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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF INDIAN ATHLETES IN LONDON OLYMPICS

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ABSTRACT

Sports became the most interesting area of media coverage among different stream. As it has got its most important status in the world's media to popularize the newspaper, there is a distinct lack of comparative research on the media coverage of sports. To minimize the gap, this search draws attention on sports coverage during the London Olympics, 2012 from three different newspapers of different languages. The coverages were recorded considering the preview, competition and review phases. The results show that the total coverage of the English newspaper, the Telegraph (36039 sq. cm.) was more than the other two Bengali and Hindi newspapers (9224 sq. cm. and 2599 sq. cm. respectively). The female performers got more attention (34942 sq. cm.) than the male performers (12920 sq. cm.). All the three newspapers provided maximum coverage in the competition phase rather than the other two phases. The English newspaper provided more attention in preview of the main competition also in comparison to the other two newspapers. It has concluded that the coverage of the print media depends mainly on the performance of the athletes, popularity of the performers and intensity of the competition.

Keywords: Media, Print media, Sports coverage, Newspapers, Performance, Gender.

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Contribution/ Originality

The present study enriched the research in the area of sports journalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Exercise and Sport has been a central part of the Indian culture considering its entertainment and developmental values since last 3000 yrs (Mondal, 2013). The ancient Indian literatures provide us such information. Print media coverage of the endeavors' of performers played an important role to provide information about the athletes and gets a feedback from the society. Aspect of the media's coverage of sport has been the way in which it has allowed the community

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to recognize the outstanding contributions of athletes. All commercial television, radio and public broadcasters offer significant sporting coverage as well. Sport is a factor or a media or an agent or a force which humanizes and socializes the individuals. Physical activity and Sport along with different other factors transform the bi-ped animal to human being as well as converting the biological being to a social being. He becomes social by virtue of socialization and through socialization we lead an approved way of life. Sport is the common activity for the whole world. World cup, Olympic Games and other International competition exhibits and reflects the various culture's of the nations. Olympic Games and world level matches and tournaments came to review for the achievement of high standard in human relationship. They will construct, reconstruct and review the respective cultures in the cosmic.

After almost 118 yrs of modern Olympic the 6 medals by Indians inspire us all to do something better and work harder. Among various ways of media, newspaper reading plays an important role in helping us to gather information about the entire world. It is really a must for modern life. Through media we can collect the information from the whole world. Print media has become the part and parcel of our life today. Media sports became a new cultural fusion of sports with communication. Through media the feelings, values, priorities of sports are communicated with the general spectators. Print media helps us to visualize the happenings of everyday life in more realistic way that compels us to think deeply about the incident. We can't think a daily newspaper without its sport coverage. In such a way various popular and less popular newspapers are covering different intensities of competition and sports program, the related sports persons, their life, their performance. So this is quite important for all of us to go through the sports related news in newspaper. Gender equity in sport is regarded as a matter of consequence at global and national levels. Examining print media coverage of women's sport is a fundamental approach to monitor the status of equity in sport. It has found that, generally the sport media have focused on the coverage of men's sports, often ignoring women performance in sport unless they offered sex appeal (Daddario, 1997); (Vincent, 2004). A plethora of research analyzing sport media content have mostly shown men receive more overall coverage than women at all levels of sport (Duncan, 2006); (Eastman and Billings, 2001); (Kian, 2008). The print media constitutes an influential role player in equity as it portrays the dominant images in society. The purpose of the study was to get some information about the print media coverage of different sports events, to compare the coverages among three newspapers, to compare the coverage of male and female sports person and to judge the impact of different other factors upon the media coverage considering the London Olympic, 2012.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Participants

Three newspapers were considered: The Bartaman in Bengali, the Sanmarg in Hindi and the Telegraph in English to determine the area of coverage was provided in each newspaper and in aggregate and its comparison through different angle. The main area of measurements included

were the coverage of description of different competitions, coverage of the male and female performers, the photographs of different performers, some other stories of sports not related with the performers of Olympics. All the measurements were taken only considering the Indian Athlete. No coverage of foreign athletes was considered.

2.2. Instruments and Procedure

A scissors was used to cut the coverage and simple measuring scale was used to measure the area. The length of the column and width of the row of specific sports news was first measured and then multiplied to get the covered area.

The three newspapers examined were among the most popular newspaper in India. The Telegraph and the Sanmarg have countrywide circulation and the Bartaman is very popular in eastern part of India. The papers were examined considering the Olympic Games, 2012 in three phases of 45 days. The first phase (13/07/12- 26/07/12) was prior to Olympic Games, 2nd phase (28/07/12- 13/08/12) was exactly the time of games and the third phase (14/08/12- 27/08/12) was immediately after the completion of the games. The pre and the post phases were for 2 weeks, i.e., for 14 days and during phase were for 17 days.

2.3. Data Analysis

The collection of data was based on a quantitative method by the present researcher and one of his co-investigators in same profession. They examined each newspaper and recorded the data on tabular form considering three phases. The data were then compiled in a computer and presented in the tables.

3. RESULTS

The measured are depicted here in tabular form. The male here denoted as 'M' female denoted as 'F', 'P' as photograph and 'L' as literature.

From table 1 it was clear that in preview phase the Bartaman and the Telegraph provided more area than the Sanmarg. In both the papers the male competitor got more mileage than the female counterpart. Considering different events Boxing got maximum mileage in all the three newspapers.

Table 2 showed that in the competition phase the Bartaman and the Telegraph again provided more area than the Sanmarg. But in this phase the female competitors got more mileage than the male counterpart. Considering different events Boxers got maximum mileage in the Telegraph and the Bartaman whereas the Sanmarg provided most coverage in shooting.

In table 3 in review phase the Bartaman and the Telegraph again provided more area than the Sanmarg. In this phase also the male competitors got more mileage than their female counterpart. Considering different events the male performers of Athletics, Tennis and Archery got maximum mileage in the Bartaman. Male Athletes also got maximum mileage in the Telegraph. Next the Badminton, Boxers and the Tennis players came. In case of female the

Boxers got maximum mileage in the Telegraph. In the other two newspapers the female performers have not got such mileage.

From table 4 it was undoubtedly clear that the female athletes have got much more mileage than the male athletes considering the three newspapers. There was a huge difference between the coverage of female athletes (34942 sq. cm.) and male athletes (12920 sq. cm.) in the print media coverage. Considering all the three phases in the Bartaman Patrica the male athletes (5951 sq. cm.) got more mileage than the female athletes (3273 sq. cm.), in the Telegraph the female athletes (30586 sq. cm.) got more mileage than the male athletes (5453 sq. cm.) and in the Sanmarg the male athletes (1516 sq. cm.) got almost same mileage with the female athletes (1083 sq. cm.). Considering all the three phases it was clear that the three newspapers provided most weightage (40837 sq. cm.) in the 2nd phase i.e. the phase during competition, as well as in this phase the three newspapers individually also provided most mileage. Among them the Telegraph and the Bartaman kept their interest on the preview also. But the Sanmarg had no such interest. In consideration of total mileage the Telegraph (36039 sq. cm.) has the most coverage in comparison to the Bartaman (9224 sq. cm.) and the Sanmarg (2599 sq. cm.).

4. DISCUSSIONS

The present findings indicated that there was a huge statistical difference in the quantity of coverage of different games, males' and females' coverage in different phases. The area of Photographs also differed from one athlete to others. The literature of the English newspaper showed that the female athletes got more mileage than the male athletes which contradicts the different other findings (Blackwood, 1983); (Bryant, 1980); (Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990); (Inman, 1987); (Leavy, 1975); (Luebke, 1989); (Lumpkin and Williams, 1991); (Miller, 1975); (Reid and Soley, 1979). But the other two newspapers support the said findings. It has found that during competition phase brought the huge difference in favour of the female performers. This was due to the two Indian female icon in Indian sports Saina Nehwal and Merry Com who won Bronze medal. Saina Nehwal one of the most popular celebrity in sports and Merry Com the face of the north east India generally demand more mileage than the male athlete. After winning the medals with the stunning performance this demand naturally increased and the media provider utilized this providing more mileage to them (Paul, 2010); (Paul and Mukherjee, 2011).

In preview section there was no such difference in mileage in different sports also. Only the Boxing, Shooting, Tennis and Athletics got some importance. In this phase also due to the two female celebrities the English newspaper considering its countrywide circulation provided mileage not only in literature but in photograph also. The previous performance of Indian field Hockey team prior to Olympic was not so good that they got mileage. Here we should have to consider the name of Indian competitors, their events and their performance also. Here in the following table (table 5) that has given.

In preview in the Bartaman the tennis, athletics and archery got most mileage considering the previous performance. In the Telegraph the Boxers and the Badminton players got most of

the mileage. In during phase it is very easy to say that the performance will get the maximum coverage. Naturally the Shooters, Boxer and the Shuttler got huge coverage both in literature and photograph in the newspapers. The present researcher has got same findings in case of Commonwealth games 2010 in India (Paul *et al.*, 2011). The Telegraph provided a mammoth coverage for the female boxer Marry Com considering her performance and social importance. Surprisingly the Weightlifter has not got any coverage in the competition phase also in the Bengali and Hindi newspapers, although they secured two medals for India. Only the Telegraph, the English newspaper provides some coverage. In the review phase there was no such remarkable story only the mere coverage in the three newspaper occurred. After the completion of the Olympic the interest of the newsreaders shifted towards the other popular game such as cricket and football. Actually the intensity of the competition indicates the volume and the type of coverage (Paul, 2010); (Paul and Mukherjee, 2011). In general the English newspaper provides maximum media coverage in comparison to other two papers which also supports the previous findings (Paul *et al.*, 2011); (Paul and Mukherjee, 2011).

The general newsreaders are searching for the report of athletic Prowess, Team or Individual victory, commonality and relative team quality in daily newspaper. The performance of the Indian athletes in during phase provides huge coverage. Beside this it is the strategically decision, attitudes, opinions and practices of the newspaper sports editors. In the review section there was again the decreasing level of media news. In the during competition phase the total coverage of three newspaper increases almost 10 times in comparison to the preview phase and again it decreases almost with same rate. This is nothing but due to the performance of the Indian athlete specially the female athlete.

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. Performance is the most influential deciding factors in case of the media coverage.
2. Generally the male performer's coverage was more than the female performers.
3. With Personal appeal the brand performers have got some extra advantage in case of print media coverage.
4. Rather than preview and review naturally the competition period got priority in coverage.
5. Photographs of male athletes are almost equal with the female athletes.
6. The English paper provided maximum mileage in comparison to the other two papers.
7. The circulation rate and the coverage area got priority to decide the coverage strategy.
8. Highlighting the high intensity competition sometimes shifted with the demands of the other news.

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Table-1. The coverage of three newspapers in the Preview phase

Event	Bartaman				Sanmarg				Telegraph			
	M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)		M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)		M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)	
	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P
Boxing	424	350	60	44	329	121	85	54	359	186	205	133
Badminton	-		103	36			64	31			32	162
Shooting	50	36	3	2	76	53	-	-	23	34		
Tennis			-	-	6		15	4				
Athletics	183	47	8	-			9	11			10	9
Archery					16	1						
Hockey					15	2			26			
TOTAL	657	433	174	82	442	177	173	100	408	220	247	304
	1090		256		619		273		628		551	
	1346				892				1179			

Table-2. The coverage of three newspapers in the during phase

Event	Bartaman				Sanmarg				Telegraph			
	M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)		M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)		M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)	
	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P
Boxing	484	41	1179	472	92	53	138	100	290	23	27012	836
Badminton	145	28	885	146	130	34	139	40	506	398	724	204
Shooting	1270	657	-	-	263	61	47	47	994	286		
Tennis	182	13	-	-	64	32	25	5	374	224	18	
Athletics	62		133				92	25	191	70	24	
Archery	3				22	4			61	28	280	72
Wrestling	57	44										
Weightlifting	02								125	48		
Swimming	42											
Judo	495	144										
Table Tennis	-	2	150	-								
TOTAL	2742	929	2347	618	571	184	441	217	2541	1077	28058	1112
	3671		2965		755		658		3618		29170	
	6636				1413				32788			

Table-3. The coverage of three newspapers in the Review phase

Event	Bartaman				Sanmarg				Telegraph			
	M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)		M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)		M (sq. cm.)		F (sq. cm.)	
	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P	L	P
Boxing	16		17	-	32	15	30	16	134	125	235	134
Badminton	30		14	-	15	04	32	18	239	45	76	45
Shooting	10	42			28							
Tennis	262	46	2	-	19		28	10	156	60	120	23
Athletics	579	4			11		13		379		90	34
Archery	152	40	19				05		45	24	56	52
Hockey	9											
TOTAL	1058	132	52	-	123	19	108	44	953	254	577	288
	1190		52		142		152		1207		865	
	1242				294				2072			

Table-4. The total coverage of three newspapers in three phases

Phase	Bartaman		Sanmarg		Telegraph		Total coverage (sq. cm.)
	M (sq. cm.)	F (sq. cm.)	M (sq. cm.)	F (sq. cm.)	M (sq. cm.)	F (sq. cm.)	
Pre	1190	52	142	152	1207	865	3608
During	3671	2965	755	658	3618	29170	40837
Post	1090	256	619	273	628	551	3417
Total	5951	3273	1516	1083	5453	30586	47862
	9224		2599		36039		47862

Table-5. The no. of the Competitors, their events and the medalists of India in London Olympic, 2012

Events	No. of competitors			Medal
	Men	Women	Total	
Shooting	7	4	11	1 Bronze and 1 Silver by 2 male
Wrestling	4	1	5	1 Bronze and 1 Silver by 2 male
Badminton	2	3	5	1 Bronze by 1 female
Boxing	7	1	8	1 Bronze by 1 female
Hockey	18	0	18	-----
Judo	0	1	1	-----
Rowing	3	0	3	-----
Archery	3	3	6	-----
Swimming	1	0	1	-----
Table tennis	1	1	2	-----
Tennis	5	2	7	-----
Weight lifting	1	1	2	-----
Athletics	8	6	14	-----
Total	60	23	83	2 Silver, 2 Bronze by male and 2 Bronze by female

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