



Digital Journalism on the Rise

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Media, and particularly news media has evolved significantly over the course of 7 decades. In the early days after the independence, radio was the most common source of news and information across the country. Since the beginning of its transmission in 1964, the state owned PTV remained as the only broadcaster in the country for well over 3 decades. Television, through PTV became the major news and information

source during this time at least in the urban centers in most parts of the country. Print media, during this time also saw a significant increase in its readership nationwide. With the turn of the century, Pakistan awarded licenses to private media channels in the country. This proved to be a revolutionary step in the electronic media sector of Pakistan as within the next decade numerous private media channels were up

and running. With cable networks spreading all over the country, news and information was available to people in real time and far easily. Electronic media became the number one source of all news, information, analysis etc. and a medium of communication as well between the state and its subjects. The print might have fallen behind in the race but remains a large part of the country's news media. Radio's use has been restricted to just far-flung areas of the country with influx of electronic and print sources in urban and rural centers likewise. This was deemed as the future of news and communication globally, but the sudden rise in social media use over the past decade drastically changed the news dissemination and communication mechanisms. Despite all the expansion in electronic and print media over time, the field of journalism in the last couple of decades did become quite saturated in Pakistan. There were very less opportunities for new entrants to enter the field and make a mark. With the spread of social media, globally and in specifically in Pakistan, the younger generation of journalism seems to have decided to adapt to the circumstances and employ new methods to follow their passion.

Digital journalism is on the rise in Pakistan. The new generation of journalists are using social media platforms, including facebook, twitter and youtube predominantly, to share news and analysis with the public. This way, not only have they increased their reach to everyone's mobile phone in the pocket instead of the TV at home in form of electronic media; but they have also freed themselves of the chains of the media house owners and senior journalists. Moving to digital platforms has given these young journalists a direct link with the masses, while the audience response to their content is visible in real time. They do not have anymore have to suffer from the self-imposed censorship of media owners for their business gains or by trying to navigate their way up the industry by buttering the senior journalists.

Majority of the old horses in the field of journalism seem insecure from the increase in digital news journalism in Pakistan. Many a times they are found indulged in unnecessary arguments with the young generation of journalists, usually on social media platforms, and demeaning their analysis and news reports. This is a clear

indication of the fact that digital journalism has shaken the footprint of electronic and print news media in Pakistan. Despite the disliking towards digital media platforms and digital journalists, the veteran journalists have themselves also turned to these platforms. Not only have they made their own digital channels on platforms such as youtube, but they also share their electronic media programs on these platforms. Even print media has been digitalized now as newspapers are available online on their respective websites as well. Pakistan's news media industry has realized the importance of digital platforms in today's world and started adapting to it. The younger generation, however, has taken the early mover adapter and captured a much larger audience. It is important to note, that digital media unlike electronic and print platforms is a lot more transparent as outreach statistics are visible not just to the content owner but also to the viewer. This could be one reason why the veteran journalists seem to be against the digitalization of journalism, as it allows no space to hide behind the manipulative TRP system for impression management. While censorship remains a significant issue in Pakistan's news media, some have falsely accused censorship of their ouster from print and/or electronic media although their content was not getting the viewership their media house asked for. This is evident from the lack of viewership on their now digital platforms as well. Had the public been paying heed to their analysis, the viewership would have transferred to their digital platforms, but that has not always been the case.

Digital journalism is here to challenge all the traditional norms and methods of journalism in Pakistan. Those who have recognized the importance of digital platforms and started adapting to the change will be able to survive in the future, while the rest will soon become a part of history. This brings forward a greater challenge to today's journalist to better their content and analytical quality to establish a reputation among the masses who now have far greater options to depend on for news and information as well as the choice to not view content from anyone.

You can either like digitalization of media or dislike it, but you cannot ignore it. Digital is the future.