SENSEMAKING IN ORGANISATIONS: A STUDY OF NEWS CHANNELS IN GUJARAT[#]

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INTRODUCTION:

Regional news organisations have their place of significance in the Indian mediascape. Localisation of news is central in building an understanding about news organisations, particularly the regional broadcast channels. As Thussu (2007) highlights, 'It is instructive to note that among the top ten news networks – none are English language news channels' (Thussu, 2007, p. 98). However, studies that attempt to locate regional news media within the realm of Indian mediascape or studying its prominent characteristics are far and few, and in a few zones they are non-existent. This article is hence an attempt to address this gap in scholarship.

States like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, New Delhi, Assam, Orissa and Chhattisgarh have news channels owned by politicians or political parties, or at least have explicit political stakeholdership. Gujarat is a tricky turf, with no explicit political stakeholdership; however, there is a certain degree of oscillation in the

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political affiliations endorsed. The research is located in the interdisciplinary realm taking into fold conceptualisations from sensemaking theorisation and sociology of news perspective.

The study is informed by the empirical findings done in the southern realm to serve as an entry point for exploration in that of the western realm. In a study of the regional news channels in Tamil Nadu, it used sensemaking as a resource and intersubjectivity as an analytical lens to further decipher the typology of media organisations (Srikrishna, 2014). Sensemaking refers to how people make sense experiences, events, environment, structures and occurrences; simply stated, it means giving meaning to what is experienced. Sensemaking is posited as a generative concept (Weick, 2001) and a tool defining the routinisation process of organisations in the media business. Intersubjectivity can be best understood as a common sense understanding. Using sensemaking as a resource enables the consideration of both theory and practice, making it pragmatic and generative (Weick, 2001). It is posited as lens used to reveal the operating patterns in the media business. This research also explores sensemaking as a concept, applying it to Gujarati news channels, based on empirical studies conducted in Tamil news broadcast organisations (Srikrishna, 2014). These theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings inform this study. The original study used participant observation and interviews, while this study has integrated data from interviews to understand sensemaking and news broadcast organisations.

It is read in the social realm and is shaped through interactions, manifesting into shared meanings that give us a sense of how Gujarati news channels are perceived. This has been presented as thematic insights that help us understand what is going on in the regional news channels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The sensemaking perspective (Weick, 1995, 2001) and its progenitor in the organising model (Weick, 1969, 1979) are, perhaps more than any other perspective in organisation studies, closely associated with a single living person … (Colville, 2009). Tracy (2012) suggests that sensemaking theory 'encourages researchers' to understand and study interactions with the goal to uncover 'thinking and behaving', like an 'outside-in' approach (Tracy, 2012). Another theorist, Colville, whose work is again looked into, is in fundamental disagreement with Weick. Although both the theorists deal with sensemaking and organisations, Weick positions it as 'organization change' and Colville as 'organization changing' (Clegg, 2009). However, Clegg (2009) notes that neither of them consider politics – 'There is a connection to be made here and a gap to be filled'.

Organisational stories carry potent meaning. They are a potential resource in the development of the rules and as currency in playing out organisational games (Falcione, Sussman, & Herden, 1987). Sensemaking as a body of knowledge has interdisciplinary application and it is important to be aware and acknowledge this. While studying sensemaking, intersubjectivity is embedded. Weick (1995) talks about sensemaking being embedded with two layers of activity – one of which is intersubjective and the other is the generic subjective (Weick, 1995). The level of the intersubjective comes first according to Weick's conceptualisation. In this level, the movement is from 'I' to the 'we' plane. The sensemaking background helps in giving this study an 'outside-in' approach (Tracy, 2012). This is done by assessing the turf in the broadcast sphere in Gujarat.

BROADCAST SCENARIO IN GUJARAT STATE

Table 1: News Channels in Gujarat

S. No.	News Channels	Establishment Year	Ownership	Ownership	Media Group Presence (Since)
1	ABP Asmita	2016	ABP Group (ABP News Network)	Media conglomerate. No Gujarati origin	1922
2	Sandesh News	2013	The Sandesh Ltd.	Ahmedabad-based ownership of Gujarati origin	1923
4	TV9 Gujarati	2007	Associated Broadcasting Company Ltd.	Hyderabad-based Associated Broadcasting Co. Pvt. Ltd (ABCL)	2003
5	ETV News Gujarati	2014	ETV News Network	Acquired by Reliance Industries owned by TV18/Network 18	ETV (Hyderabad daily Eenadu) launched its news channel in 1995
6	VTV News	2012	Sambhaav Group Media Pvt. Ltd.	Ahmedabad-based ownership of Gujarati origin	Sambaav Media launched in 1986
7	GSTV	2006	Gujarat Samachar Copyrights with Destination Media Inc.	Ahmedabad based ownership of Gujarati origin	Lok Prakashan Ltd. owns Gujarat Samachar, one of the pioneering newspapers launched in 1932
8	Zee 24 Kalak	2017	Zee Media Corporation Limited	A subsidiary of Essel Group	Zee Media Corporation launched Zee News in 1999

Indian news channels are available in more than 70 countries. The number of licensed private satellite TV channels reached 877, of which 389 were news channels and 488 were non-news channels (FICCI-FRAMES, 2018). The news channels in Gujarat can be categorized into two: one the regional channels, which can be defined as the channels run and owned by the natives of Gujarat, such as Sandesh News, Bizz News, Gujarat Samachar, Mantavya, Nirmana and VTV Gujarati, and the other being the national channels which have ownerships at the national level but have their regional language's channels functional in Gujarat, such as ABP Asmita, TV9 Gujarati, News18 (Formerly ETV Gujarati) and Zee 24 Kalak.

The site Gujarat was deduced based on Jeffery's work that drew tacit parallels between the states. Jeffery also suggests that the proprietors of Gujarati or Tamil newspapers are 'down to earth' (Jeffery, 1997). While there have been many comparisons drawn in the article, interestingly, the print scenario comparing Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, perhaps in an understated way, warrants a mention.

> As Jeffery (1997) notes, 'Gujarati and Tamil newspapers are characterized by screaming layout, spectacular stories and big headlines'; 'Even sensational Tamil papers like Thanthi or Gujarati papers like Gujarat Samachar and Sandesh have the flavour of a New York Post or a British Sun. The 'package' is international, even though the contents must be sensitively local'; 'What works in West Bengal and Kerala probably will not in Gujarat or Tamil Nadu' (Jeffrey, 1997).

We have a sense of how the print media used to be perceived; however, the broadcast scenario is relatively new and is an intriguing site to study. There are three significant highlights, which Jeffery's work (1997) suggests, the primary impression is that of the Gujarati media being loud, the second pertains to a tinge of cultural imperialism with preference for international packaging and the third has to do with parallels being drawn in terms of content, packaging and localisation. We, however, do not have a sense of how the Gujarati news channels as media organisations are perceived. Is their sensemaking evident? Will the spheres of speculation shed light on it?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions this study is concerned with are probing, understanding the ownership matrix, news channel's routinisation and operation and aiming at reading and developing a sensemaking understanding of Gujarati media houses.

1. How are Gujarati news channels made sense of?

2. What are the spheres of speculation in regional Gujarati news channels?

The primary study in Tamil Nadu spanned for 2 years and has documented a number of embryonic themes unique to regional news channels. These empirical findings will inform the basis of this study (Srikrishna, 2014). The themes explicated will seek to build an emergent understanding of these news channels. They will also aid in answering the spheres of speculation; by speculation we mean the perceived assumptions, reflections and deliberations prevalent about and around the regional news channels in Gujarat.

METHODOLOGY

The research is an exploratory and interdisciplinary study. Our endeavor to explore regional news, especially in a complex amalgam of cultures, language and geo-political Indian scenario, calls for acceptance that reality is socially constructed. It is unique to a site or organisation explored. The spurt of news channels in the Indian domain began in the 'late 1990s and early 2000s' (Thussu, 2007, p. 96). Each state within India has different dynamics. There is merit in extending such studies to every state.

> Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) highlight in the context of case research that the '... researcher has to frame the research within the context of this theory and then show how inductive theory building is necessary. Typically, the research question is tightly scoped within the context of an existing theory, and the justification rests heavily on the ability of qualitative data to offer insight into complex social problems'.

As Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggest, the study will capitalize on inductive theory building, with the study carried out in Tamil Nadu, informing the experiential reasoning and guiding to function as an entry point into the broadcast scenario at Gujarat. The epistemological logic of this study lies in the social constructionism realm, thereby privileging the 'search for themes and patterns that are socially shaped' with the 'ontological assumption that communication is almost always intersubjective because of its social context' (Srikrishna, 2014).

While there have been reservations against undertaking replication studies, one needs to be aware that there are many ways to undertaking it. Our study effort best qualifies as 'generalisation and extension' study, wherein the researcher uses different research

procedures and draws from a different sample of population (Tsang & Kwan, 1999). The conceptual and empirical understanding from the study in a different state guides and informs the study, but in no way would that influence translate to making this a comparative analysis. The sites are distinct and there is merit in studying each state separately. However, the previous study serves as a critical entry point in this study, providing the expertise of where to look for patterns and how. This is also premised on our 'taken for granted way of understanding the world' and by undertaking a critical stand to such effect (Boje, 2001).

This study although positioned in the communication discipline borrows across disciplines, which include sensemaking, organisational communication, organisational studies and communication with media studies as a sub-discipline, making the research interdisciplinary.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The major themes that were explored began with a straight-forward enquiry on how Gujarati news channels functioned. It paved way to unearthing striking insights into the broadcast media's employee base, especially their perception on their industry as well as about news sense, newsgathering and news making. This contributed towards an emic perspective, typically understood as an insider's view. It was supplemented with an etic perspective (an outsider's view), built from two standpoints, viewers and journalists. Those classified as viewers were also experts or proponents in their field of occupation, who followed Gujarati media and news reporting closely. They also consumed Gujarati news on a daily basis. The journalists or media personnel interviewed had diverse experience in reporting, editing functionalities and leading their news teams. They also closely followed the growth and expansion format within the regional mediascape, enabling them to share conversant observations and facts.

This qualitative study used in-depth interviews (refer Appendix I) as the data collection technique, with (a) thematic analysis and (b) organisational storytelling and events used as data analysis tools. The respondents who contributed the emic perspective included reporters and journalists, while the etic perspective was built based on the respondents who were journalists, viewers and experts. To elaborate further, the three categories of respondents[1] include three reporters[2] (defined as solely involved in newsgathering), three

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[1] The respondent profile can be accessed by mailing the author.
[2] Reporters will be mentioned as Reporter 1, 2 and 3 in text whenever quoted verbatim.

journalists[3] (with vested power too influence) and seven viewers[4] (who may also be defined as experts in the field of academics, management and media). The site being relatively unexplored, in-depth interviews with each of them helped in enabling thick descriptions, and predominantly six of our respondents particularly gave an insider's insight. The respondents largely belong to the media industry, with six of them working in the news industry, three of them in academics (who often critique media and news developments) and three other respondents with expertise in management, advertising, marketing of media-oriented domains.

The data analysis technique uses thematic analysis. The sampling techniques used includes convenience and snowball sampling. It made sense to privilege the generativeness of the field, as till date there has not been an academic or extensive research effort to understand the *Gujarati* broadcast organisations. With the exception of a few peripheral mentions in news reports, this is a site seldom explored.

Although an ethnographic immersion would have been ideal, this study has tried to explicate patterns and trends by engaging with the study respondents in detail and has focused on capturing the rich explanations and thick descriptions in their responses. Verbatim quotes from respondents have been included wherever relevant. The study of the Tamil Nadu broadcast sphere[5] also used 'thick descriptions', and it is considered an important technique in enabling the transferability of the study and also holds the view that there are 'indeed multiple-constructed realities and not one objective reality' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The trajectory is following the 'what, how and why' questioning patterns to achieve a deeper sense of engagement. The organisations and the actors have been read by attempting to understand their organisational context, thought leadership, media ownership, operating model and idea of commercialisation (Srikrishna, 2014). The context-specific conditions are being privileged with these constructs being explored under the themes that have emerged.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The thematic arrangement of the research findings is characteristic of the etic–emic circularity, and the theme analysis used in this research is a combination of inductive, deductive and grounded approaches (Boje, 2001). As already stated, an emic account presents the insider's view; the insiders in this study are the respondents who are a part of

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[3] Journalists will be mentioned as Journalist 1, 2 and 3 in text whenever quoted verbatim.
[4] Viewers will be mentioned as Viewer 1–7, in text whenever quoted verbatim.
[5] The earlier study of the corresponding author, based on which this study is set.

the media organisations explored. An etic standpoint integrates two dimensions to present the findings, one is gathered through past studies and research efforts, while another offers an outsider's perspective, which is represented in this study through inclusion of experts as viewers and the journalists from other organisations. The etic and emic circularity allows scope for integration of te existing literature, reflected through the third theme explicated – 'reverse chequebook journalism' (Jeffery, 1997). In addition, data reduction was also followed (Lindlof, 1995, p. 216). The themes pertain to aspects of media organisations, such as stakeholder dynamics, ownership, corporatisation, operating model, editorial positioning, journalistic practices and editorial control. These feature as six emergent themes:

1. Absence of explicit political stakeholdership: caste-based ownership argument

2. The shift from family-owned businesses to conscious corporatisation

3. Banking on stringer-based model

4. Impact of reverse chequebook journalism

5. Anti-establishment debate: pro-party versus pro-government dimensions

6. Centralised disbursement of news and approvals: editor-driven output

Absence of Explicit Political Stakeholdership: Caste-Based Ownership Argument

The scenario in Gujarat is unlike other states especially that of Tamil Nadu media organisations, characteristic of operating in a state where often media and politics are intertwined (Ranganathan, 2006). This does not mean that there is an absence of political or ideological dissemination; however, the shift is from political ownership to family-based ownership in Gujarat and with a tinge of communalistic tendency or a socio-political affiliation. The print media scenario was representative and infamous for being a proponent of such a communalisation approach.

> As Mehta notes,'The expression of religious nationalism has much to do with the way the media carries the news. Apart from commercialization, there is a great deal of the communalization of the media' (Puniyani, 2009).

However, although a couple of respondents echoed similar sentiments, the overall sensemaking perception about the communalisation orientation came across as something

not resonant of strong views or ideologies in the broadcast scenario.

> Viewer 2 (a senior academician) suggests that news channels are not communalized in any sense; however, they report on the communalisation rhetoric which often forms the basis on which political discourses are framed.

This is confused with the channel's ideology when merely an ideologue from the political spectrum is covered. The news channels and reporters currently in operation are also being attributed to a casual and laid-back approach to journalism, a stark contrast to the degree of aggressiveness and hard-hitting approach in the English news channels.

> Reporter 1 opines 'Why should we go around screaming and stressed? We don't need that. We are happy and peaceful in the way we report stories. I do not support any political party in the state, not even the ruling party. But I have to respect sentiments of my editor. I know what gets approved or rejected'.

On further probing, Reporter 1 revealed that the management did not encourage communal views and would often want the news produced to 'sound safe' rather than 'neutral' or 'communal'. By communal, the reporter meant a socio-political affiliation or support.

> Journalist 1's perspectives added critical insights in this exploration – 'My experience has been that Gujarat news channels now are quite competent with bringing out news, but there is an amount of caution they have when it comes to analysis'.

Furthermore, there is a perception that since most of the Gujarati natives who own these media organisations are upper-class Hindus, they may have a bias against other communities or lower castes. There are interesting patterns of revelations our research results explicated:

1. Barring two respondents, the rest iterated that upper-class Hindus favored BJP; however, most of these channels have had content against the party.

2. That they all (owners) belong to a class of capitalists who have only one intent of making money.

3. Owners of certain news channels and their parent media organisations although may have had upper caste sentiments, it is something lost in the temporal space, as continuity and consistency of perspectives are absent.

4. The advent of corporatisation of media takes the larger criticism than any other factor.

Weick (1995) talks about being plausible rather than accurate, and these perceptions have the element of plausibility; typical 'cues' of 'class consciousness' enunciates a broader sensemaking perspective of resonance against caste having a role to play, although there is accuracy in most native Guajarati owners being upper class (Weick, 1995).

The Shift from Family-Owned Businesses to Conscious Corporatisation

The native Gujarati entrepreneurs established media organisations as family businesses. This has run into the third generation, with the third generation leaders moving away from majority of the habituated practices. This indicates that the meaning making happens at the organisational level, where the realm of intersubjectivity and generic subjectivity meet. These are characteristic of te generic subjectivity which implies common environment, rules and policies.

However, there is a conscious attempt to resituate and rearrange the generic subjectivity established over the past two generations. Necessarily what is currently operational is the process of overwriting and refabricating the conditioning, which used to be crucial to the organisational space as these can be best described as 'pattern(s) of technique for survival' (Campbell, 1960). The habituated survival patterns have transformed. The cultural and social cues in the environment within the organisation used to be dependent on nurturing personal and working relationship with the owners. The employees used to be fixated on connecting with the family owning the business, which is not the case now. The disjuncture between the governing family and its establishment's employees is apparent. Nevertheless, these cues are bound to be re-written with the advent of corporatisation, although most media organisations continue to be family-owned, signifying a third-generation leadership.

> Reporter 3 notes, 'My neighbor used to work for a leading Guajarati daily. He was close to the family and used to boast of his association with them. Now I work for the news channel by the same family. The current generation keeps to themselves, except a few close aides'.

In a way, the association with owners used to be a point of satisfaction at work till perhaps a decade ago. The turn towards systematising the media organisations has brought in more formal structures of interaction. In a nutshell, ascription to psychological ownership strategies is minimal, in comparison to their first- or second-generation patriarchs. It also in a way means lesser employee control in terms of premising familiarity with the family and

conjuring trust to ensure superlative efficiency to achieve organisational ends; however, such identification and association with business families have reduced considerably (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001). Nonetheless, how agency is distributed across such organisations is a pertinent question that could not be addressed in this research. It is crucial because often agency problems spill over to define corporate governance.

Although the work force is smaller in comparison to a print unit, there seems to be a divide within, between those who come from the rural areas of Gujarat and those born and brought up in the cities, specifically Ahmedabad.

> Reporter 2 opines that 'I see a huge divide among those from Gujarat interiors and the city-bred. The former have a very good command over the language but are very casual. Those city-bred are more polished, but make mistakes when foiling their stories in Gujarati, however they keep looking for new opportunities and keep jumping jobs'.

Those from a sub-urban or rural background seem to be constructing an environment that is characteristic of strong regional language skills, ironically paired with a blasé attitude. This seems to be the predominant reading of regional news room environment. They are seen as reasonably enduring persons playing a key role in the news channel's internal environment. Further within the environment, the background of employees seems to play a role in constructing the internal environment, typically identified as 'laid-back' in the current scenario.

In the intersubjective realm, there seems to a larger understanding on attributing lesser value to inherited leadership. There seems to be an intersubjective agreement between most of the respondents, particularly Journalist 1 and Viewer 3 (a senior academician) who suggest that those who run most media organisations in Gujarat also own huge business conglomerates and are running newspaper or news channel for attribution of 'pride' than as a business purpose or passion. Inherited leadership seems to also reduce the awe, respect and aura of classiness, typically associated with the entrepreneurial pioneers in Gujarati media industry. Morck, Stangeland, and Yeung (2000) place an argument on how inherited leadership tends to slow down the pace of economic growth (Morck et al., 2000). In the larger realm, moving away from the family-owned psychological leadership to a more corporatized outlook seems inevitable.

Banking on Stringer-Based Model

The regional Gujarati news channels considerably depend on stringers for newsgathering. As with most national and regional media, both print and broadcast news channels bank on a network of freelancers, called stringers. These stringers often occupy a strategic position having contacts and informants ranging from politicians, lawmakers, celebrities, industrialists to police personnel. Banking on stringers has been there since the inception of organized journalism. Yorke points out how stringers often are 'wooed by news editors' and provide 'much of the basic news' (2000, p. 19).

> As Journalist 2 reasons, 'Usually bureaus have limited staff. It is humanly impossible to gather news from all quarters without stringers'.

Another dimension that came out suggests that although these channels from outside may seem like competing with each other, there, however, exists a forthcoming and amicable relationship between them. In fact, as noted in most regional bureaus, they tap into the same sources, using the same set of stringers, and rely on the same footage too. This is made possible as most bureaus of news agencies also engage with the same set of stringers for content production. Similarly, once a news agency comes into play, every regional channel can use the same footage by giving the news agency the acknowledgement. Such practices give rise to a cultural norm of sharing across organisational boundaries. The environments in each of the newsrooms get influenced by each other. The degree of influence may vary; however, the cues and enactments are arranged in terms of the dependability between the organisations, permeating into defining the overall cultural, newsgathering and organisational norms.

Interorganisational arrangements are distinctive among these regional news channels. It is symptomatic of generic subjectivity and interchangeability, with an emergent – 'intimacy, discretion, close proximity and small sized collectivities where people work primarily as collaborators rather than experts' (Weick, 1995, p. 174). These trends at the organisational and interorganisational levels influence the overall sensemaking of regional news.

Impact of Reverse Chequebook Journalism

The reverse chequebook journalism is in a way unique to the Gujarat turf, as it was something that mushroomed out of this sphere. The impact of which is still proliferating shared norms and practices and can be read from myriad dimensions.

'…'newsadvertisement' was said to be peculiarly Gujarati contribution to the newspaper industry. Governments, organisations and private citizens, unable to get their versions of events into the big-circulation dailies, sometimes bought full-page advertisements to get out 'contradictions, corrections and polemical material about different events. The government', according to the Editors' Guild, 'heaped ads and a good amount of revenue on what it should have regarded as offending newspapers'. This was, the Editors' Guild concluded, 'chequebook journalism in reverse" (Jeffrey, 1997).

The profit-driven newspaper business in Gujarat pioneered atypical newsadvertment, due to the readership and reach it enjoyed. These practices have been normalized over time and are put in perspective as an operating norm in media business.

Journalist 3 acknowledging such practices adds a dimension reasoning suggesting it is seen as an opportunity to make money, 'They do not need it to run the business because there are other businesses that can fund this. But they will not let go of even a small opportunity to make money'.

The reverse chequebook journalism may not always seem unethical, as over the years it has a normalized modus operandi and emerges as a subtle advertising strategy.

Journalist 1 makes pertinent observation about this scenario signifying how it has become a consolidated practice, 'Nineties used to be very bad. Now I feel it's all centralized. Plus you have one party ruling the state for so long…things tend to get organized. Even media corruption. I mean to say it's not brazen in Gujarat like other a few other states, where journos are on payrolls of parties but it does exist at a larger level'.

There are multiple realms from which these revelations can be read; however, the most pertinent realm in the context of this article is to acknowledge the reverse chequebook journalism, which is a conventional practice that has got the negativities associated with it subverted and normalized. The existence of a single party ruling the state also produces its own analogies. The opportunities in advertising and newsadvertisement can be read as being 'schema-driven', rather than 'evidence-driven', as 'in contemporary organizations the cost of being indecisive outweigh the costs of being wrong' (Weick, 1995). The overarching acknowledgment of such practices discoloring the ethical underpinning of journalism is an often encountered perspective. They attribute those in power and decision-making profiles as

lingering on to such practices, even though they have the potential to abandon such practices of money-making.

> As Viewer 3 (a senior academician) reasons, 'News is business. Advertisements drive news' and nothing can be done about changing it.

A hegemonic minority have engulfed the negative association and made it seem a directional and plausible strategy of business, although it acts as dubious attachment to journalism.

Anti-Establishment Debate: Pro-Party Versus Pro-Government Dimensions

Since March 1998, the government in the state of Gujarat has been formed by *Bharatiya Janata party (BJP)*. Whether it is an admissible preposition or not, when 'social stability, racial harmony, economic growth and political stability are at stake', then the relationship between 'press and government is expected to be co-operative rather than adversary' (Xu, 2005). The willingness to be accommodative is a result of being interdependent for each other's means and ends, with that of the press concerning sustainability and revenue; and the government's effort in reaching out to the masses with the right kind of strategic communication efforts, in an ironic platform of dissent, characteristic of the press. A report in *scroll.in* has quoted one of the journalists in Gujarat – *Mitra*, who concedes that with an exception of a couple of media houses, they do not publish anything anti-government or anti-party for the fear of backlash; and further adds that a 'leading regional language newspaper was shut down for around a month soon after Modi came to power for carrying anti-Modi stories' (Bhushan, 2016).

> Reporter 3 suggests 'In my previous workplace, editorial was pro-BJP, in my current organization, they are out and out anti-BJP and anti-establishment'. Reporter 3 speaks of an inherent bias in taking sides – 'Aligning as anti or pro establishment happens because we promote privatization. I cannot take a call, I have my bias, my editorial has theirs, capitalism wins, and media cannot be independent anymore'. Journalist 1, however, brings a view on the contrary – 'Gujarati media is far more independent …. They had excellent reports during Banaskanta floods, Saurashtra agrarian crisis, all were anti-government; something that national media will think twice before airing'.

The anti-establishment stand in journalism is not new; it is something that repetitively resurfaces. It is best understood as an opposition to conventional economic or political

institutions, for the larger welfare of the society. There also seems to be a belief that anything anti-establishment is newsworthy. There are typically two kinds of arguments one can come across in the Gujarati media organisations, one is a pro-party approach and the other a pro-government approach. Pro-party denotes being pro-BJP[6] and pro-government denotes support for the government as an establishment, thereby distancing oneself with the political party associated. It makes sensemaking even more remarkable and produces a remarkable alignment between 'wholes and cues, documents and meanings, figures and grounds, periphery and center, all define one another' and 'sensibleness derives from relationships, not parts' (Weick, 1995). The perpetuity of the ruling government may have organized a number of practices, pertaining to the realms of co-operation, dissent and revenue or benefit augmentation dimensions.

Centralized Disbursement of News and Approvals: Editor-Driven Output

Stories take the editorial tone and tenor in its output. Every story passes through the editor. Furthermore, most of the news channels do not depend on government funding of any kind for sustenance, barring advertising revenue, which is seen from a profitability angle rather than from the sustenance front. The news stories, especially political or celebrity targeting or boosting reports, always go through the editor. Usually, the conception period for news stories in television is short, unless it is an investigative or a scheduled exclusive content; making it imperative for every primetime and political content to pass through the editors. Often this is synonymous to one or more representatives who own the media house, particularly when it is a family business. Over time, expectations are understood and the easy-going attitude of most of them in the newsroom creates an environment of accepted norms and routine. This builds a strong routinisation. The sensemaking practices and its process rely heavily on routine (Srikrishna, 2014).

The ideological and political standpoints, anti- or pro-governmental tone and the type of stories that are usually aired build an understanding internally among the journalists, who often would tread the conventional trail. This way there would be more acceptance and lesser disappointments of their stories being shelved. A constructed sensemaking routine was apparent while studying the routinisation aspects. This was particularly deemed necessary as most channels intended to make their stance explicit.

> Viewer 1 (an academician) states that 'At least three of the five top news channels are extremely critical of the ruling party and Modi in particular'. Viewer 4 (proponent in thought leadership) adds that 'Almost all channels report the same

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[6] BJP – Bharatiya Janata Party – the ruling party in the state.

way, sound the same'. Furthermore, Viewer 5 (an industry expert) points out that consistency in maintaining political orientation is extremely critical, as it is used as a brand appeal and attracts viewers who have similar ideological expectations.

Although the news organisations always intend making their leanings evident, it may not always be apparent to those working within, as every context triggers a different reaction; for instance, there have been political stories aired for the purpose of TRP (Television Rating Points) or advertising, supporting political partakers, despite the fact that the same set of politicians or parties have been criticized on other instances. So essentially, the predictability in the intersubjective realm goes astray in such erratic circumstances. It could be attributed to the decision-making powers on top and their strategic play. As Weick (1995) suggests, 'there is always some loss of joint understanding when intersubjective translates into the generic' (Weick, 1995, p. 72).

The centralized disbursement of news is hence indicative of strong editorial control. It in a way defies power decentralisation. News assemblage happens by taking into consideration the selection of content and sponsorship considerations among others factors shaping news (Ranganathan, 2006).

CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The power of regional language and localisation are pertinent additions to literature in myriad arenas, not restricted to business, communication and media studies, but are expansive; these include organisational studies, management, globalisation studies, diaspora studies and economics, to name a few. It has the potential to displace 'pan-Indian' networks and communicates 'a new dimension with language-/region-specific channels', with auxiliary consequence to diasporic settlements across the globe (Sonwalkar, 2001). Hence, regional or state oriented studies are especially pertinent to consider and undertake in research, especially of broadcast news organisations.

This study also questions the lack of academic or research interest in exploring the power and strength of regional media. The 'search for patterns' (Boje, 2001; Spradley, 1980) in this study explicated six main themes shedding light on how Gujarati news channels function. The internal stakeholders make sense of what is happening in their organisation retrospectively through cues, of which ownership, editorial leadership and organisational culture are the strongest. The viewers also search for cues in the news narrative that makes explicit the political and ideological positioning. Media ownership has resulted in a

trickledown effect by gradually moving away from traditional revenue models known,[7] from being entirely dependent on advertisers to other means of funding essentially signifying access to alternate resources (Srikrishna, 2014).

The sensemaking practices such as reciprocity and mutual respect were integral to the regional news broadcast organisations studied. The centralized disbursements of news, the emblematic air of casualness in the regional organisations, the notion of belongingness and adherence to the organisation's implicit and explicit norms, the organisational values and positioning are deeply entrenched in the intersubjective realm, within which the mediascape of Gujarat operates. The pro-party versus pro-government demarcation in news is a novel perspective explicated. The 'intersubjective interaction is central to constitution of social reality, individuals can be seen to be both 'constituting' and 'constituted by' their participation in communities' (Bianchin, 2006). The researchers' standpoint in this study, privileging generativeness, was informed by social constructionist practice to pay attention to the taken-for-granted practices recognising the seemingly nugatory means of enactment, which helped reify fads from reliable patterns of meaning-making and sensemaking within organisations.

The narrow respondent base for this study could be considered a limitation; however, it is also to be taken into consideration how tough regional news turfs are to enter; even after establishing a relationship with respondents, to make them talk about their job or their management comes with a circumscribed disclosure and is often paired with apprehensiveness and trepidation of talking or sharing their slice of reality. Another dimension which this study could not meticulously cover pertains to advertising and revenue generation model of news broadcast organisations. In addition, in more than one way, news production is technology-driven. It would be interesting to study the techno-social aspects of regional news production. Future research can strongly consider ethnographic immersions in the newsroom, as it would open up insightful vantage points, in understanding the intricacies of regional news assemblage and production. It would also help address the limitation acknowledged in this study.

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[7] Such as the two-sided markets (Anderson & Gabszewicz, 2005)

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Appendix I: Discussion Guide

The discussion guide from primary study effort was used 'as is'; however, a few questions were discarded and a few more questions were added to explore the Gujarati regional media (Srikrishna, 2014). Whatever catered to the research questions of this study were retained. The search was for patterns, and hence the way these questions were articulated had minor nonconformities, based on respondent's time, environment, mode and platform of interaction, language skills and grasping skills. The interviews were predominantly in English and Hindi. Generativeness in the zone of exploration has been privileged, as essentially my search was for patterns (Srikrishna, 2014).

1. How long have you been working here?

2. Can you please throw light on your past work experiences? If a fresher, why did you choose to join this particular organisation?

3. Did you have the freedom to choose the role you wanted?

4. Why did you come into this role profile? What are your ambitions?

5. What are the conflicts you face with other actors?

6. Do you form your views/opinions based on what you feel? How much does your colleague's view/opinion influence you?

7. Do you have independence in making your own decision?

8. How do you communicate – in which language? Style? How does it vary with the kind of person you interact with?

9. In day-to-day interactions, whom do you think usually has more power, you or the persons you interact with?

10. Do you have an ideological leaning? Is your organisation pro-government or anti-government?

11. Do you feel Gujarati news channels are partial to certain parties and critical in assessing others?

12. Have you changed in the way you communicate after working here?

13. Are you clear on what are your editorial expects?

14. How different are you from the others here?

15. Are you a different person outside this premise?

16. Are there any written/unwritten rules you are expected to follow?

17. What do you think are your working habits? (Style of working, organising, taking breaks …)

18. Are there certain guidelines you always stick by although you have never been told?

19. How much importance do you think is given to news versus advertisements? What you think about the kind of advertisements that are telecast in your channel?

20. How do your editorial and marketing teams work? (To those in managerial and decision making profiles)

21. What kind of politics do you encounter when you work?

22. How is a typical day at work? How would you describe your routine?

23. What are the advantages/disadvantages of working with a regional news channel? How often does the organisation communicate to you?

24. Who communicates to you often? Why?

25. How would you describe your organisation?

26. How is the ownership structure? Is it family-owned?

27. What kind of interpersonal relationships do you share with your colleagues?

28. How supportive do you think is the management (or higher-ups as the case maybe)?

29. Do you agree to certain decisions because your colleagues agree? Do you find yourself in a compulsion to agree with certain ways of working/practices because the management has set the guideline?

30. If you are in such a situation, do you try to influence your view openly? If not, how do you express dissent/dissatisfaction? If you choose to remain quiet, why did you opt not to speak out?

31. Do you think you are important for your organisation?

32. Are there powerful actors whom you always abide by? Do you oppose them at any point of time? Are you forced to fall in line with his/her/their opinions?

33. Are caste/religion/political loyalty strong considerations in the news channel(s)?

34. If you think your organisation supports a particular political will, how do you feel about it?

35. Do you support it? Can you openly voice your dissent if you don't? Can you express what you feel freely or you go by what is collectively expressed?

36. What do you think about your competitors? (Colleagues, departments, other news channels … as the case maybe)