third-party mediation. This type of open communications, “peels back the curtain on an athlete’s existence, showcasing personality layers never seen at press conferences” (Johnson, 2009).

The stars of sport also have developed a greater awareness of the importance and commercial value of image rights in the digital environment; this has been accompanied with the rise in personal websites attempting to offer exclusive comment (Boyle 2007).

In a study on sport and social media, Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, and Greenwell (2010) focused on the usage of the social medium Twitter by professional athletes. The study examined the content of tweets sent by a variety of professional athletes, and placed those tweets in one of six categories: content, diversion, fanship, information sharing, interactivity and promotion. Analysis revealed that interactivity and diversion were the leading elements of Twitter usage among professional athletes, accounting for 62% of the tweets examined. Promotional tweets accounted for only 5% of the total.

In international sports, tennis player Andy Roddick; golfer Stewart Cink; cyclist Lance Armstrong; and Chad Ochocinco and Larry Fitzgerald of the National Football League (NFL) are just a few examples of the hundreds of athletes who have embraced Twitter (as can be found at [twitter-athletes.com](http://twitter-athletes.com)).

Among Indian sports celebrities, Virat Kohli is the most followed Indian sportsman on social networking site Twitter with a base of 4,870,190 followers, followed by Sachin Tendulkar, holding the number two spot a year after his retirement. Tendulkar has 4,869,849 fans, followed by Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni at the third spot with 3,327,033 followers as on Dec 24, 2014. (“Sorry Sachin”, 2014)



Sport fans thus can get a real, unmediated look into the lives of their sport heroes and, in the process, possibly develop a greater appreciation for the talent, dedication to their sport, and day-to-day lives of these athletes (Kassing & Sanderson, 2009; Sanderson, 2008).

Sports journalists and other sports media personnel also utilize these mediums to reach audiences, but the public, professional teams and athletes now have the ability to bypass traditional media outlets through social media platforms (Sanderson & Kassing, 2011).

Jason Fry (2011) also echoed similar voices in his article 'Rules of the game change as sports journalists compete against teams they cover', said that "teams, leagues, associations, athletes and agents are all increasingly bypassing journalists and using digital tools to communicate directly with fans. Right now, this stuff is mostly marketing. But as sports organizations become more sure-footed digitally, they will become journalists' competitors. And that will lead them to reassess bargains struck with newspapers generations ago."

The emergence of social media in sport has important implications; Phua (2010) noted that the Web, through its ability to be a major socializing agent and communication channel for sports fans, will continue to play a vital role, eventually superseding traditional media such as broadcast and print.

This raises questions regarding the role of journalists as media gate-keepers in this changing scenario. Gate keeping can be defined as the process by which the many messages in the world are reduced by news decision makers and shared with the public (Shoemaker, 1991). Gate- keeping dates back to 1947 when psychologist Kurt Lewin noted that information (in reference to news) flows through the gate and that individuals control what flows through the gate (Lewin, 1947).

Today the term has a "wider potential application since it can apply to the work of literary television" (McQuail, 2005, 308). Barzilai (2009), refers to these controls as: selection, addition, withholding, display, channelling, shaping,

manipulation, repetition, timing, localization, integration, disregard and deletion of information.

Shoemaker et al (1991), contend gate keepers take many forms, for example: people (who can be producers, sub-editors, reporters, managing editors, among others), professional codes of conduct (including media ethics), company policies, and computer algorithms (sets of formula that translate the company's gate keeping policies into computer instructions) to select news items for readers of the news web page for example, news.google.com (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009).

Shoemaker et al (1991), added that algorithms are the product of many decisions from the level of management to code writers. Hence, Google News represents seemingly objective information for readers. Similarly, gate keeping by the media personnel in mainstream channels denotes some level of influence from management that sets up policies as guidelines of operation and these become like a rule of thumb that journalists subconsciously apply on news items.

Singer (2006), writes that the proliferation of information on the internet has diminished the power of journalism's gatekeepers, but journalists can still serve a role in sorting, interpreting, and lending credibility to news on behalf of the public. In this regard, Singer (2006 b) says the traditional idea of a gatekeeper no longer exists and that journalists no longer control what information citizens receive.

Singer refers to today's journalists not as gatekeepers but as "sense-makers" who interpret for citizens "what is both credible and valuable" (p. 12). As Singer (2006 a) points out "The Internet defies the whole notion of a 'gate' and challenges the idea that journalists...should limit what passes through it."

According to Bruns (2005), this is impractical and he instead refers to gate keeping as "gate watching", given the fact that news users engaged in organizing available news stories from a multitude of channels, have no ability to control the gates of any of the channels. The gates have multiplied beyond all control. However, Singer argues users are now secondary gatekeepers of the content

published on media websites which digital news editors assess leading to selective-re-dissemination of that content (Singer, 2013).

Domingo et al., (2008), conclude that gate keeping is in two categories. The first is weblogs produced by the public outside media companies, and the second are those produced by professional staff journalists. These to a certain extent resemble news journalism. Meaning, such bloggers will automatically apply the journalistic skills on the blogs.

There also have been concerns about the language of sports text in the digital age. According to various media theorists and experts, “the growth of media and cultural industries and the rise of the information society coincides with a ‘pervasive sense of declining cultural, educational and political standards’ or ‘dumbing down’” (Williams, 2003, p. 229).

Said Colin Sparks (also cited in Williams): While there may be more information available, the quality of this information as well as public understanding is declining. Public ignorance and apathy is growing as the serious, challenging and truthful is being pushed aside by the trivial, sensational, vulgar and manipulated (Williams, 2003, p. 230).

Alfred Harmsworth, once editor of the New York Daily World (1900), referred tabloid to the use of economy with words, short sentences and short, simple paragraphs (Tulloch, 2000, p. 146). Tabloids are also defined as a specific print media structure, where a newspaper or magazine is made half the size of the traditional broadsheet newspaper.

Today, according to author Elizabeth Bird, the label of tabloid is most often used to represent the sensational tabloid the paper whose stock in trade is the human interest, graphically told story, heavy on pictures and short, pithy, highly stereotyped prose (Bird, 1992, p. 8).

Colin Sparks defines tabloid in a similar manner. “It devotes relatively little attention to politics, economics, and society and relatively much to diversions like sports, scandal, and popular entertainment; it devotes relatively much attention to the personal and private lives of people, both celebrities and ordinary

people, and relatively little to political processes, economic developments, and social changes (Sparks, 2000, p. 11.)

Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News, S. Elizabeth Bird and Robert W. Dardenne noted: Running through most American writing on news is the assumption that there are two kinds of news, variously called hard versus soft, important versus interesting (Gans, 1979) news versus human interest (Hughes, 1968) and Information versus story (Schudson, 1978).

Hughes claims news articles either edify or entertain, and this either/or split has become a taken for granted, if constantly qualified, assumption in American journalism. (Bird & Dardenne, 1988, pp. 68-69) .Infotainment is hardly considered news at all and is often pointed to as examples of dumbed-down news content for consumption by the masses.

According to an analysis by Schmalenbach (2009), sports journalism in Germany has lost in many cases its credibility due to the fact that speculations instead of facts are making the headlines. Furthermore, sports journalists in Germany have been criticized for being biased regarding individual players or athletes and rather following the public opinion than being critical (Schlegel, 2007)

Infotainment is believed to be lacking in quality, hard informative and useful news. Bird in support of the tabloid-infotainment connection says, “Tabloids do not claim to be fiction, even if they do claim primarily to be entertainment. They do report on real people and events, and their staff members are journalists. (Bird, 1992, p. 104).

Shawn Starr (June 1, 2015), Editor In Chief at Dawg Pound Nation, ‘In The Age Of Media Hyperbole, Browns Fans Must Be Smarter’ writes : "Opinions on sports existed, but in the form of the editorial, or opinion piece. Some places specialized in this, like Sports Illustrated magazine, which mixed sports opinion and humanities (stories about the personal lives of athletes). Now though, the lines aren't just blurred, they do not exist. Beat reporters don't simply report fact any more; they report their interpretations of what the facts are.

"We live in an age when even simple stories are given sensational headlines ... Even opinion based writing has suffered a tragic decline in quality. This one I honestly blame on the consumer, the reader. Yes, that's some of you. You don't want quality, well written analysis anymore, you want shocking, sweeping proclamations that typically don't have much basis in fact and certainly no researched arguments." ('In The Age Of Media Hyperbole,' n.d., para. 6, 2015).

Reflecting on the changes in sports writing, Leonard Koppett said: "Overall, today's sports pages are better written – in the literary sense – than 50 years ago. But the change in content and purpose is much greater. Our idea, then, was 'get the story, tell it as clearly as you can, avoid being wrong, look for the most interesting angle, don't worry about the stenographic reproduction of quotes.' Today's formula is 'make (not just get) the story, be entertaining at whatever cost to accuracy, aim at getting the reader's attention (which will draw attention to you), and move up the ladder as fast as possible'. (Koppett, 2003: 262)

In an article, 'Still Stumped: The dearth of Indian sports biographies' by Sarang Bhalerao (2012), a panel comprising Harsha Bhogle – a television commentator and cricket expert, Ayaz Memon – a veteran sports journalist, and cricket historian Boria Majumdar agreed that some of the good cricket articles are found on the "blogosphere". The effort by the writers, in putting across their point, has made blogging a popular medium to disseminate the ideas.

K.P. Mohan, (2014) veteran sports writer and journalist, who recently retired from The Hindu, in an article 'Electronic media and its impact on sports journalism: is print media dying?' says, "I don't think sports writing has improved. It has only deteriorated. The general belief is readers have already watched the action live on television and there is no point in giving basic information to them through news stories. Thus there is either an attempt to bring in some 'masala' into routine daily reports or else a lot of quotes to pad up."

According to Nichola Reneé Harris (2006), "Implementation of some of the tools of the tabloid has affected mainstream media's bottom line in a very positive way -- better circulations, bigger audiences and of course, larger profits. These

practices have become so successful, that they are now being used on a large scale, so widespread, in fact, that tabloidization has been called an epidemic.

One of the factors for tabloidization is the “existence of intense competition between commercial news outlets, which forces editors and journalists to scrutinize and tailor their product as never before.” (Sparks 2000).

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### **Website Links**

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