



Research Article

MEDIA COVERAGE OF VALENTINE'S DAY: IS MEDIA BIASED IN COVERING THE FESTIVAL?

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Abstract

Valentine's Day celebration in India has been much debated and covered by the media in the last couple of years. In the year 2009, far right Hindu activist from Sri Ram Sena to Bajrang Dal were involved in beating up unmarried couples and blackening their faces, as mark of shame for celebrating Valentine's Day. They claimed that the festival was a "western practice" and promotes "lust not love". Following this other Anti- Valentine's Day groups also expressed their views and this led to public debate about moral policing and Indian culture. However what is interesting to note is the fact how media covered. At one side media has played a big role in promoting it (for many reasons) and on the other hand it has also criticized it for cultural and religious concerns.

This research tries to explore in depth how media covers the festival with commercialization, culture, religion and politics in the backdrop. The research studies 9 newspapers of in 3 different languages, namely English, Hindi and Urdu. The study tries to find out whether media is biased in covering the festival or is it propagating an idea to its readers. The idea of taking 3 different languages is to draw a sharp comparison and contrast among the national and vernacular newspapers.

In order to find it, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been applied to the articles. Content analysis and Textual analysis are the important methods used to find out the statistics and underlying meanings behind these articles.

Keywords: Valentine's Day; media; newspapers; Hindu activist

Introduction and Background

Valentine's Day is a festival associated with romantic love and courtship. Though there are varying opinions and traditions associated to the origin of Valentine's Day, it is believed to be named after a Christian Saint called Saint Valentine. The day first became associated with romantic love in the circle of Geoffrey Chaucer in the middle ages, when the tradition of courtly love flourished. (Source: Henry Ansgar Kelly, in *Chaucer and the Cult of Saint Valentine* 1986). During 5th century Rome, the festival of Lupercalia was celebrated on 15th May. The celebration paid homage to the Gods Faunus and Remus as well as the twin brother Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome. Later on this festival was associated with love, fertility and courtship.

One school of thought believes that Saint Valentine was a Roman priest martyred for refusing to give up Christianity. Later, through his strong faith he healed the blind daughter

of his jailer and before his execution, sent for a farewell note signed, "From your valentine". Other historians believe that saint Valentine was a temple priest, who was jailed for defiance, in the year 270 AD, during the reign of Claudius. King Claudius believed that marriage was a distraction for the men in his army. He believed it made them weak. Saint Valentine was said to have performed many secret marriages of young lovers. When Claudius got to know about this, Saint Valentine was executed. And in his remembrance the day is believed to be celebrated.

Brosius (2010) in her research paper, "*Contesting emotions - Ritualizing Romantic love in Neoliberal Urban India*" writes "Valentine's Day started as early as in the mid-nineteenth century in Victorian England, expanded to the USA in the second half of the same century, and further spread across the globe in the 20th century, mostly related to Neoliberal economics and social change".

Thus there are many histories and traditions associated with it. In the 21st century, Valentine's Day is a day to express love, exchange gifts and chocolates and give cards to one another.

Celebration of Valentine's Day in Indian Context

With liberalization and globalization, Valentine's Day became a day of celebration for many young Indian couples in the early 1990's. This phenomenon was observed by the increasing number of Television and Radio programs and selling of Valentine's Day cards in Archie's and other card shops. Brosius (2009) observed, "Celebrated worldwide by ritualizing – and legitimizing – romantic sentiments of two people, Valentine's Day in India is nevertheless a highly contested and politicized occasion for many, both critics and supporters".

In the year 2008 and 2009, celebration of Valentine's Day was considered as "cultural contamination" from the West and as something against "Indian culture and tradition". The Hindu and Muslim traditionalists considered Valentine's Day a threat to their culture and tradition. Political parties like Shiv Sena and Sangh Parivar have asked their followers to shun the holiday because it is "alien to Indian Culture".

Despite these obstacles, Valentine's Day is becoming increasingly popular in India. However, leftist and liberal critiques of Valentine's Day remain strong in India. Valentine's Day has been strongly criticized from a postcolonial perspective by intellectuals from the Indian left. Many studies have shown that Valentine's Day promotes income inequality in India and aids in creation of pseudo westernized middle class, creating gap between the rich and poor. (Mankekar, Purnima, 'Screening, Culture, Viewing Politics', 1999). They also criticize mainstream media attacks on Indians opposed to Valentine's Day agenda.

Valentine's Day and Print Media

Media privatization, commercial growth and cultural heterogeneity have brought many changing patterns in the way romantic love is perceived now. In the year 2009, the Pink Chaddi Campaign (This campaign was started by the 'Consortium of Pub going', 'Loose and Forward Women' against the protesters of Valentine's Day namely political parties like Shiv Sena and Baj Rang Dal) brought a new wave of change in the way, Valentine's Day was perceived in India. It was through television, blogs and print media that the issue added fervor to the movement. There were many such similar incidents in favor and against Valentine's Day, that were covered differently by different mediums.

This research particularly studies the media coverage of Valentine's Day. One would observe that every year, Valentine's Day celebration is covered in the print media, using special features, supplements, news articles, and loads

of advertisements. Each of these has a purpose to achieve or a message to convey to its reader. Why it is that print media is so interested in covering the festival? This research paper basically focuses on the role of print media, the changing patterns and the motives with which an article is published in context to Valentine's Day. Further, the study explores how Indian newspapers of three different languages, have covered the same issue in strikingly different manner. The various trends would be discussed later in the chapters.

Review of Literature

Valentine's Day is a subject which has been explored by many historians, anthropologist and other research scholars. The festival is believed to have originated in the West but now it is celebrated all over the world. It is interesting to note how a global festival is understood, interpreted, and celebrated in a country like India which is full of cultural and religious diversity. Valentine's Day is basically associated with the idea of romantic love. However, in India, it has many other meanings and opinions attached to it, which are worth exploring. The mass media often portray myriad views and ideologies of the readers and this study explores the contested meanings attached to this day.

While several studies have focused on Valentine's Day, a review of literature did not yield any works on the media coverage of this day in the Indian context. This study will explore Indian media coverage of Valentine's Day by content analyzing newspapers of three different languages, namely Hindi, Urdu and English. In order to have a better understanding of Valentine's Day, and the media coverage it has received, the following section offers an account of studies conducted in other countries. Here are some of the common themes which are relevant to this study.

Local Treatment of a Global Festival

Valentine's Day is a festival that originated in the West and has become widely popular in the last decade. In the Indian scenario, it is observed that with the onset of globalization and liberalization in the 1990s, this festival became more popular as people became more open in discussing issues such as relationship, sexuality and romantic love. The whole concept of Valentine's Day began to be explored through different media like Archie's cards, advertisements, radio, print media and television.

Fair (2004) in her study, "'Me Do Wu,' My Val: The Creation of Valentine's Day in Accra, Ghana," explores the influence of African media in embracing an element of globally circulating mass culture, Valentine's Day, in Accra, Ghana. In her research, she studied three different media including radio, television and the print media. Her study explores the changing patterns of mass value culture of urban Africa. She tries to find out, how a global element like Valentine's Day, has been accepted by the society at a local level, that is, people celebrate it in local ways that are understood only by them.

According to her study, media companies draw the attention of people and advertisers to radio and television channels, by identifying the festival as worldly and modern. The study shows the gradual seeping in of modern ideas of romantic love, and opens opportunities for discourse on an otherwise difficult topic like love and sex.

She points out that even in Western countries many believe that it is a festival manufactured by the greeting card industry. But today in United States, Canada, Europe and Australia, the day is celebrated as a card and gift sharing day. In the year 2000, United States alone spent \$3.6 billion to celebrate Valentine's Day (Jan Scott 2001).

Flair (2004) observes that the celebration of Valentine's Day works for the elite in Ghana because it indicates buying power, associates a person with modern ideas of love and open opportunities for discourse on difficult subjects like sexual behavior and romantic love. A festival that is borrowed from abroad is altered to fit the local atmosphere. Flair (2004) further argues: "Valentine's Day is part of a complex set of imported and indigenous lifestyle markers that are used increasingly in urban Africa by individuals and social groups to construct identities as older and more traditional cultural norms and forms loosen their hold."

The methodology that she used involved, in depth interviews, surveys, small group discussions and a study of four newspapers, radio stations and advertisements. However, this study is focused on the Indian print media alone. The goal of this study is to show how Indian newspapers, which are published in different languages, frame the festival in different ways. This study will delve in depth into meaning construction of the Valentine's Day festival by Hindi, Urdu and English dailies in India.

In another study done by Christiane Brosius (2012) titled "Love in the Age of Valentine and Pink Underwear: Media and Politics of Intimacy in South Asia," the author explains how a global festival seeps into the local culture through local mediums thus shaping different opinions on the festival. The opening lines of her study read "The flow of transcultural images and media in times of contemporary globalization does not mean that we must anticipate a symmetrical and identical diffusion and reception" (Brosius, 2009).

Here, she clearly points that the holiday, in spite of being a global festival is not celebrated in a similar fashion all over the world. She has tried to explore the subject of love through images and media. And Valentine's Day is an important festival where such patterns can be located and deconstructed. Brosius (2009) points out that even though the festival has taken a global appeal, the patterns are "more complicated" and at times "contradictory" in the South Asian context.

In the very introduction, she examines how a globalised notion of love (Valentine's Day) circulates, with the help of images and media, how it changes speed, quality, and routes over time.

Different treatment of Valentine's Day by different media

As mentioned earlier, Valentine's Day began to be celebrated by Indians belonging to different class, age and cultural backgrounds even as liberalization and commercialization introduced many social changes. It no longer remained a festival of the elite class.

Brosius (2009), argues that "Valentine's Day greeting cards have substantially come to shape relations and practices, enabled to think, and experience, new emotions. Valentine's Day and its ritualized paraphernalia contributed to the aesthetic dimension of life style in urban environments. Most of all, it helped shape the idea that one has to 'work' to make love work; i.e. To be – and stay - in love."

She conducted an in depth study of the ways in which greeting cards serve as an important medium to generate a particular emotion or express uncomfortable feelings of romantic love which otherwise is difficult to convey. She also points out that these cards may also generate the desire to be in love. She writes, "Valentine's Day greeting cards have substantially come to shape relations and practices, enabled to think, and experience, new emotions."

Although the current study focuses on the coverage of Valentine's Day in newspapers alone, it also tries to analyze the gamut of messages that newspapers convey to their readers at large that are contrasting in nature. Further, this study will also attempt to find out why such a pattern exists and what a particular newspaper tries to achieve by doing that.

In another study titled "Contesting Emotions. Ritualizing Romantic Love in Neoliberal Urban India," Brosius (2010) discusses the portrayal of love and Valentine's Day through different mediums like cards, Indian cinema and public places. She points that, "Indian Valentine's Day cards are a part and parcel of a dating culture, of new urban sites of consumption and leisure, and of an oscillating movement of youth between public and private. As far as V-Day cards are concerned, it is 'easier' and seen to be more sophisticated to express love in English." She points out that 'new media' help cultivate new emotions and feelings. The various media become "care takers" and "teachers" of emotions.

Brosius (2010) in her paper has studied various kinds of cards and images that exist in public sphere. She points out that cards in English are far more expressive than in any other language. A similar comparison can be drawn between English, Hindi and Urdu newspapers.

This study explores similar frames and meanings of Valentine's Day. Newspapers of three languages were

chosen as they offer a wide scope to explore the different sections of society in terms of class, religion and culture.

Valentine's Day: Social and Political Meanings

Flair (2004) writes that media depictions of Valentine's Day and its various social and political meanings were observed through different newspapers in the National Archives, the contemporary press, and radio and television programming and advertisements aired in 2002. Flair (2004) further points out that, "Social-sexual tensions permeate popular culture as well. Popular news-paper advice columns in the *Mirror* and the *Spectator* help readers navigate sticky relationship problems". (P. 39)

In her study, she discovered different opinions on Valentine's Day. She writes:

"The strongest objections to Valentine's Day are moral. The Reverend Apostle Kwamena Ahinful opined in the Mirror: '[Val Day] is simply the indulgence of sensual pleasure or lusty love, and it is this which greatly peeves religious leaders who consider that Valentine's Day has veered off its divine love course into what is morally demeaning, erotic, and lewd!' (Feb. 15, 1997). He continued on the same theme the following year: 'Once again, the Valentine feast has come off with its lovers day preachments. And that is today, February 14. But if you ask me what is this Valentine for? I won't hesitate to answer that it is for sheer encouragement of people to drink and indulge in boozing binges, erotic pleasures, and prurient sexuality. That's the long and short of this Valentine which is feverishly gripping our society. Nothing more' (Mirror, Feb. 14, 1998)" (Flair, 2004, p. 46).

Brosius (2009) talks about the Indian society and observes: that Valentine's Day has become a 'ritual of self-display and self-creation' for youngsters and married couples. With the celebration of 'being in love', the festival also underlines the pleasure of dating and dining, of consumption and public declaration of emotions as 'pleasure'. Here, she rightly points out that Valentine's Day in India is highly contested and political.

In the year 2009, few party members of the Hindu nationalists 'Sri Ram Sena' attacked a lounge bar *Amnesia* in Mangalore. They beat up many young couples, especially women, arguing that those women were violating the Indian culture and tradition. The situation got so worse that two women had to be hospitalized. Interestingly all of this was covered by media, either by chance or plan. The whole incident was shown on various news channels adding more hatred and rise of sentiments among the Indian Middle

class. This led to a debate about moral policing and Indian tradition.

Hereby, one clearly observes the role of media, be it television or print when it comes to shaping people's opinion or propagating an idea. The role of media is critical in this case as it heats up the emotions of public, adding fuel to the fire.

After that incident, Promod Muthalik, Shiv Sena leader, was arrested for alleged acts of violence, but he continued with the agenda of moral policing and gave speeches, which the mainstream media covered differently. Some media covered it in depth; some covered only one side of the story, while others didn't cover at all. This study will illuminate similar comparisons in newspaper coverage of Valentine's Day 2010.

Brosius (2009) makes an important observation in this context: "The use of media as a threatening tool of exposure in an increasingly media-savvy and "reality TV" oriented urban society is to be taken seriously. Muthalik referred to Valentine's Day as a "Christian" festival and demanded that it to be celebrated in churches rather than "in public".

What is interesting to note here and link with Valentine's Day is the fact that how culture, tradition, gender, sexuality and religion are closely entwined. Pulling even one of these strings has far reaching consequences. And the chemistry that exists among the above elements is something that needs to be studied.

She further explains how this issue was not just highlighted in television or print media but also in other online public sphere like Facebook (social networking website) and blogs. The Pink Chaddi campaign and the public outrage were reflected through these mediums.

Somini Sengupta (2002) article titled "Bombay Journal; Oh, the Heartache! They Want Cupid Banished" explores the reasons why political parties are setting an agenda against Valentine's Day. She quotes one of the leaders of Shiv Sena who says, "Drinking, dancing. Drinking, dancing. These two D's are destroying us. If our boys go and demonstrate in front of those shops, we cannot stop them. We have not asked them to demonstrate, but they might do."

Sengupta (2002) observes that, Hindu fundamentalist political parties like the Shiv Sena are a very powerful force in the city and the state government. It sees Cupid, the symbol of love, as the very embodiment of Western Culture. Sengupta (2002) further points out:

"What is certain is that their crusade against Cupid is merely the latest sign of a creeping Puritanism that aims to make this India metropolis less freewheeling. The passion over Feb. 14 is just the latest effort by the Shiv Sena, a coalition partner in the national government led by the

Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, to weigh in on Bombay's cultural life.”

One thing that is common among all these researches is that they all bring out the political side of the whole story. Flair and Brosius have both pointed out that the festival has become highly politicized in the last decade. In my research I would try to explore how in India, the holiday has become major peg for political and religious issue and has brought time and again in the newspapers belonging to different languages.

Commercialization of the festival

An article published in United Press International (UPI.com) titled, “Nations say Valentine’s too commercialized” in February 2011, points out that Valentine’s Day has been commercialized in various countries like China and America. The Research with Survey Sampling International indicates that 50% of the Chinese and 42% of the people in United States say that they do not plan to celebrate Valentine’s Day, while in other countries; most people are planning no celebration. The findings are based on a study of more than 5000 adults drawn, from SSI’s online panels from the countries: United States, Britain, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. The author writes, “In the United States, 52 percent say they plan to give gifts and 50 percent say they plan to go out to dinner. Fifty-seven percent of U.S. consumers say they plan to give a present, but 67 percent say they expect to receive a present in return, the survey says”.

Fair (2004) also observes that some Ghanians regret the commercialization of the holiday, the cost of gift, and the grossness of promotions. Flair writes, “Val Day in Accra would be a far lesser holiday if it were not for radio and television promotion. Picked up from media promotion handbooks produced in the United States, Valentine’s Day came to Accra prepackaged in a rarefied state of hype.

If one talks about India, Valentine’s Day celebrations are not a new phenomenon. The day is not just celebrated among lovers, but also among friends, family members and relatives. One would observe that commercialization and consumerism is growing with new products in the market. Weeks before Valentine’s Day, the preparation gets started and media plays an important role in promoting it.

Criticism of the festival

Charu Gupta (2002) in her study titled “(Im) possible Love and Sexual Pleasure in Late-Colonial North India” explores how unconventional love was expressed in late colonial north India, especially Uttar Pradesh, in literary genres, newspapers and in actual practices. It probes the portrayal of Hindu publicists, mainly of conventional love, inter religious romance and elopement. This was covered in detail in various newspapers and some popular novels.

During the late colonial North India, the incidents of abduction, ill-treatment and harassment was very recurrent.

Gupta (2002) tries to examine how Hindu columnists wrote about the ill-treatment and abduction of Hindu women by Muslim men. These articles were very communal in tone. They were one sided and many a times they lacked objectivity and seemed too general in tone. Interestingly most of these newspapers were owned by Hindus and so they came up with such articles.

The above mentioned research just touches upon the issue of Valentine’s Day but does not study it in depth. The research explores the idea of unconventional love, and how it has been covered in literary genres and contemporary newspaper.

Westernisation, Culturalism, Nationalism

An article in The Pioneer newspaper titled “Liberty is not Libertinism” by Kanchan Gupta published on April 7, 2011, where the author argues that the idea of protesting against Valentine’s Day should not be considered as negative or something conservative. He doesn’t justify the Shiv Sena, nor does he justify their actions. Gupta questions, “Who is to tell The Consortium of Pubgoing, Loose and Forward Women, and their guardian angel Renuka Choudhury, that a vegetarian and a teetotaler, whether a man or a woman, who finds ‘pub culture’ abhorrent and distasteful, or those who reject conspicuous consumption since it clashes with their middle class values, can also be ‘forward’ and ‘modern’ in their personal lives?”

Here, Gupta in his article doesn’t support the protesters of Valentine’s Day but at the same time doesn’t say anything against it. It is interesting to note how each of these writers have different understanding and notion of freedom of expression and lifestyle. He tries to bring in Social reformers like Raja Rammohan Rai and Ishawar Chandra Vidyasagar saying that these were the people who brought drastic change in society like women emancipation and widow remarriage, without abandoning culture and tradition. The point here to be noted is that how writers in print media represent different notions of ‘modernism and freedom’ when it comes to Valentine’s Day. Culture and Indian tradition is an important backdrop among many such articles.

If one sees the world’s scenario then, Valentine’s Day is not appreciated worldwide: it was banned in several countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, claiming that it brings along westernisation or Christianisation as its temptations. The regional Hindu chauvinist party Shiv Sena in Mumbai identified Valentine’s Day with ‘prostitution day’, vulgar, shameless and opposed to Indian culture. They believe that Valentine’s Day is turning the youth away from the Indian culture, traditions and values.

This a trend that one notices in India, however, the fact that print media covers it in depth or not at all, 'how' it covers it, with what context and opinions, is something that needs to be studied.

Based on the above review of literature and keeping the goals of this study in mind, the following research questions were formulated:

Research Questions

- Are English, Hindi and Urdu newspapers in India biased while covering Valentine's Day?
- Is media trying to propagate an idea or an opinion to its reader regarding Valentine's Day?

Hypothesis

English, Hindi and Urdu newspapers in India are biased while covering Valentine's Day.

The English newspapers have commercialized it. The Hindi newspapers have neutral approach to it, while Urdu newspapers are highly critical of it.

The number of articles published on Valentine's Day, drastically vary in English, Hindi, and Urdu newspapers. English newspapers cover the maximum while Urdu newspapers have had the least the number of articles.

Methodology of the Research

This study combines quantitative and qualitative methods including both content analysis and textual analysis to get a more detailed picture of newspaper coverage of Valentine's Day festivities.

Content Analysis

According to Bernard Belson , Content Analysis can be shortly defined as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1974)

Here "objectivity" is achieved by making different categories for the data in such a manner that even if someone else applies different data to it, the person would get his/her own the content analysis. Therefore, the results depend on the method and not the analyst.

"Systematic means" means that a particular set of methods is applied to all content that is to be analysed and the

categories that are made are such that it becomes relevant to the hypothesis of the research.

It is "a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding" (Stemler 2001). It often involves building and applying a "concept dictionary" or fixed vocabulary of terms on the basis of which words are extracted from the textual data for concordancing or statistical computation.

Quantitative means simply the recording of numerical values or the number of times a particular content occurs.

Manifest content means the apparent content, which means that content must be coded as it appears rather than as the content analyst feels it is intended.

According to Berelson, following are the possible uses of content analysis

- Reveal international difference in communication content
- Spot the existence of propaganda
- Identifying the intentions of a particular group.
- Analysing the attitudinal and behavioral responses to communications.

Qualitative Analysis

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2003), qualitative analysis is a non-quantitative type of analysis which is aimed at finding out the quality of a particular phenomenon

Textual Analysis

This include: semiotics, rhetorical analysis, ideological analysis, and psychoanalytic approaches, among many others. These types of analysis seek to get beneath the surface (denotative) meanings and examine more implicit (connotative) social meanings.

Selection of Samples

This research tries to draw a comparison as to how differently the three print media (English, Hindi and Urdu newspapers) covered news on Valentine's Day in the year 2010. For this purpose I chose 9 newspapers, listed in Table 1.

Table 1: List of newspapers studied during the present investigation

ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS	HINDI NEWSPAPERS	URDU NEWSPAPERS
1. THE TIMES OF INDIA	1. RASHTRIYA SAHARA	1. RASHTRIYA SAHARA
2. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES	2. NAVBHARAT TIMES	2. SAHAFAT
3. INDIAN EXPRESS	3. HINDUSTAN	3. AWAAM

Therefore a total of 9 newspapers were selected. Using, random sampling method, I used 3 newspapers from each languages, that come under the top ten newspapers in India, according to the Indian Readership Survey (IRS). The fact that these newspapers were circulated in New Delhi was also kept in mind.

All the above mentioned 3 English language newspapers i.e. *The Times of India*, *The Hindustan Times* and *Indian Express*, were available online. Hindi and Urdu newspaper's past one year archive was impossible to access. Hindi newspapers, namely, *Rashtriya Sahara*, *Navbharat Times*, and *Hindustan*, were accessed from their respective libraries. The Urdu newspaper *Rashtriya Sahara* was accessed through the library while, the other two *Sahafat* and *Awam* articles were taken through my own collection.

Why the Three Languages?

This research purposefully chose these three languages because it aims English, Hindi and Urdu are the major spoken languages in India. The Hindi and English newspapers have the maximum readership while Urdu hasn't. All of them have a different target audience but completely different approach towards the festival. It is interesting to note that local language newspapers play an important role in shaping the trend in society. Print media through different languages has the potential of shaping up a perspective among its readers. The three languages are also symbolic of the national and the local print media and draw a sharp comparison in spite of being published in the same city.

Why These Newspapers?

I choose these newspapers in order to draw a comparison between the national dailies and the local dailies. How a particular global phenomenon like Valentine's Day is being addressed in different manner by three different languages.

The newspapers were also chosen on the basis of availability and accessibility. All the English newspapers were available online. The Hindi newspapers were difficult to access and had to be taken from the respective media libraries. Same was the case with Urdu newspapers. I was particularly interested in Urdu newspapers as it targets to only one type of readers, particularly Muslims for that matter. It brought in the perspective of a Muslim majority from a media's point of view. And how far is that true in reality, is something that needs to be addressed.

Applied Methodologies

The content analysis was done by coding all the data into different categories so that comparison and contrasting could be done easily. The same coding was applied to all 160 articles. The categories were further divided into different sub categories. This adds more credibility and objectivity to the research. The research was basically analytical, because different relationships were observed

and studied. There were various categories. Some categories like date, word count, dateline, number of photos etc were able to bring out the factual analysis of the data. While categories like 'tone of the story' or 'type of source' or 'primary and secondary topic', brought more in depth findings and details. Following are the categories and sub-categories. This research uses both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods.

Period of Research

The period of research was the January and February. The reason being, that this is the only time when the newspapers publish articles on Valentine's Day. Of course, the maximum articles were published on the day of Valentines Day, one day before it and one day after it.

For the same reason, all the articles that were published on Valentine's Day are taken as sample for textual analysis.

Data Analysis

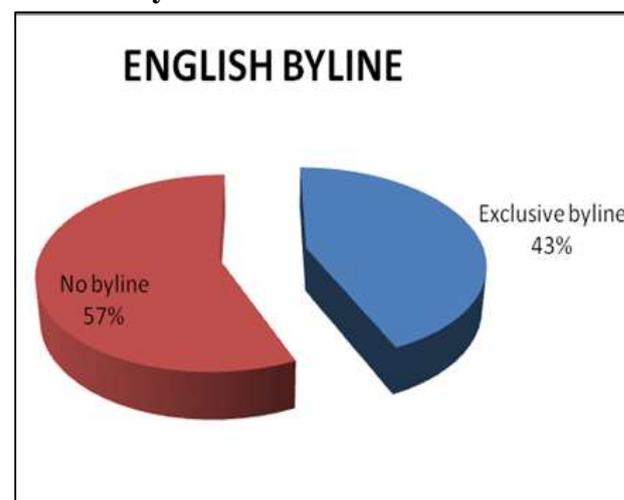


Fig. 1: Out of 76 English articles, 33 of them have exclusive byline

The result shows that 43% of a total of 76 articles carried exclusive byline stories. This means that 57% of the article that carried no byline either carried the name of the agency from which the article was taken or read 'special correspondent' (Fig. 1). Interestingly most of these articles (with no byline) were commercial in their opinion. They talked about a particular gift shop or a restaurant, which seemed more like a 'paid news' rather than an objective approach towards it. Since majority of the articles in English are from the 'Times of India', most of them don't carry an exclusive byline, thus helping in supporting the hypothesis.

Secondly the quality of both these types of news articles, differ a lot in terms of the way they have dealt with Valentine's Day. These two aspects have later been discussed with illustration, in the 'Discussion' section of the research. This factor helps and supports the hypothesis of my research.

In case of Hindi news articles, the trend seems to change, as 67% of them carry no byline. However, the point to be noted here is that, the trend that is noticed in English articles is not the same here. In fact it is the other way round. Most of these articles talk about relationships only (Fig. 2). There were very few articles that dealt with entertainment or politics. The articles seem to be more balanced in their approach. This fact helps in supporting the hypothesis of my research.

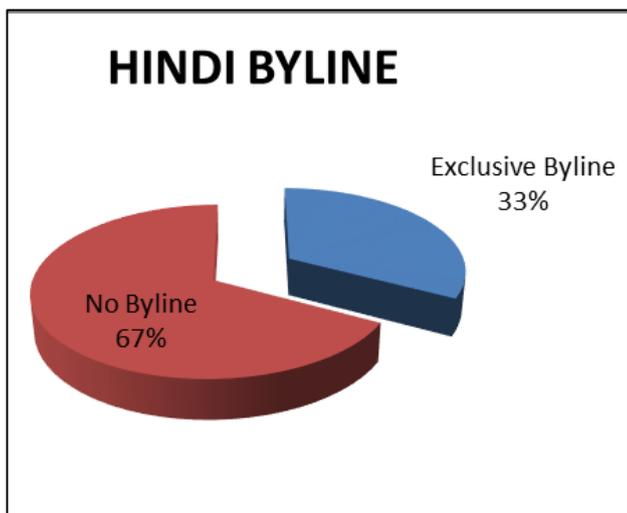


Fig. 2: Out of 61 articles Hindi articles, 20 have exclusive byline.

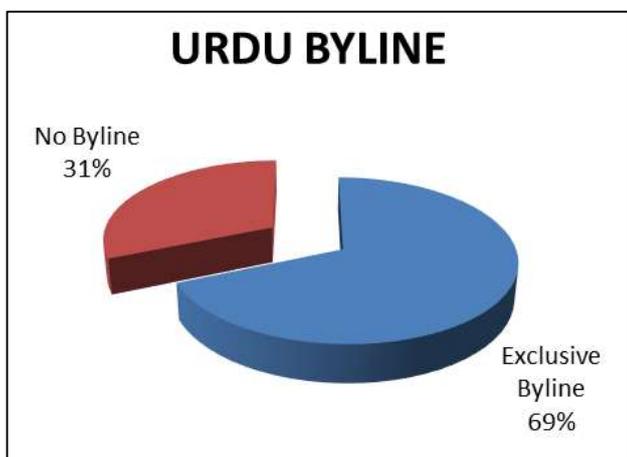


Fig. 3: Out of 22 Urdu Articles, 7 articles have exclusive byline.

In case of Urdu articles, 69% of the articles carried an exclusive byline (Fig. 3). There can be various reasons for the same. The primary reason being, that the readership of these newspapers is not very high as compared to Hindi and English newspapers. Secondly, since the readership is not good, perhaps there is no particular agency form which they take their news and that is why these articles are mainly written by freelance journalist. Most of these articles are highly opinionated and critical in their approach towards the festival. This strongly supports the hypothesis of my

research and has later been discussed in detail with illustrations.

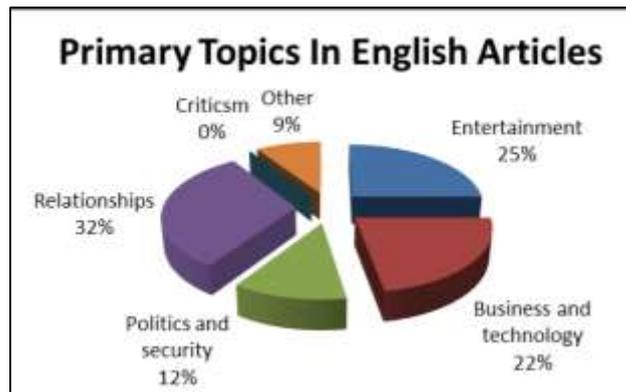


Fig. 4: Various categories in 76 English articles

The primary topic in most of the English newspaper articles was relationship, which was 32%. The other important topics were entertainment (25%) and business (22%) (Fig 4). Not a single article criticized the concept of Valentine’s Day, while Hindi and Urdu newspapers do. It is interesting to note that, these articles started with the ‘relationship’, but the topic didn’t last long. The second paragraph would be about completely different aspect like bollywood or commercial side of the story. This has been explained with illustrations, in the Discussion section, and helps in supporting the hypothesis of my research.

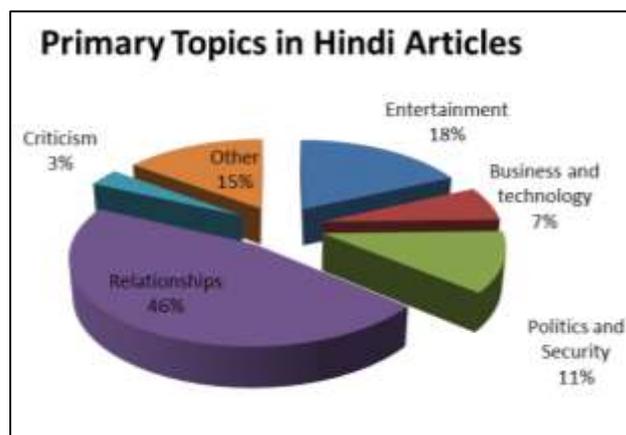


Fig. 5: Various Categories in 61 Hindi articles

Almost of half of the articles in the Hindi newspapers had the primary topic as relationships (46%). This fact has also been observed in the Exclusive byline section. There are very few articles that transgress into another topic like business or entertainment, but majority of them carry the same topic (relationship) throughout. While other primary topics were entertainment (18%) and politics (11%). Here the business angle constitutes just 7% of the total articles unlike the English articles that constitutes 22% of all the articles. Only 3 % of the articles criticized the concept of Valentine’s Day unlike English (0%) and Urdu (33%) (Fig. 5). The following facts have been further explained with

examples from the text of the story. This in many ways helps in supporting the hypothesis of my research.

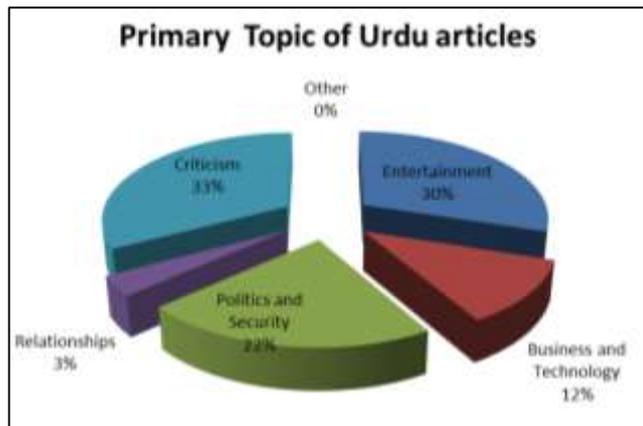


Fig. 6: Various Categories in Urdu Articles

The primary topics in case of Urdu articles is divided into three major categories namely –

Criticism of Valentine’s Day- 33%

Entertainment- 30%

Politics- 22%

This is one of the major findings of my research. 33% of the articles had the primary topic as ‘criticism’ and 100% of these articles didn’t have a secondary topic. However, there are other topics like entertainment and politics that have also been dealt. It is interesting to note that only 3% of the Urdu articles talked about relationships, which constitute the primary topic in English and Hindi articles. Surprisingly none of the articles in the English newspapers have criticized the concept of Valentine’s Day and only 3% of the Hindi articles have done so (Fig. 6). These findings have been explained in the Discussion section of the research. They are helpful in supporting the hypothesis of my research.

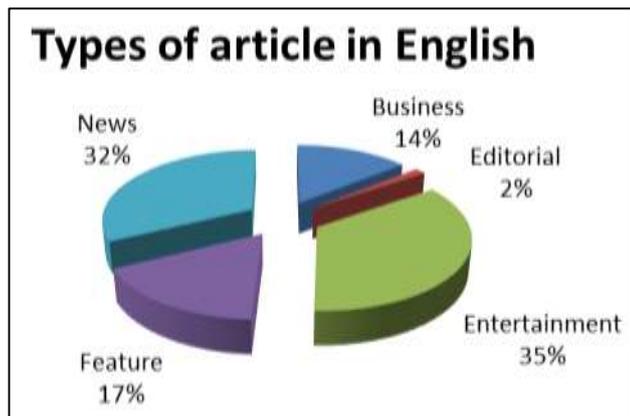


Fig 7: Types of articles in English

Fig. 7 shows 35% of all the articles fall into the category of entertainment where they mostly deal with celebrities and bollywood stars. Rest fall in the categories of news (32%), feature (17%), business (14%) and editorial (2%).

Interestingly food, wine and restaurants were the main elements of articles under entertainment category. This would be explained with citations and illustrations in the later chapters.

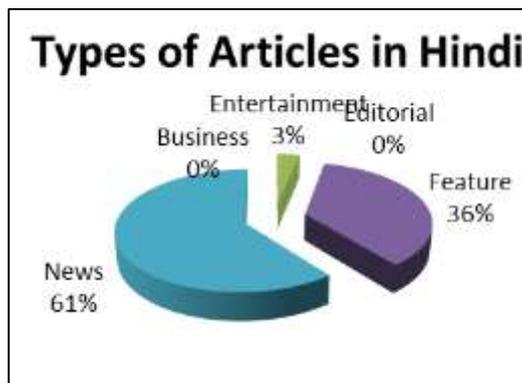


Fig. 8: Types of articles in Hindi

In Hindi articles, 61% of the articles were hard core news. Though most of these news were Delhi based, but Nav bharat Times published many news from different parts of the country (Fig. 8). There was news about honour killing in various parts of the country. Other news stories dealt with issues like, the opinion of older generation about Valentine’s Day, or some case studies of couples who decided to get married on their own and didn’t follow the traditional method, like arrange marriage or so. Other news items were stories about the protest by Bajrang Dal or Shiv Sena. Some news told about different places in Delhi, where a couple could hang out. Some touched upon the security issues as well. This finding has been further discussed in the Discussion section of the research. It helps in supporting the hypothesis of my research.

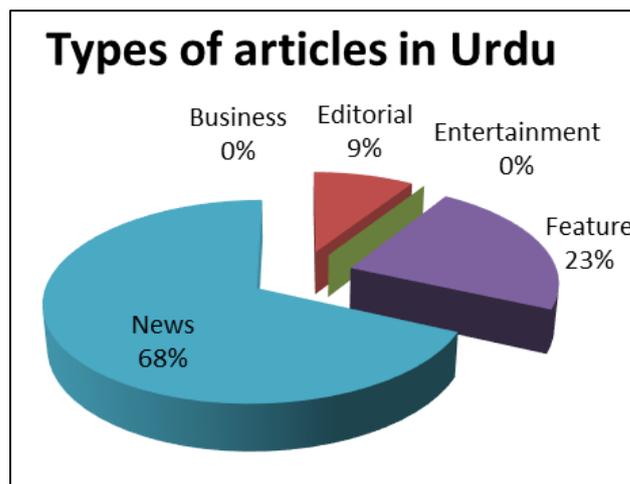


Fig. 9: Types of articles in Urdu

Most of the articles in Urdu newspapers fall in the category of News. This constitutes 68% of the articles. While other articles fall in the category of Feature (23%) and Editorial (9%) (Fig. 9). The news was mainly about the criticism of Valentine’s Day and the repercussions of celebrating this day. Others had a balanced point of view towards the

festival. Interestingly, 9% of all the articles in Urdu were in the editorial section which is nil in the case of English and Hindi newspapers. The reasons and content of these articles would be dealt in detail with illustrations in the Discussion section of the research paper.

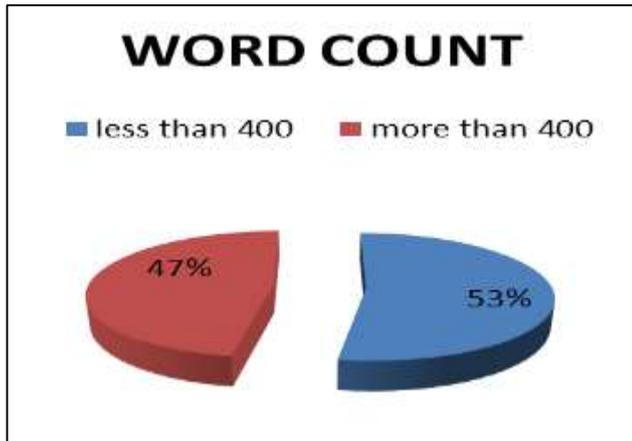


Fig 10: Word count in English newspapers

It is evident from Fig.10 that 53% of the articles in the English were more than 400 words. This shows that the amount of coverage given to Valentine’s Day is far more than in Hindi or English Newspapers. This helps in supporting the hypothesis of my research.

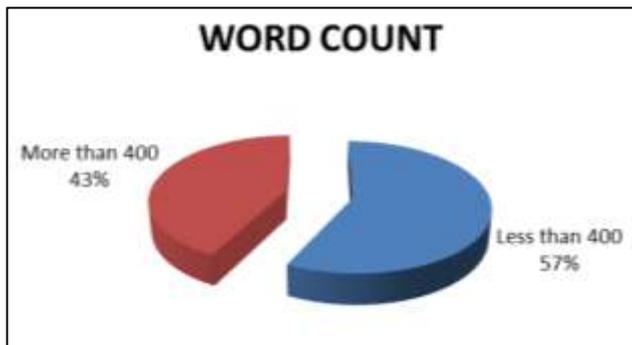


Fig 11: Word count in Hindi newspapers

Fig. 11 shows that only 43% of the articles are more than 400 words which is lesser in percentage as compared to English articles.

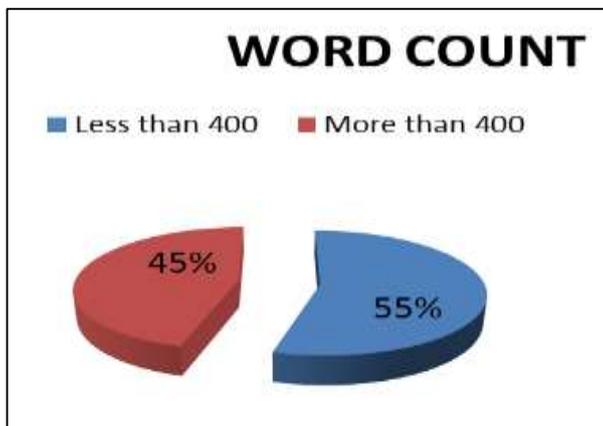


Fig 12: Word count in Urdu newspapers

Most of the Urdu articles were short and usually placed in between other stories as sub stories. While there were some articles that were there in the editorial section and were more than 400 words (Fig 12).

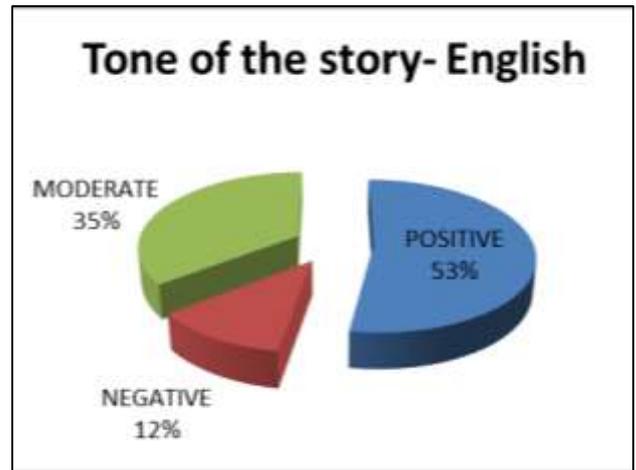


Fig. 13: Tone of article- English

This is one of the most important finding of my research. 53% of the articles carried an overall positive tone in the story. It mostly talked about how to celebrate the day, what all things to do, what are the places to go and so on. Though most of them touched upon the commercial side of it. While 35% of them were neutral and balanced in their tone. Only 12% of them had a negative tone (Fig. 13). The stories that carried negative tone, usually criticized the commercial side of it. All these factors have been dealt in detail with illustrations in the Discussion section of the research. This being the most important finding, along with other sub finding would help in supporting the prime hypothesis of my research.

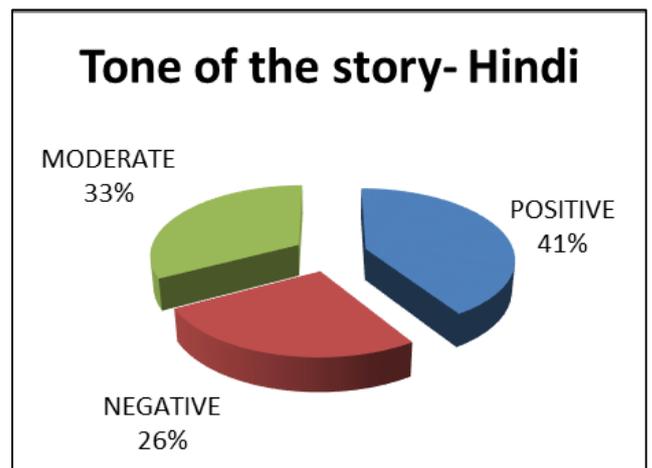


Fig. 14: Tone of the story in Hindi

The tone of the story in Hindi newspapers is far more balanced in their approach as in contrast to English and Urdu. 41% of them were positive in tone, 33% neutral, and 26% negative. Even the 26% that are categorized as negative are dealing with issues like commercialization, protests, and political colour to the whole festival (Fig. 14).

They don't openly oppose it and at the same time are also not against it. This finding is helpful in the supporting the hypothesis of my research. The finding would further be illustrated with other examples.

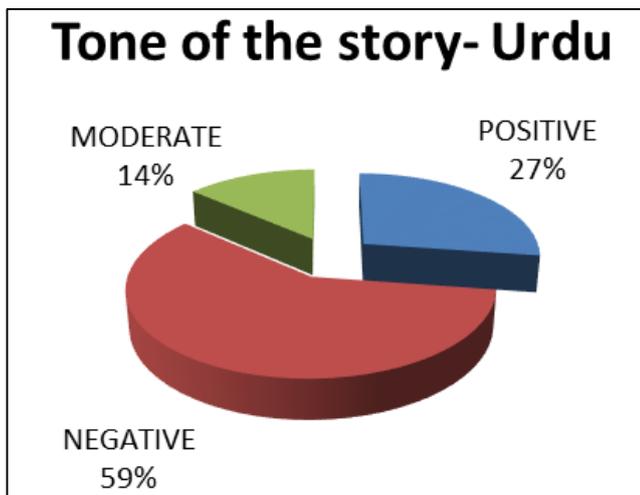


Fig. 14: Tone of the story in Urdu

It is evident from the Fig. 14 that 59% of the articles carried a negative tone. Few articles openly criticized the concept of Valentine's Day and the rest conveyed a similar message by covering issues pertaining to protests, and warnings issued by Hindu and Muslim political and religious leaders, respectively. Only 14% of the articles were moderate in nature. While 27% read positively. These 27% usually talked about this festival as a day of celebration for not just couples but also among kids, friends and family members. They also dealt with Bollywood stars. Some of these articles were fictitious stories on romance and love, which surprisingly wasn't there in other English and Hindi newspapers. It is important to note that the newspapers like Awam and Sahafat, carried a special editorial column on Valentine's Day and explored all the aspects of it. The same has not been done by English or Hindi newspapers. Both these newspapers are local in nature and reflect on various other issues. This would be discussed with examples in the Discussion section of the research. This being the major finding supports the hypothesis of my research.

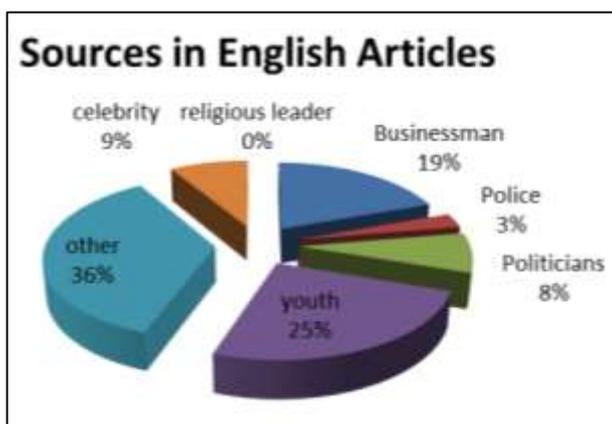


Fig. 15: Sources in English articles

Most of their sources were youth (25%) and businessmen (19%). While major chunk of it fall into the category of other (36%). The doctors, counselors, and historians etc. Those stories that were purely commercial had quotes from the businessman, talking about the sale of a particular item during Valentine's Day (Fig. 15).

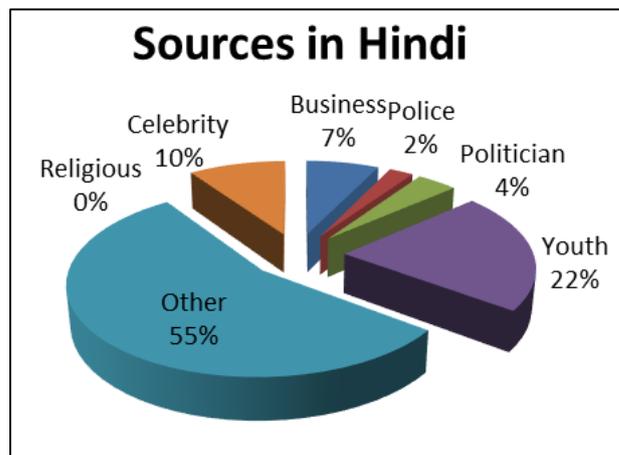


Fig. 16: Sources in Hindi articles

Most of the sources in Hindi articles fall into the category of 'others'. Those articles that had no quotes also fall into the category of 'other'. It also includes people like doctor, historians, social worker etc. Other sources include youth (22%), celebrity (10%), businessmen (7%), politician (4%) and police (2%) (Fig. 16).

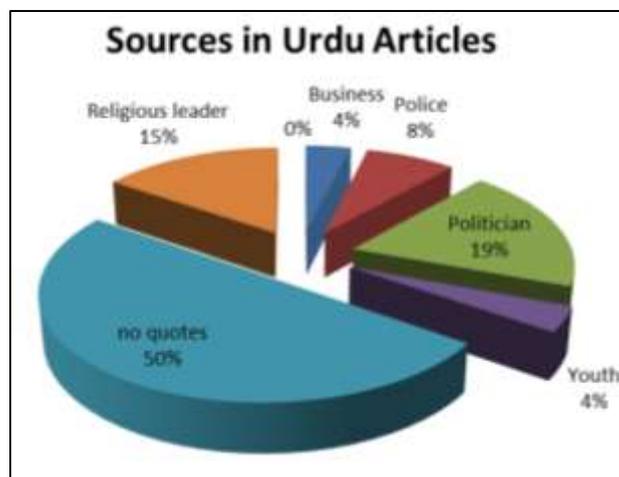


Fig. 17: Sources in Urdu articles

In case of Urdu Articles, 64% of the articles had no quotes. Rest of the quotes was either from a political leader (19%) or religious leader (15%). This finding helps in supporting the hypothesis of my research. And has been explained later in the paper (Fig. 17).

Textual Analysis

Much has been debated about Valentine's Day and its rising popularity among the masses in the subcontinent. A careful analysis of how newspapers published in the three major Indian languages namely, Hindi, Urdu n English, treat such

a popular event is an opportunity for us to understand such differences. For the purpose of analyzing these articles, all the articles published on 14th February 2010 were examined. There were a total of 71 articles in all the three newspapers. In the three English newspapers there were a total of 28 articles published on Valentine's Day. In the three Hindi Newspapers, there were 29 articles published and in the three Urdu newspapers there were just 14 articles. The following themes were identified during a textual analysis of the articles.

A commercialized festival: An opportunity for businesspersons and entrepreneurs

A textual analysis of the articles shows that popular English and Hindi newspapers have stayed clear from critiquing the "event" in any way. In newspapers such as *The Times of India*, the kind of news coverage is highly supportive and the paper takes on the role of a promoter rather than a neutral observer. This is understandable as in these times of increased competition where competition is tough, it is simple business sense to shift focus from serious journalism to stories that sell and rake in more business. Valentine's Day is one such big opportunity. Farmer's suicide is not.

No wonder apart from the kind of support the event has enjoyed in the articles of the popular newspapers (*The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*) ample ad space too is dedicated in promoting the Day. The goal is clear: Keep the youth engaged, tell them what's in and what's not, and thus get more business for the paper. The market clearly dictates the terms here.

For example, in an article titled "Love Bite" published in *The Indian Express* by Prabhjot Sohal, the author enumerates what is special for couples at hubs like Khan Market and Basant Lok. He arouses interest amongst the readers by describing interesting food items and romantic places. The subtitle "feel the love, after your meal" sets the tone of what's to follow. Words used in the article include "libido enhancing foods," "infused with aphrodisiac potions," "love concoctions" (Sohal, 2010). The tone and choice of words draw attention of the reader and arouse a sense of desire among them.

What follows is a list of eating outlets and their special offers for the day accompanied by price tags. The author even takes care to pinpoint the geographical location of one of the restaurants, Sartoria, "situated right next door to Kvlin" just in case the reader misses the point. So the focus of the story is eating out and having fun on Valentine's Day. The title of the article suggests that food and love go hand in hand and celebrating Valentine's Day without it would be boring.

Another article published in *The Times of India* titled, "Time to Indulge" brings out a flat one-dimensional perspective of a company and what its promoters have to

offer. The article featured in the most highly circulated English language newspaper is talking about one of the many escapades that companies and business enterprises unfailingly launch to leverage the high demand of a unique experience this day. This article reads more like an advertisement than a feature story. It is replete with information about the company, the packages it offers, the cost and duration, etc. The language, the choice of words such as "half-hour sojourn in the skies..", "joyride", "romancing the sky, one-hour experience", "shared thrill of a balloon flight" create interesting visuals in the reader's mind.

Another article in *The Times of India*, titled, "Say It With Flowers" by Anirvan Ghosh explores the business of flowers on the occasion of Valentine's Day. Even as India as a nation debates/struggles with the ideology of "To celebrate or not to celebrate" Valentine's Day the author chooses to showcase another face of progressive India which has moved beyond the mundane - The rise of an Indian entrepreneur as the largest producer of cut roses in the world.

By highlighting the life of a successful entrepreneur who has carved a niche for himself globally, the author expresses optimism that the scenario in the subcontinent is changing for the better. The opening line of the article expresses this hope and support for a more tolerant society, "The world's largest producer of cut roses hopes that love will conquer intolerance." Voicing a semi appeal through the world's largest producer of cut roses, "Ramakrishna Karuturi, founder and MD of Karuturi Global, expects most Indians to defy threats of groups like Sri Ram Sene (Muthaliks) this Valentine and gift roses to their loved ones."

However, not many articles published in the Hindi newspapers took such a perspective. In the '*Hindustan*', there was an articles published, titled, "All is there, but flowers are on top" talks about the high sale of flowers on the occasion of Valentine's Day. The article is short. It does not promote any particular outlet or florist shop.

It would be interesting to note that there was only one news article among the Urdu newspapers which talked about the commercialized side of the festival. The article, titled, "Business of Love Reached 1 Crore Rupees" talked about the increase in sale of the flowers. The title and the tone of the story are negative in tone and perhaps portray Valentine's Day as a day of making business. It should be noted that among all the articles, the commercial angle was mostly prevalent among the English Newspapers and lacked in Hindi and was negligible, in Urdu newspapers.

Explicitness and openness on romantic relationships, intimacy and sexual behavior

English print media coverage of Valentine's Day also included stories on intimacy, romantic relationships and

sexual behavior among the youth. While Hindi media did not give much coverage to such issues, Urdu newspapers completely avoided such topics.

One such article titled, "Demand Shoots Up by 10 to 20 percent," published in *The Times of India* is worth discussing here. The article is referring to the sale of condoms and shows a bolder face of the media in a relatively conservative society. The article states: "the demand for condoms and contraceptive pills also rises in this season of romance." The author clearly suggests that more and more young couples prefer getting physically intimate this season. Hence suggesting that the perception of Valentines in the cities is restricted not to just mushy innocent love and romancing anymore but is also perceived as an opportunity for a far intimate expression of their love.

The article delves into further details: "Men and women are slowly becoming comfortable with the use of condoms and don't mind experimenting with flavoured, lubricated or dotted ones." Although the author, towards the end of the article, hints that physical intimacy amongst youngsters (read as pre-marital) is still not acceptable and remains a hushed affair, the statistics and the statements made in the article emphasise that people are fast shedding their inhibitions.

Criticism against the festival on ethical, moral and nationalistic grounds

In many articles published in Hindi and Urdu, the author openly criticized the festival on various grounds like tradition, nationalism and religion. For example, in an article titled, '*Valentine's Day Represents Lechery Not Love*', written by Yusuf Rampuri in *Sahafat* Urdu newspaper, the reporter is openly hostile not only towards the idea of celebrating Valentine's Day but other festivities and traditions which have started to influence the "traditional Indian ways" and fashion them into something more "western" by blindly following trends. He criticizes those who celebrate the day on ethical and moral grounds. The reporter states: "If we embrace anything virtuous, it of course stands to reason, but to follow all even if it is injurious and amoral to society is an eccentric folly."

The author goes on to support his statements citing the examples of clothing among men, especially women. The first example he gives in the article is what he portrays as the "blind imitation" of the West by women. He reminds the reader of proud yesteryears of social values and tradition, where Indian women once known for their shy nature used to "cover their head with an extended part of the cloth and kept their chest unexposed." The author contrasts this image of past modesty with the present fashion "not meant to clothe their bodies" but to make them look "half naked." Pronouncing the women as "immoral" for aping the West, the author engages in more youth bashing.

Regarding Valentine's Day the author expresses his objection with the manner in which this day is celebrated. Rather than a day of expressing love, he objects that this day has become an opportunity for couples to get together, exchange pornographic cards and engage in physical intimacy (read pre-marital intimacy), especially in public spaces.

The author objects to parents sending their wards to English-medium schools which have an apparently unethical atmosphere. According to him, this leads to a lifestyle which is based on "materialism and vile habits, in order to gain momentary pleasures." He considers such a lifestyle as one marked by indulgence, experimentation, drugs, premarital and extramarital sex and the loss of family bonds. All this, according to the author, adversely affects society and the nation.

The textual analysis brought up many similar articles in Urdu newspapers. Such articles were very long and critical in tone. They were highly opinionated and subjective. They primarily highlighted the need to reject popular trends on Valentine's Day.

Debating what is love today and yesterday: Identifying the true "Indian" version of love

Editorials and opinion pieces debated the changing nature of love. One such example is an article in Hindi, "Love Had to Change" by Sanjay Khatri published in *Navbharat Times*.

The above article follows the trajectory of love, as it has been experienced by the masses, beginning from the Vedic times and comparing it with the Middle and Modern ages. The author's study focuses on the Indian subcontinent, drawing a comparative analogy with the West, to highlight how it is natural for love to evolve into a free flowing expression of physical intimacy devoid of the extreme emotional attachment contrary to what is popularly depicted in the movies and literature today. The author refers to the sculptures of Ajanta and Ellora temples, pointing out that expression of romantic love is not something alien to Indian culture but very naturally inherent in our sensibilities. The author points out how social restrictions in India did not allow for more expressiveness in love. He further traces historical invasions against India and refers to Muslim rulers. The latter part of the article explores how the sensibilities are changing once again into a more uninhibited expression of love as is prevalent in the West.

The article is a deeply personal article, highly subjective with a prejudice against both the invaders from West Asia and the "West" in general. The article basically implies that what the Vedas have to say about love is what remains true to Indian cultural values while the rest are impurities brought in by the "West."

In another article titled, "A Horrible Agenda Against the Lovers" written by Sam Puniyani published in the *Sahara*

newspaper gives a different perspective. The center stone of the article is the idea from the Veda which says "Aano Bhadra kratvo yanto vishwata" (let the best idea come onto us from the whole universe). The article thus urges the masses to accept all that is good, beautiful and true; and it considers Valentine's Day as yet another opportunity to showcase beauty of love: "This day in fact reflects our love to each other and those dear to us".

The author is critical of those who are starkly intolerant of this day. He says that these "self-appointed moral police" have a "secret agenda," that is, "an agenda against liberalism, multi-cultural society and democratic values of the country." This very statement together with the title of the article '*A horrible agenda against the lovers*' establishes the fact that the author is attempting to make Valentine's Day more acceptable. The author talks about this "inter connectedness of traditions" through the latter part of the article. The article gives us insight of how a common liberal Indian perceives the nation in contemporary times, its liberal democratic values being tried and tested and the nation patiently answering back, holding on firmly never to give in.

Security Issues and Valentine's Day

The year 2009 witnessed incidents like the Mangalore pub attack and the "Pink Chaddi" campaign, which brought the issue of security to the forefront. Several articles highlighted the security precautions being taken at restaurants and other hang outs for couples. However, such articles were rare in English newspapers and more common in Urdu and Hindi dailies. For example, in an article titled, "Tight Security in Bhopal to Protect Lovers on Valentine's Day," published in "*Sahara*" talks about the precautions being taken to keep a check on any untoward incident. Another article titled, "Enjoy Valentine's Day Fearlessly" published in *Sahara* gives assurance to couples against any protest or action by the Hindu organizations. The author writes: "This year the couples need not care for any harm from any Hindu organization. They may happily express their love". The article is short, with quotes given by the police.

In another article titled, "Where Love Finds its Abode", published in *Navbharat Times*, the reporter gives a sense of assurance to couples despite the security issues. It states that despite the security hassles, there are many places to be explored. The article addresses the fear among couples keeping in mind the past attacks by Shiv Sena and the Bajrang Dal.

To conclude the results section, the textual analysis of articles shows that while English newspaper go all out to promote Valentine's Day, Urdu newspapers are highly critical of the day and portray it as a Western influence that needs to be curbed. Meanwhile, Hindi newspapers seem to

take a cautious, middle-path stand where they mildly approve of Valentine's Day without promoting it.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to analyze media coverage of Valentine's Day in the Indian context where acts of violence have occurred in relation to the celebrations on that day. The study combined quantitative and qualitative methods to get a more comprehensive picture of the media coverage of Valentine's Day festivities. Specifically, this project attempted to compare coverage in English, Hindi and Urdu newspapers of Valentine's Day in the year 2010.

The main findings of this study show that while English-language newspapers promoted activities related to the festival, Urdu-language newspapers were more critical of the event. Meanwhile, Hindi-language newspapers maintained a cautious approach – sometimes portraying a positive picture and sometimes treading a more critical line. Such findings highlight the important role played by a newspaper's readership in terms of its coverage. As results show, the newspapers clearly attempted to cater to their readers' cultural and social values in their coverage. For instance, English and Hindi dailies such as *The Times of India* and *Rashtriya Sahara* cater to a wide spectrum of readers and are not limited to a specific group. In contrast, most Urdu dailies do not cover a wide cultural spectrum and are addressing people with a particular set of social and religious values. Thus, they tend to highlight a more specific set of causes, concerns and interests relevant to their own readership. However, it is important to also remember that one cannot generalize the social and cultural values of the entire readership.

Furthermore, results show that while English-language newspapers covered Valentine's Day as entertainment and fun event, Hindi and Urdu newspapers gave it a more newsy angle. A content analysis of the articles also highlighted the tone of the articles showing that English-language newspapers gave a more positive feel to the articles while the others did not as much. In fact, the tone of the story in Hindi newspapers is far more balanced in their approach as in contrast to English and Urdu.

A close textual analysis of the articles reveal that Valentine's Day has more or less become a commercialized festival. For businesspersons and entrepreneurs it is an opportunity to reach out to the masses and crack out the best deals this day. Most English-language newspapers have taken the lead in this; with Hindi-language newspapers following close behind.

The Urdu-language newspapers however have not shared the enthusiasm of their English and Hindi counterparts, but have chosen to be custodians of a culture loosing fast to the modernity of the times.

Another pertinent observation has been the emergence of the English-language newspapers, breaking out from the mold of a (once) conservative society and donning the role of representing the new bold, non-conservative India. The articles published in them included stories on intimacy, romantic relationships and sexual behavior among the youth. Both, the Hindi and Urdu print media have avoided discussing such topics.

While we have a very pro Valentine's Day approach amongst the English print media; Urdu print media and to some extent Hindi print media have taken a very different stand towards the same event. Most of the Urdu articles published and a few Hindi-language newspapers have openly spoken against the festival on ethical, moral and nationalistic grounds. Their approach has been a more explorative kind, dissecting this relatively 'new' phenomenon of Valentine's Day; juxtaposing it with the nation's past, comparing and contrasting and at times finding similarities with it.

Keeping in mind the incidents like the Mangalore pub attack and the "Pink Chaddi" campaign in the year 2009, the issues of security came to the forefront. Several articles highlighted the security precautions being taken at restaurants and other hang outs for couples. However, such articles were more common in Urdu and Hindi dailies and were rare in English newspapers.

The more widely circulated English-language newspapers such as the Times of India market themselves as upwardly mobile, fast and trendy. The "news" they publish is thus supposed to be popular, "attractively packaged" and most importantly one that "sells." The emphasis on selling is a critical determinant as it influences what is published and what is not. With serious challenges coming from television and online news, things have become all the more precarious for the print media as it struggles to maintain its share in the market. Sales, thus has become an even more decisive factor.

The content analysis part of this study illuminated the types of sources used in the stories. Stories published in English-language newspapers often quoted the youth and businessmen while stories published in Hindi newspapers had far less businessmen. Interestingly, a majority of stories in Urdu did not have any sources or quotes. Those Urdu-language stories that carried sources often carried quotes of political and religious leaders. Differences in the type of sources used show how a story is covered from different perspectives. Several stories published in Urdu and English-language newspapers also critical of the commercial aspects of the festival.

As Brosius (2010) argues in her study titled "Contesting Emotions. Ritualizing Romantic Love in Neoliberal Urban India", there exist a multitude of opinions on Valentine's

Day in this country. Supporters and opponents of Valentine's Day have their own personal agendas and interests in mind. Their agendas are reflected by the different types of media they use to promote their idea to a larger population. Here the supposedly "objective" print media play an important role in portraying Valentine's Day in different ways.

This study has explored how newspapers in different languages portray Valentine's Day differently in Indian society. While English-language newspapers promote Valentine's Day, Urdu and even Hindi newspapers (to an extent) portray it as an attack on Indian traditions and culture. Some may also attribute the critical nature of coverage in Urdu newspapers as adherence to religious values. As observed, Urdu newspapers often portrayed Valentine's Day as antithetical to Muslim religious values. However in Hindi newspapers, several stories were more balanced in their approach, although several articles also seemed to tow values espoused by Hindu political parties. Meanwhile, English language newspapers promoted the festival and advertised places to go out and have fun on that day.

An important point to note here is the role played by language in terms of the socio-cultural values it espouses. Indian newspapers published in different languages displayed different objectives and implications. One thus observes that religion, culture, tradition and sexual behavior are closely intertwined. Language plays an important role in all of them. They are interdependent and layered. In case of Valentine's Day in Indian context, issues like tolerance, religion, politics, business, cultural diversity and sexual behavior come hand in hand. Modernity and Valentine's Day intersect with one another. For those who consider the festival as "western", also consider it as "modern" and hence "not right". There are many social-cultural tensions that are reflected through different newspapers. The newspapers choose these tools according to their readership requirements. a

Limitations and Recommendations

This study suffers a few limitations. One was the accessibility and availability of articles, especially those published in Urdu and Hindi. Hindi and Urdu-language articles were not available online unlike the English articles. Secondly, the nine newspapers that have been chosen for the research do not fall in the category of top 3 newspapers according to Indian Readership Survey. The reason is the lack of availability and accessibility of those newspapers. However, the newspapers that have been chosen do fall in the top ten newspapers, thus giving a platform for comparison and contrast. A second limitation is the small sample size, especially of Urdu-language articles. The reason for choosing 9 newspapers was to have a good sample size so that generalizations and conclusions can be

drawn. However, despite including 9 newspapers in the sample, the Urdu-language articles remained small. One of the obvious reasons is the fact that very few articles were published on Valentine's Day. The second reason is the choice of newspapers. Due to unavailability of articles, vernacular and regional newspapers were used in my sample size. However this limitation also turned in favor of the research as it drew a sharp comparison between the local press and the national dailies.

Further, the above-mentioned limitations can serve as a direction for future research. A similar study in future may have a broader approach. The focus may be on other mediums like television, radio and online. An overall study of these mediums including the print media would give better generalization and concrete results. Another thing that may be considered in future research is the interview of the journalists who write these articles. Secondly, studying more vernacular print media so as to witness the local scenario and the way it perceives a global phenomenon, where commerce, language and culture play an important role.

Conclusion

This research intended to analyze the quality and character of print media coverage of Valentine's Day in the Indian context. A close analysis of the articles revealed that popular English and Hindi newspapers have stayed clear from critiquing the "event" in any way. They have rather treated this day as a commercial festival with businesspeople, entrepreneurs and popular media promoting it fully aware of the promising business opportunity this day holds. In marked contrast to this, Valentine's Day has largely been perceived unfavorably by the Urdu print media. Not following the trend set by the popular English and Hindi newspapers, the Urdu print media have given a more reserved and conservative response adhering more closely to the social, cultural and religious values of their readership. English print media on the other hand has responded extremely positively to Valentine's Day. They have positioned themselves as promoters of Valentine's Day to leverage upon its full marketing potentiality.

Another important finding has been the bold and open coverage of Valentine's Day by the English print media. It's marked

with explicitness and openness on romantic relationships, intimacy and sexual behavior; something which is not observed in either of the indigenous language newspapers. Hindi and Urdu-language newspapers have maintained their distance from such issues.

Urdu newspapers though have been most opinionated critiquing Valentine's Day repeatedly across all their newspapers whereas this approach to Valentine's Day surfaces in the Hindi newspapers to a limited extent. Disapproval, wherever apparent, is based on ethical, moral, religious and nationalistic grounds. Editorials and opinion pieces in these indigenous language newspapers frequently debated the changing nature of love in this cross cultural milieu.

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Appendix

Some illustrations of Valentine's Day published in various sources



A. (Source: Wikipedia.com)



B. (Source: newshopper.sulekha.com)



C. (Source: Defence.pk.com)



D. (Source: newshopper.sulekha.com)