

 INDIANtelevision

KNOWLEDGE SERIES

A REPORT ON
HINDI NEWS VIEWERSHIP

**WHO IS WINNING RACE
POST-DATA RESUMPTION**

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Introduction

News channels in India have always been one of the most talked about genres when it comes to linear television consumption. While cord-cutting has severely affected the viewership of many genres, news has weathered the digital storm firmly. According to TV audience measurement body Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) 's data, the viewership of the news genre saw a 27% growth in 2020 compared to 2019. In contrast, the general entertainment channels (GEC) and sports genres experienced a dip in viewership.

Unfortunately, despite the growth, the news genre faced many challenges in the past two years, especially in viewership data. After reports surfaced on the manipulation of television rating points (TRPs), followed by several controversies, BARC decided to put a pause on publishing weekly individual ratings for news channels in October 2020. All the sub-genres under news include Hindi News, English News, Regional News and Business News.

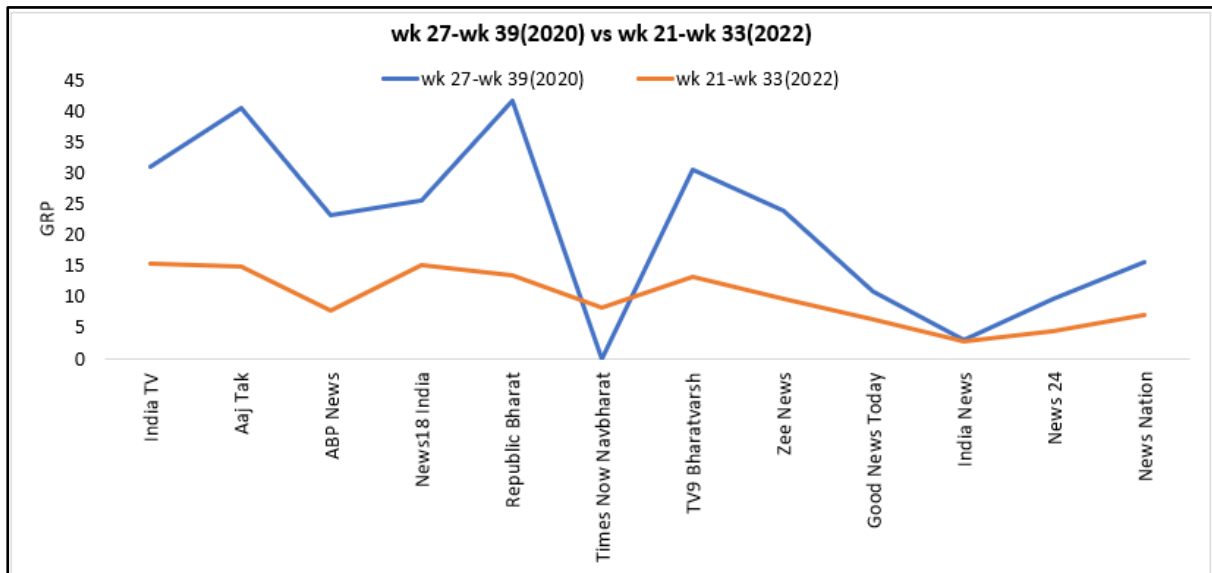
Earlier this year, news channel executives heaved a sigh of relief when BARC announced to resume ratings for news channels from 17 March 2022. The announcement came soon after the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) asked BARC to release news ratings immediately.

"The reconstitution of the Board and the Technical Committee to allow for the induction of Independent Members have also been initiated by BARC. A permanent Oversight Committee got also formed. In addition, the access protocols for data have been revamped and tightened," MIB said.

The announcement brought significant relief to the news broadcasters. In the absence of concrete data on viewership, news broadcasters faced challenges in getting a good rate from advertisers. Also, this is because TRP has been the easiest way for them to provide data on the return on investment (ROI) to advertisers. Finally, the revival of BARC ratings has eased the concern of news broadcasters around credibility and revenue.

15+ HSM (GRP):

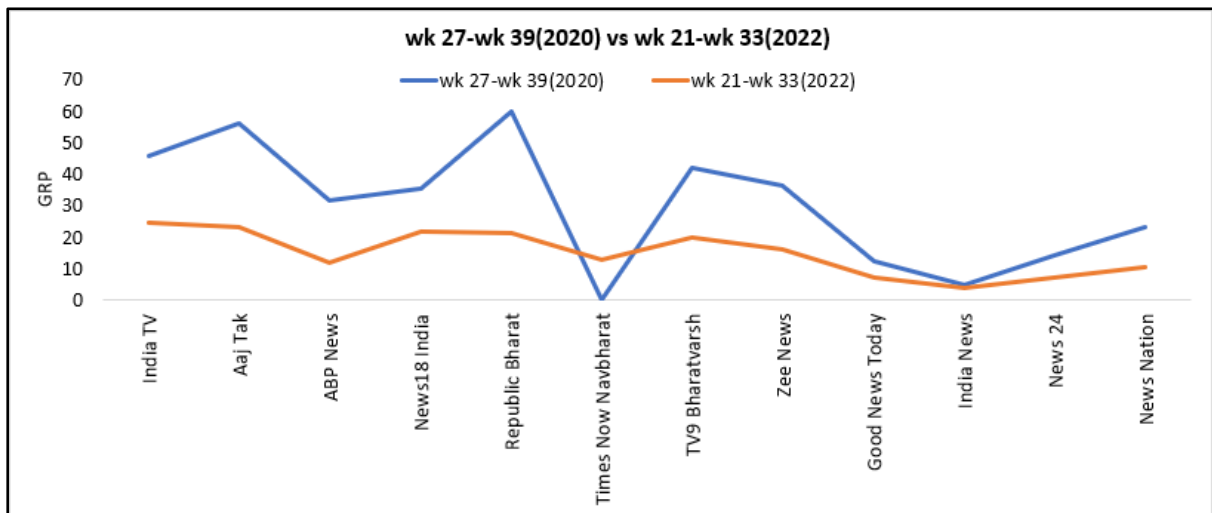
GRP wise, whole News genre has shown a dip post data release in BARC as compared to Pre Data pause in BARC. Though Genre dropped by 54% from the previous data period, India TV GRP dropped by 50% whereas AajTak dropped by 63%, R Bharat by 68% and TV9 Bharatvarsh by 57%.



(Source:- BARC, TG: 15+, Mkt: HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs - 2400 Hrs, GRP)

22+Male AB (GRP) :

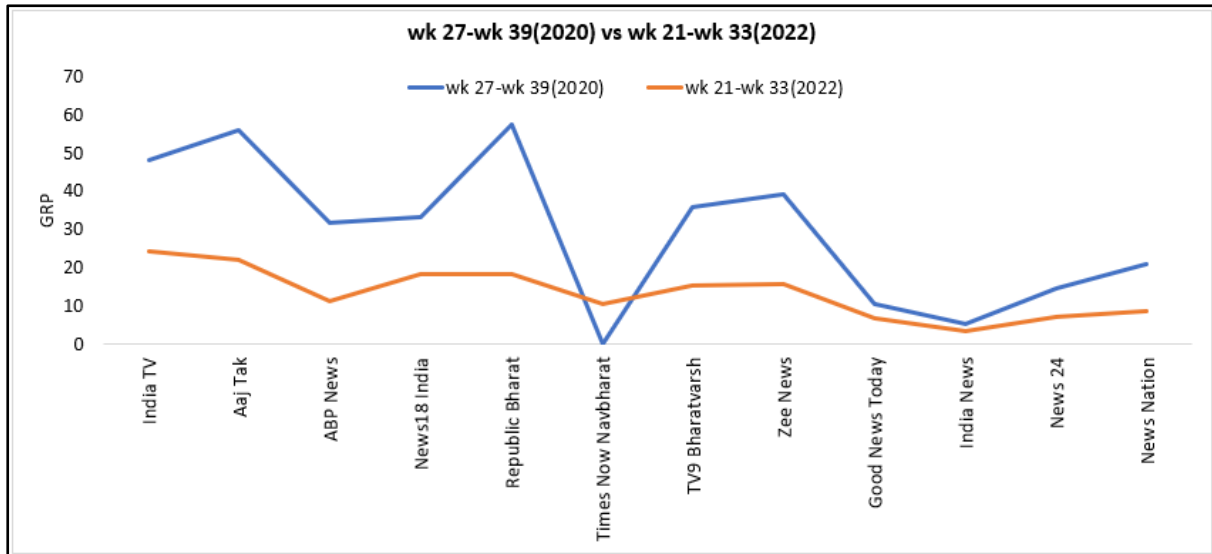
The similar scenario can be seen on advertiser's preferred TG 22+ M AB:



(Source:- BARC, TG:- 22+ Male AB, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, GRP)

NCCS A Premium Audience (GRP):

Trendline of Premium Audience (NCCS A) is in sync with core TG. Genre for the period 2020 was higher compared to current period. GRP point of view, India TV has the highest viewership in Hindi News genre among premium audience.



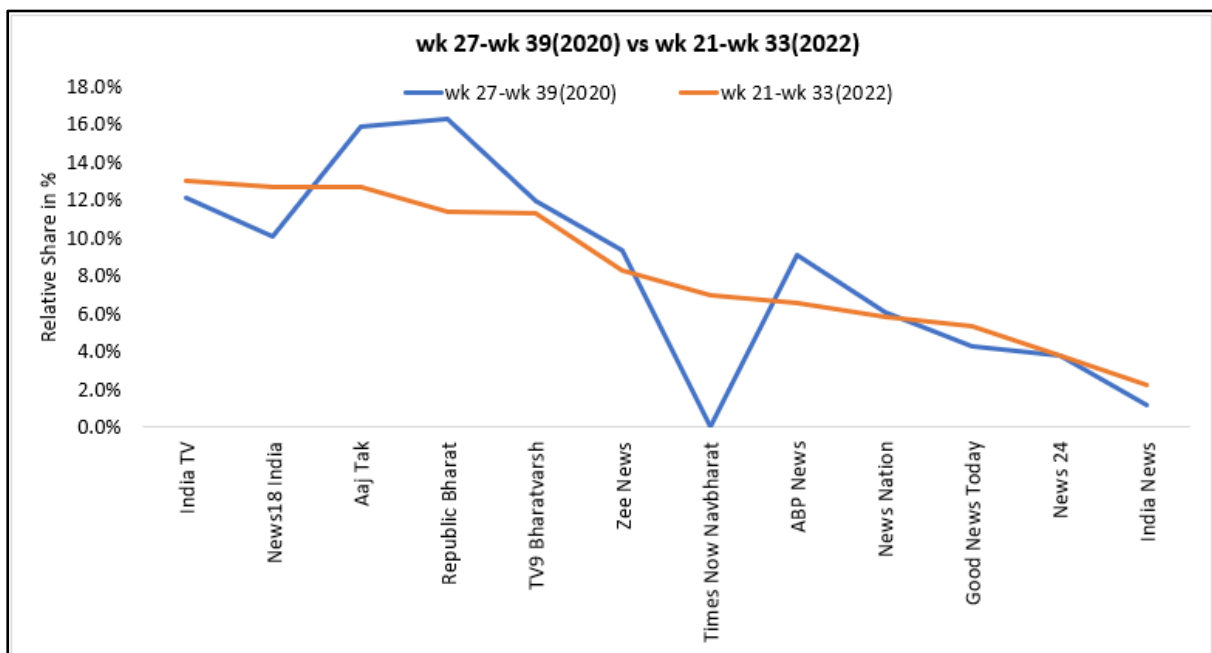
(Source:- BARC, TG:- NCCS A, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, GRP)

Though GRP have gone down from previous data pause period for all the channels, India TV has become the No 1 choice for all above audience group.

How Does The Rating Chart Look After Resumption?

After the resumption of ratings, there has been a visible change in the leadership position of the Hindi News genre. India TV has emerged as the market leader with a 13.0% relative share during week 21- week 33, 2022.

15+ (share percent)



(Source:- BARC, TG:- 15+, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, Relative Share in %)

In core TG for Hindi news genre 15+ HSM, India TV stands No 1 position in the current scenario with a relative share of 13%. Pre data pause Scenario AajTak was no.1 channel with 15.9% relative share followed by India TV with 12.1% share, In post data resumption despite of 1 channel (Times Now Navbharat) added to the genre India TV gained 1% relative share whereas most of the channel has gone down.

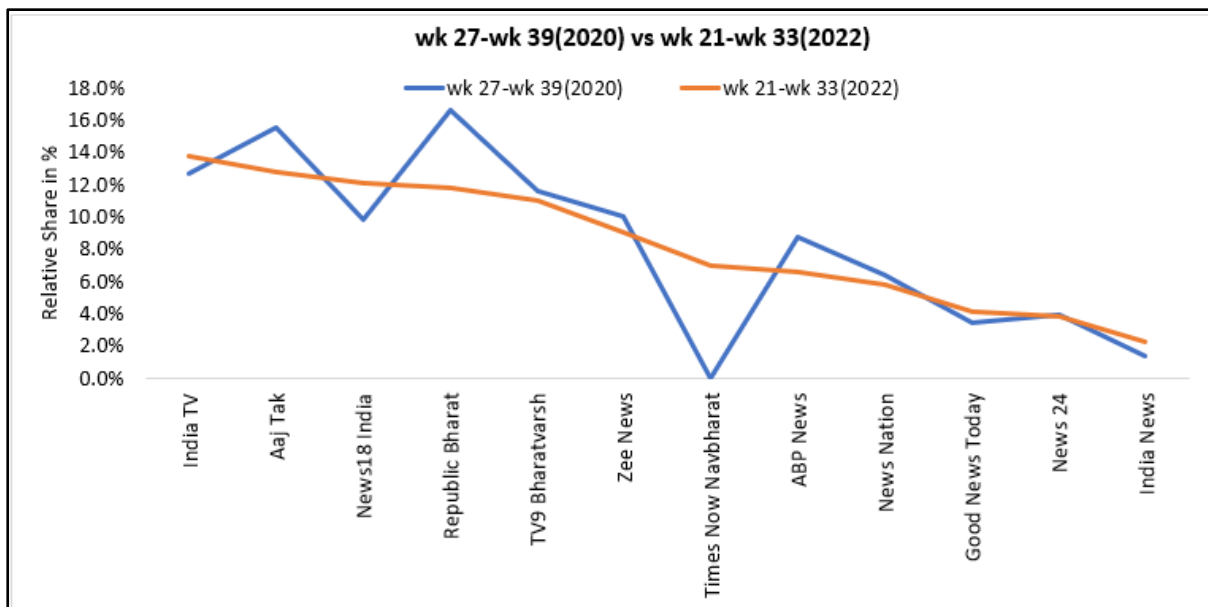
Before BARC pulled the plug on news viewership data in 2020, India TV had a share of 12.7%. On the other hand, AajTak, now the second leading Hindi news channel, has seen a low-single-digit drop in market share, from 15.5% in the pre-pause phase to 12.8% in the post-data resumption period.

Among other channels, News18 India has seen a rise in relative share, acquiring the third position in the genre. However, other popular channels such as Republic Bharat, Zee News, and ABP News have seen a decline in relative share.

Let's look at the target market, the majority of advertisers in India the 22+ Male AB age group remains the most lucrative target group for them. Although the target of marketers is evolving slowly with the emergence of new age brands and changing consumer behaviour patterns.

22 + Male AB (share percent)

22+ Male AB is considered to be the buying TG for most of the Advertisers. The current period shows that India TV is leading the Hindi News genre with 13.8% share.

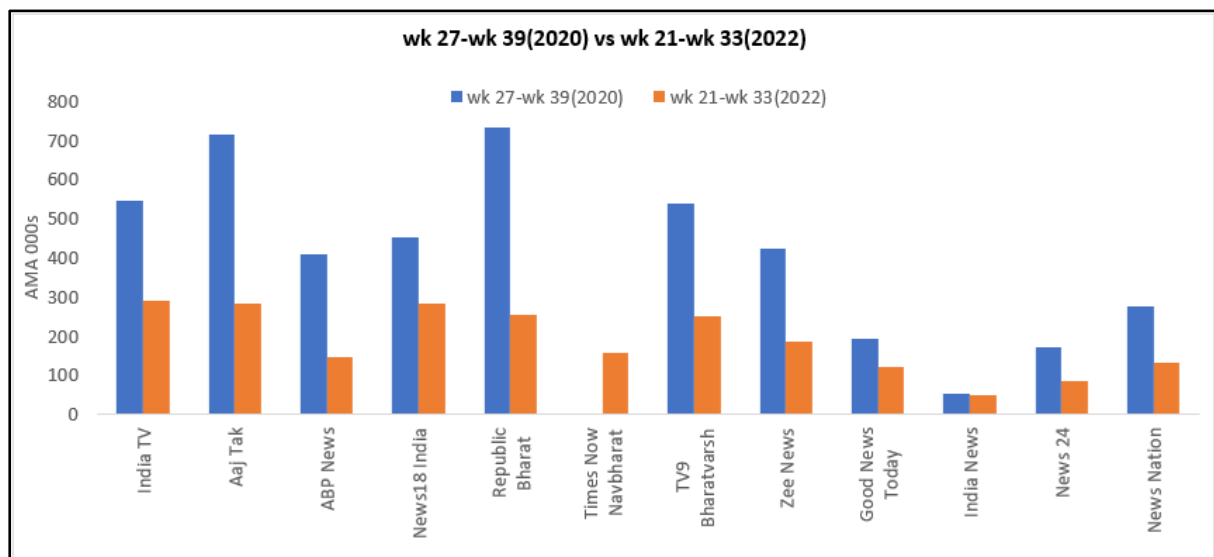


(Source:- BARC, TG:- NCCS 22+M AB, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, Relative Share)

India TV is leading the Hindi news chart in the post-BARC data release in this category. In contrast, Republic Bharat used to play the leadership role in terms of average AMA'000 (Average Minute Audience).

15+ (Average AMA'000)

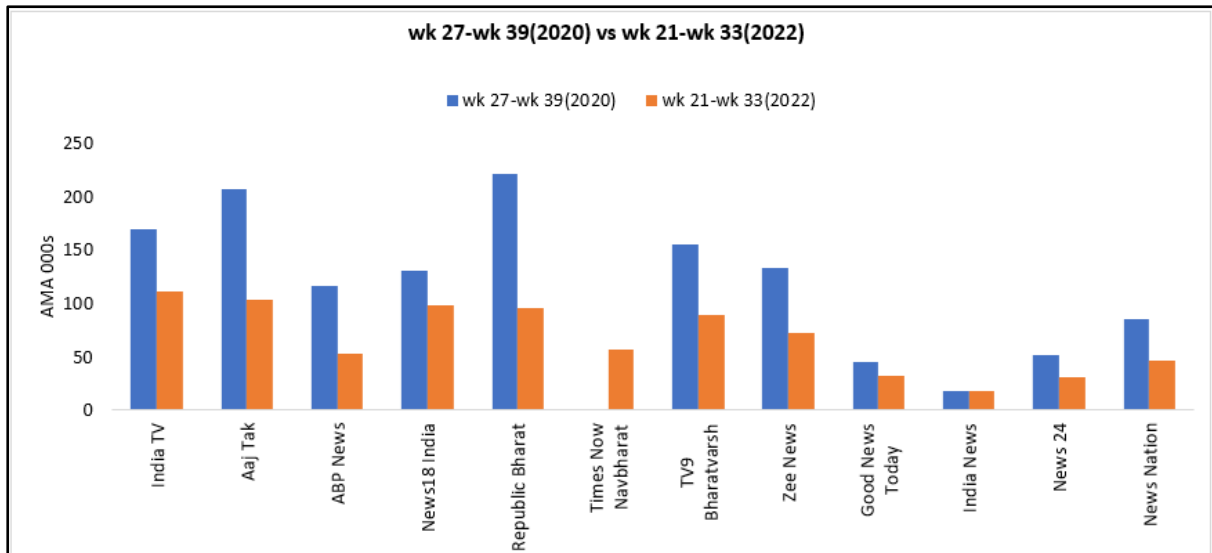
As per avg AMA'000, India TV was No 3 pre data release of BARC whereas AajTak was ahead of India TV rank as No.2 position republic Bharat was Rank as No.1 position, whereas post Data release of BARC, India TV is 3% ahead of AajTak and at No 1 position. In absolute terms, in previous period Republic Bharat was at No 1 position carrying a 2% higher viewership than second most channel (AajTak) where in current scenario India TV is leading the genre with a 3% gap from second most channel(News18 India).



(Source:- BARC, TG:- 15+, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600Hrs-2400Hrs, AMA 000s)

22+ Male AB (Average AMA' 000)

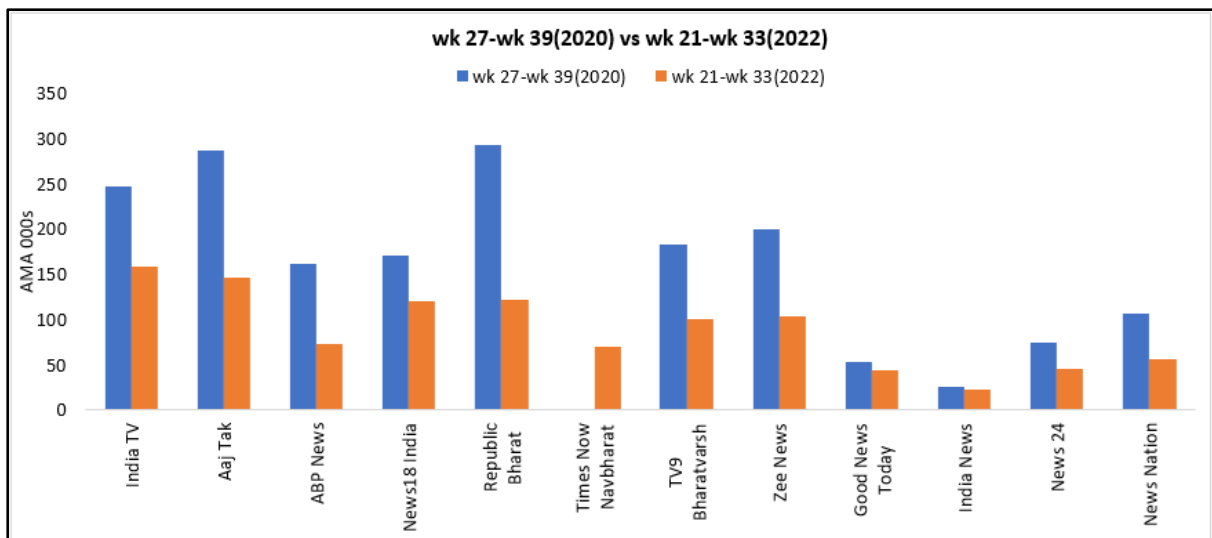
India TV leads the Queue in Hindi News post BARC data release where Pre Data pause R Bharat used to play the role of No 1 in advertiser preferred TG 22+ M AB.



(Source:- BARC, TG:- 22+ Male AB, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, AMA 000s)

NCCS A Premium Audience (Average AMA'000)

As per avg AMA'000 of NCCS A TG, India TV was preferred the most in Post BARC data release followed by AajTak, Republic Bharat & News18 India.



(Source:- BARC, TG:- NCCS A, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, AMA 000s).

More importantly, India TV has also attained market leadership in the '15+ HSM category', which is the core target of the Hindi news genre. The news broadcaster garnered a 13.0% relative share during week 21- week 33, 2022, compared to a 12.1% share during the pre-data pause period.

AajTak emerged as the close second as per the same data cut with a relative share of 12.6%, while it had a 15.9% relative share during pre-data pause days. Among other major

channels, Republic Bharat saw a significant decline from a 16.3% relative share in the pre-pause period to 11.3% after the resumption of data.

As per average AMA'000 (Average Minute Audience), India TV has acquired the leading position in the post-data resumption phase. In absolute terms, Republic Bharat was in the leadership position during the pre-data blackout period carrying a 2% higher viewership than the second channel (AajTak). In contrast, in the current scenario, India TV is leading the genre with a 3% gap from the second most channel, News18 India.

In terms of Time Spent Viewing (TSV), India TV leads the Hindi news genre with 34 minutes in the post-BARC data release. Despite a 13-minute loss post-data release in BARC from pre-data pause, the channel has a 17% higher time spent than its immediate competitor (TV9 Bharatvarsh). In the previous period, the top channel (Republic Bharat) had a time spent of 55 mins.

Although regional markets are seeing a gradual increase in TV viewership, Hindi still remains the largest market for TV channels accounting for 43% viewership share, according to BARC India data. Moreover, the overall news genre garnered the highest share of ad volumes, which is at 28%.

The overall GRP has gone down for the news genre in both groups. However, India TV has witnessed a lower decline (50%) in GRP compared to the overall decline of 54% in the 15+ HSM group. It is pertinent to note that the GRP does not solely decide how news inventory is sold and brought. Hence, news broadcasters have not yet seen much trouble attracting advertisers.

Where Is the Audience Flocking To?

According to BARC data, India TV has also emerged as the most preferred Hindi news channel. With a relative share of 13% during the week 21-week 33, India TV has acquired the numero uno position, followed by AajTak with a 12% share. Republic Bharat and News18 accounted for 11% share each. Reason for India TV improved performance was purely driven by content and innovative presentation for event like UP Election Counting Day, Independence Day, on ground coverage of story related Jahangir Puri, Gyanvapi etc.

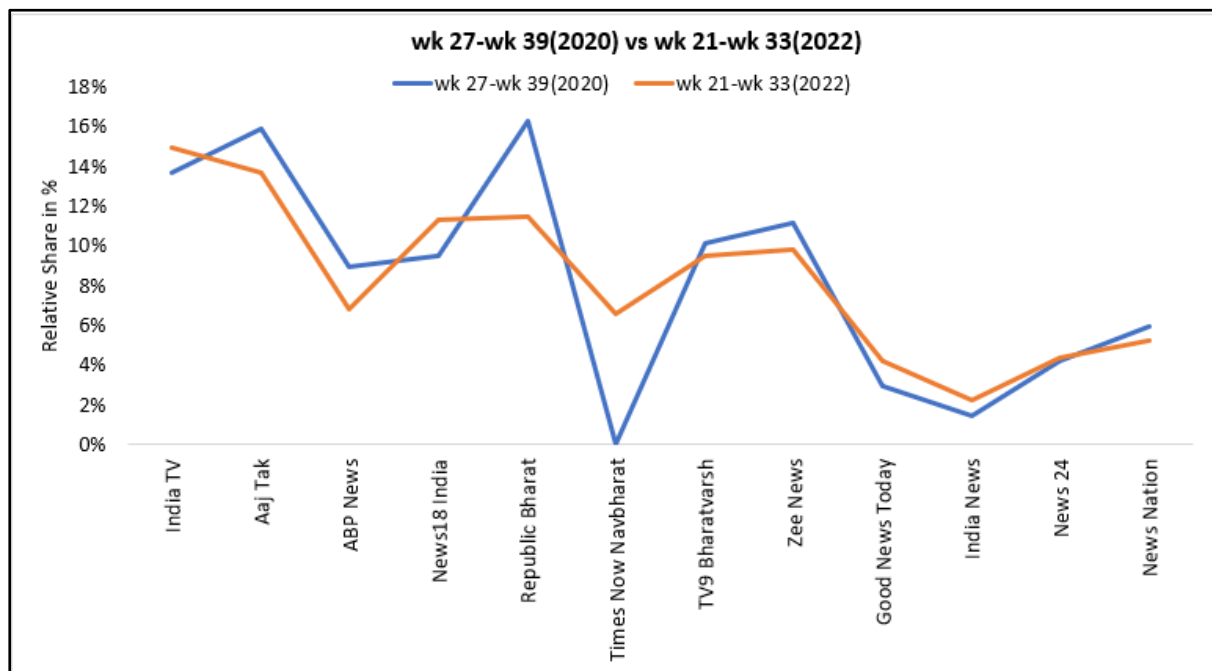
Is There an Opportunity for News Channels?

It could be a good opportunity for the genre as India is expected to become one of the fastest-growing high-end and luxury markets within the next five years. From international luxury brands to homegrown ones, marketing and advertising spending have increased significantly over the past few years.

As per Statista, the Indian luxury goods market amounted to \$5.94 billion in 2021, and the market is projected to grow at 8.03% annually. Interestingly, the brands are also making their presence available in tier II towns beyond metro cities. In addition, media consumption behaviours are changing across the gamut. Therefore, luxury brands are no longer restricted to glossy magazines and the Factual genre.

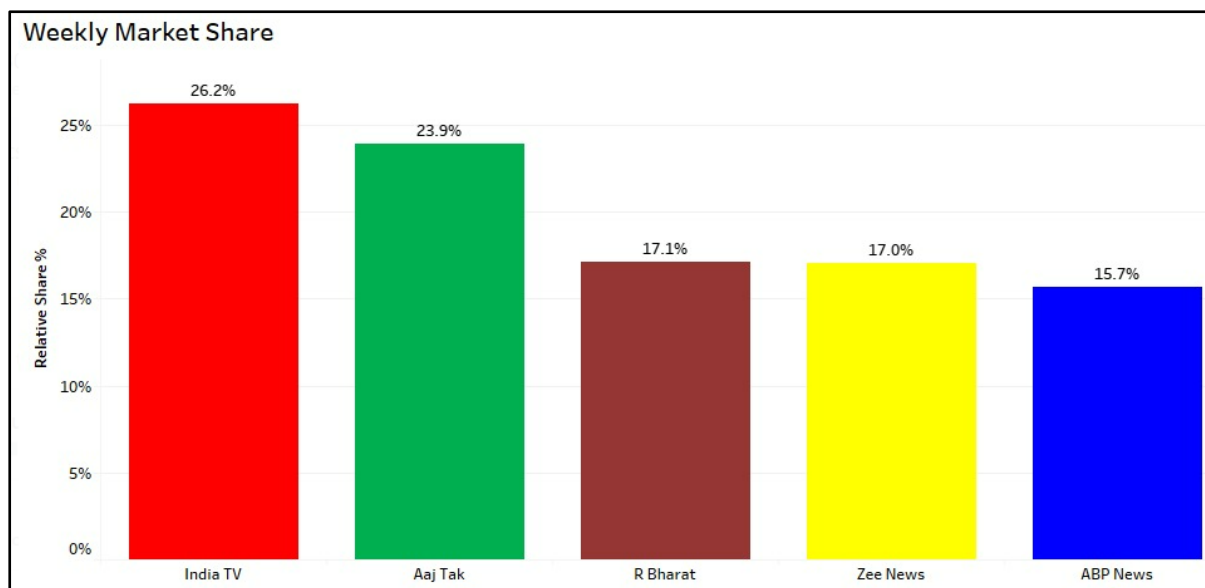
India's growing high-end goods and luxury market can bring new opportunities for Hindi news channels. To understand which News Channel will be preferred by Advertiser, we have dug out BARC NCCS A and Premium Audience Data provider Airtel Xstream. In both the data, India TV followed by AajTak are the most preferred channel by the Audience.

NCCS A Premium Audience (Share Percent)



(Source:- BARC, TG:- NCCS A, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, Rel Share)

Airtel Xstream(RPD data)



[Source: Airtel Xstream, 24Hrs, Market: HSM, Period: Wk 21'2022 to Wk 33'2022, Relative share among Top 5 SD Hindi News channels (Basis Total Watch Time)]

As a genre overall, news has been widely regarded as an undeniable frequency builder. But that does not kill the opportunity for news channels to onboard a brand like Michael Kors or Tanishq.

While the beauty or apparel industry, lifestyle, and health is seeing an influx of premium brands in recent times, the high-end market in India is also witnessing the entry of automobile brands, premium smartphones and appliance launches. For example, smartphone brands such as Google Pixel and iPhone are also reportedly mulling moving some of their productions to India. As a result, the number of luxury automobiles sold in India has also increased by over 50% in the first half of 2022, according to industry estimates.

Against this backdrop, news channels need to focus more on AFPs and Branded Segments and create their own influencers to change advertisers' perceptions. Speaking to the advertisers, we infer that the new channels must take some standard measures: introducing more positive news, a higher number of shows on in-depth analytical discussions, debates, and higher screen time for international news, among others. Along with programming, the news channels also require more credible faces as anchors with no evident political affiliations.

Among other Hindi news channels, India TV has an obvious advantage by having consistency in terms of the face of the channel. Rajat Sharma, one of India's most influential anchors and editors, has helped the news channel to attain brand value and credibility

among viewers. However, India TV too, like its peers in the Hindi news genre, needs to bring more innovation in programming to attain a more inclusive viewership, especially to increase female viewership. The tonality of addressing the viewers, especially during coverage of brutality and gender-based crime, can be a game changer too.

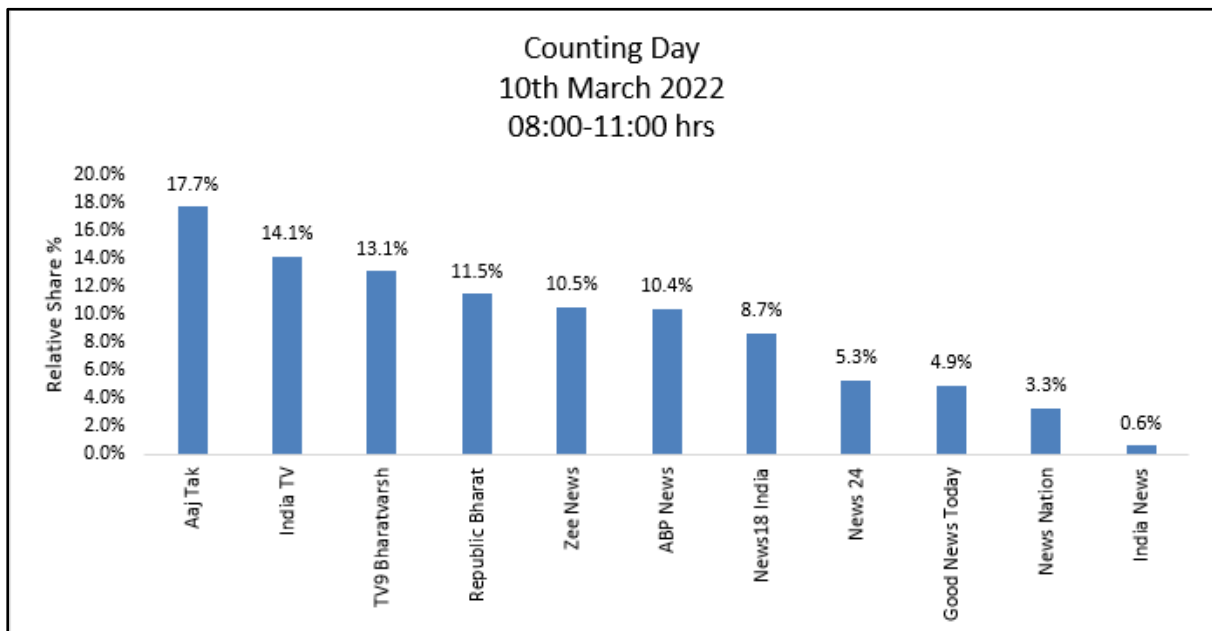
News Genre Expected To See Higher Growth

Election Coverage:

After 17 months of data blackout, when the news genre is slowly coming back on track, the timing could not be better for the news broadcaster as the country is looking at several elections from the end of 2022. Starting from Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat legislative assembly elections, it will culminate in the Lok Sabha election in 2024.

It is a no-brainer that elections in India are one of the most talked about events. During elections, the content takes away all the limelight, whether positive or negative. In addition, each and every stratum of Indian society have a view on elections.

Recently concluded UP Election counting hour saw change in historical ranking pattern. Genre was led by AajTak and India TV.



(Source : BARC, 10th Mar'22, 15+ HSM, Time band : 0800Hrs-1100Hrs, Relative Share in %)

The news channels with a bouquet of programs such as live coverage, breaking news, expert analysis, and pre-post poll surveys are bound to attract more eyeballs over the next two years.

Considerably, Hindi news channels garnered 62 crore Impressions on the counting day of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, according to BARC data. Hindi News channels were viewed by 27.9 crore people during that particular week, an increase of 30% against the average of the previous 4 weeks. Besides Hindi news channels, the overall news genre, including English and regional news channels, saw high growth in viewership during that period. With many elections scheduled over the next two years, the near-term future outlook for news channels looks positive.

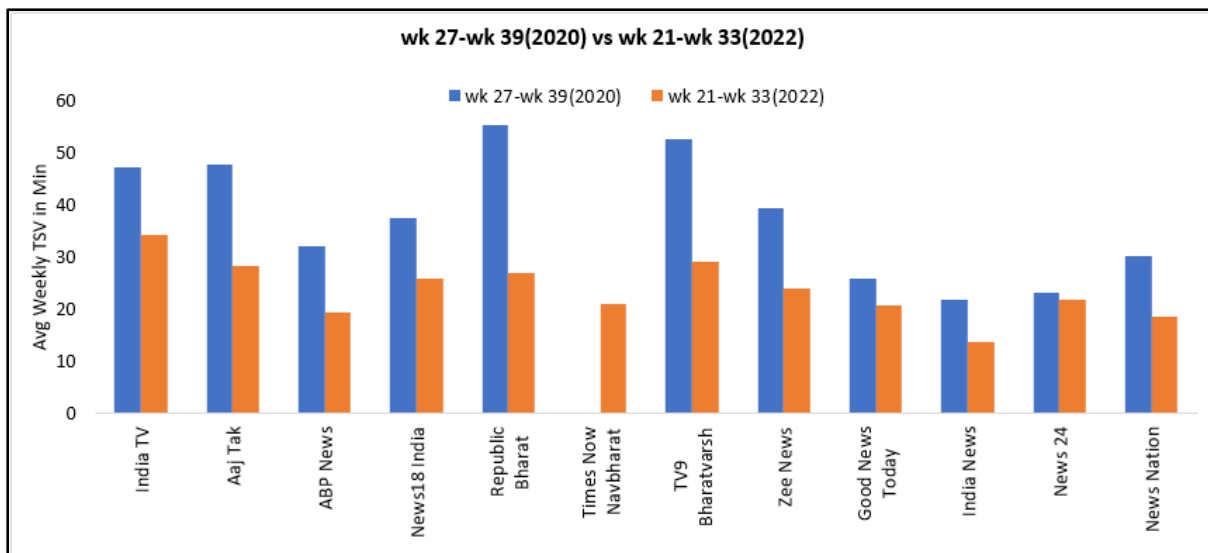
Festive Season:

The festive season is no longer region and a specific time window driven. It is an extended season between August and January. Also, it represents how the cultural construct is changing in India. A part of India gets influenced by many India. For example, the Ganpati festival is becoming huge in West Bengal, and Hyderabad lights up during Diwali. The brands also look at an extended festive season, from August to December. During this period, new age e-commerce, retail, and fashion-apparel brands also roll out multi-media advertising. As news channels are integral to any marketer's strategy, the 4-5 month-long festive season is also expected to open up more opportunities for broadcasters.

The common myth that people veer away from their typical media consumption habits during the festive season is also changing due to the extension of usual festivities. Moreover, certain focus group interactions suggest that TV viewing behaviour stays consistent mainly. Therefore, it is pretty evident that viewers will not put a pause on news consumption for almost nearly half of the year.

15+ TSV (Average Weekly)

As per Time spent (TSV), India TV leads the Hindi news genre with 34 mins in post BARC data release. Despite of a 13 mins loss in post Data release in BARC from Pre Data pause , still the channel has 17% higher time spent than its immediate competitor(TV9 Bharatvarsh).



(Source:- BARC, TG:- 15+, Mkt:- HSM, Period:- As mentioned, 0600 Hrs-2400 Hrs, Average weekly TSV in Minutes)

In 2021, television ad volumes during the festive season grew by 27% compared to 2019, as per a report by Ad Ex India, a division of TAM Media Research. The top categories in 2021 were e-commerce – media/entertainment/social media, milk beverages, shampoos, toothpaste, and toilet or floor cleaners. Besides, the top advertisers were Hindustan Unilever, Reckitt Benckiser (India), Cadburys India, Brooke Bond Lipton India, and Ponds India.

Despite macroeconomic headwinds, the overall sentiment around the festive season remains positive across the country. After two-pandemic stricken years, which resulted in subdued festive sales, this is also the first complete festive season without Covid-19 restrictions. As a result, offline retailers expect better footfalls this year along with e-commerce sales.

68% of Indians are excited about the upcoming festive season sales, an increase from 59% last year, a recent survey by [thetradedesk](#) said. Additionally, shoppers intend to spend as much or more this festive season compared to the previous festive season. The report also added that nearly 40% of consumers plan to start shopping in mid-October or earlier.

Brands across categories such as automobiles, consumer electronics, FMCG, and retail sectors are expected to increase marketing and advertising spend during the upcoming festive season at least by 10-20% from last year. Moreover, the media spending will get driven by TV and digital media.

Buzz For News Gaining Momentum

The discussion around the news business has always been around television as a medium. Therefore, it gets often ignored how the news broadcasters are expanding their footprints on the digital medium as well. All the well-known journalists and news anchors are also building their brands on social media platforms like Twitter. It adds to the value of their publications or news channels.

In 2021, online news had a reach of 467 million as compared to 503 million smartphones in India, as per ComScore data. However, industry experts believe the number will surpass 750 million by 2025.

For instance, India TV has a whopping 32.5 million subscribers on its [YouTube channel](#). Among all the shows available on the India TV YouTube channel, 'Aaj Ki Baat with Rajat Sharma' and 'Aap Ki Adalat' garner high viewership. In addition, the channel has 2.1 million followers on Twitter as well. More interestingly, Editor-In-Chief and Chairman Rajat Sharma has 10.1 million followers on Twitter alone.

It has now become necessary for Hindi news channels to build a robust footprint on Twitter, as nearly 50% of the tweets on the platform are non-English. With a well-rounded digital presence, it is no doubt that the Hindi news channels will attract more new-age brands who do not solely depend on TV viewership data for media planning.

Conclusion

Across genres, the consumers are looking at more progressive and relevant content. In addition, production value, high-tech equipment and localised content can make a news channel more credible and user-friendly. Therefore, the news channels have a scope to drive more viewership across time bands by experimenting with fresh content offerings. As a result, the ad rates would move up too. 'Despite the high ad volume in Hindi genre, the rates have remained stuck' as per Industry sources. Unfortunately, the genre lacks a sense of premium-ness as the Hindi consumer has a non-premium persona. Some experts and broadcasters feel that the industry and the major players should come together and present a unified front to advertisers and agencies to showcase the nuances of the markets and hold on to rates. As a result, the Hindi news genre should attract the same rates as its English counterparts.
