

MARKETING OF SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

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MARKETING OF SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

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Submitted

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CERTIFICATE FROM THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Marketing of Select Newspapers in Mizoram**” submitted by Ms. Lalthanzuali Hauhnar (MZU/Ph.D/705 of 3.11.2014) for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) of the Mizoram University, embodies the record of original investigation carried out by her under my supervision. She has been duly registered and the thesis presented is worthy of being considered for the award of the Ph.D degree. This work has not been submitted in the past for any degree in this or any other University or Institute of learning.

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DECLARATION

I, Lalthanzuali Hauhnar, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institute.

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PREFACE

A newspaper is any printed periodical work containing public news or comments on public news, according to the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) (2020), a central government organisation in India. Newspapers have typically been production-oriented with business strategies centred on the newspaper and its issues. However, newspapers are now adopting the marketing concept, viewing themselves as products that must be adapted to meet customer needs and offered in a competitive marketplace, just like any other product. The newspaper market being a two-sided market must take into account both the readers market as well as the market for advertising space.

On every continent and in every market context, innovating news publishers are finding ways to adapt and thrive in the face of changing consumer behaviour and competition that is driven, in large measure, by the rapid changes and challenges of digital technology. According to the World Press Trends (WAN-IFRA, 2019), the global newspaper industry is a 123 billion dollar industry serving at least 640 million paying news users and millions more through free products. The newspaper industry in 2021 witnessed a total of more than Rs. 225 million daily circulations (*Press in India*, 2021) and newspaper revenues across India amounting to about Rs. 220 billion (Basuroy, 2022). Newspapers and periodicals are published in 189 languages and dialects (*Press in India*, 2021). Such pluralism is richly represented in the newspapers that reflect multicultural heterogeneity, diverse social values, and an array of linguistic traditions (Sterling, 2009).

Mizoram has proved itself to be a home for print media. According to *Press in India* (2021), the total number of newspapers and periodicals in Mizoram registered with the RNI were 206. As per the Directorate of Economics and Statistics data of 2020, there are 95 dailies, nine weeklies and two monthly newspapers published in Mizoram. Out of these newspapers, only three are in English and one in Mara language. Mizo language is one of the registered tribal languages of India and the *lingua franca* of Mizoram. The Indian-languages newspapers in most of the regions

of India have been expanding in terms of circulation and advertising revenue. However, in small linguistic States such as Mizoram, though there is a growing demand for vernacular dailies, the newspaper industry is facing serious challenges such as small readership base, physical distribution in the hilly terrain, and inadequate advertising support. It is in this context, the present study is conducted to explore the marketing strategies or practices followed by the leading newspapers published in Mizoram. Further, it is attempted to enquire into the consumption behaviour of newspaper readers. The study is expected to provide insights to the entrepreneurs interested in publishing newspapers, media managers, advertisers, and other stakeholders concerning media.

The entire study has been presented in the form of the following five chapters:

Chapter 1 – *Introduction*: The first chapter serves as an introduction to the main concepts, importance, components and classifications of a newspaper. It lays emphasis on the marketing of newspapers and presents the current scenario of the newspaper industry from a global perspective and narrates the Indian experience as it gradually shifts from an industry with missionary motives to a profit driven and capitalistic industry. It describes the situation of the newspaper industry in Mizoram and the multitude of print newspapers and periodicals. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic has been outlined to understand its effect on the newspaper industry. A review of literature covering the areas of newspaper industry, consumer behaviour of newspaper readers and impact of information technology and new media on newspaper industry are detailed in the chapter. The research design of the study is included which describes the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, methodology and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 - *The Newspaper Market in India with reference to Mizoram: Characteristics, Circulation and Competition*: The second chapter explores the newspaper market in Mizoram in the context of its characteristics, circulation and competition scenario. The newspaper market in India has been detailed from a macro angle and it is followed by a discussion of the evolution of newspapers in Mizoram, a small state of India's North East. The characteristics of the newspaper industry in

Mizoram have been discussed in terms of language, distribution, pricing, advertising and ownership pattern. Circulation of the daily newspapers and the prevailing competition are analysed.

Chapter 3 – *Marketing Strategies of Select Newspapers in Mizoram*: The third chapter examines the importance of marketing strategies in the newspaper industry. It attempts to identify the marketing strategies of select newspapers in Mizoram in terms of their product, pricing, placing and promotion decisions.

Chapter 4 - *Consumer Behaviour of Newspaper Readers in Mizoram*: The fourth chapter attempts to analyse the consumer behaviour of newspaper readers in Mizoram. It identifies the socio economic background of the respondents, their preferential contents of newspaper, the nature of buying newspapers and the frequency with which the newspapers are read. The types of news preferred by the readers as well as the readers' perception of coverage of news items are examined. Evaluations made by readers on ratio of news to advertisements and the evaluation of value of newspapers based on 12 premises were studied. The readers' level of satisfaction in terms of types of news items covered and other features of the newspapers was analysed. Dependency on newspapers for news and other media habits were also studied.

Chapter 5 - *Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion*: The final chapter enumerates the important findings of the present study and attempts to provide suggestions for newspaper organisations and the Government of Mizoram based on the findings of the study. Further, this chapter highlights the scope of future research for prospective researchers in the field of newspaper marketing.

Lastly, the thesis concludes with References followed by Appendices.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

a.m.	ante meridiem
ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulation
AIR	All India Radio
AMA	Americal Marketing Association
AMC	Aizawl Municipal Council
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
B2B	Business to Business
BCM	Baptist Church of Mizoram
CBC	Central Bureau of Communication
CCI	Competition Commission of India
CSI	Customer Satisfaction Index
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAVP	Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity
DDK	Doordarshan Kendra
df	Degree of Freedom
FBC	Fundamental Baptist Church
FM	Frequency Modulation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSVA	Gross State Value Added
HTML	Hypertext Mark-Up Language
I&PR	Information and Public Relations
IBEF	India Brand Equity Foundation
IKK	Isua Krista Kohhran
INMA	Indian Newsprint Manufacturers Association
INS	Indian Newspaper Society
IRS	Indian Readership Survey
KT	Kohhran Thianghlim
LPS	Liandailova Pachuau and Sons
MBTV	Mathrubhumi Television
MJA	Mizoram Journalist Association
MRC	Media Research Council
MZP	Mizo Zirlai Pawh
NDTV	New Delhi Television Ltd
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRS	National Readership Survey

NYT	New York Times
OTT	Over-the-top
p.m.	post meridiem
PCI	Presbyterian Church of India
PCI	Press Council of India
PIB	Press Information Bureau
PTI	Press Trust of India
RC	Roman Catholic
RNI	Registrar of Newspapers for India
RSS	Really Simple Syndication
SA	Salvation Army
SEBI	Securities and Exchange Board of India
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
STP	Segmenting, Targeting and Positioning
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TRAI	Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
TV	Television
UE	User Experience
UI	User Interface
UK	United Kingdom
UNI	United News Agency
UPC	United Pentecostal Church
USA	United States of America
WAN-IFRA	World Association of News Publishers
ZSDA	Zoram Seventh Day Adventist

CHAPTER - 1
INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introduction to the main concepts, importance and components of a newspaper. It lays emphasis on the marketing of newspapers and on the newspaper industry in the world, in India and in Mizoram. A review of literature covering the areas of newspaper industry, consumer behaviour of newspaper readers and impact of information technology and new media on newspaper industry are detailed in the chapter. The research design of the study is included which describes the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, methodology and limitations of the study.

1.1 NEWSPAPER

1.1.1 Meaning

News, both the essential and the frivolous, can be used to bind people together to build a sense of community and encourage them to engage with one another. It also provides information that people need in order to exercise judgment about what is happening in the world around them. People consume and apply the news to help them with their decision making so they can function as informed citizens. It also helps them organize their daily lives by advising them about predicted weather, transport problems, or the upcoming tour of a popular act (Burns, 2002). The need for news is universal and is fundamental in human nature. The desire for news – coming from people of all levels of intelligence, interests and tastes – is significantly satisfied by the newspaper. The need for news and newspaper arise out of the need for information (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). The consumption of newspaper affects people and society (Jeffrey & Sen, 2015).

A newspaper is any printed periodical work containing public news or comments on public news, according to the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) (2020), a

central government organisation in India. Newspapers have multiple purposes. In addition to the conveyance of news and information, the incorporation of other types of publication is an essential ingredient in the development of the newspaper. Advertisements are one obvious example of content that has nothing to do with the supply and analysis of news. Editorial and leading articles can be traced back to the handwritten newsletters of the seventeenth century which provided commentary on contemporary events. Puzzles and pastimes such as crosswords have helped readers while away the time spent with their newspaper. The serialisation of fiction, stories and novels in nineteenth-century newspapers is a further example of how non-news and non-information content has always been an essential ingredient of the newspaper (Williams, 2009). Pollard (1937) stated that few other kinds of enterprise equal the newspaper business in intensity of competition or in the directness of its dependence upon public acceptance. Good will is vital to its success, yet is so fragile and intangible, that bad judgment or unsound or unpopular policies can ruin it almost overnight.

Quite apart from the physical factors, the newspaper continues to present an offer distinct from other media. It offers a range of content in one package, as opposed to requiring the consumer to go to different places for different things, as on the internet. It acquires character and attitude from the way it selects and what it selects. It is seldom bland. Newspapers, unlike other media, tend to reflect and reinforce the prejudices of their readers, painting a picture of the world the reader will recognise. Newspapers will understand the lives of their target audiences and publish material that is relevant to them, that fits in with their preoccupations, interests, working lives, family lives and leisure. While magazines are deliberately more specific, newspapers will seek to deal with all aspects of the readers' lives: their health, holidays, finance, homes, children, clothes, food, and the things that excite them, enrage them, worry them and amuse them. All offered in one portable package (Cole & Harcup, 2010).

1.1.2 Importance

Newspapers are a crucial part of the news landscape. A newspaper's role is to find out fresh information on matters of public interest and to relay it as quickly and as accurately as possible to readers in an honest and balanced way (Randall, 2007). This role is influenced by various factors such as the content of newspapers, how that content is selected and how it has changed over time; the economics of newspapers, their policies, editorial and commercial; the threats to newspapers from competing media, even their survival; the extent to which society wishes to regulate or control newspapers, the freedom of a free press; the responsibility of newspapers with regard to matters such as privacy, taste and decency, the age-old contest between public interest and what interests the public (Cole & Harcup, 2010). Newspapers mean different things to different people. A variety of functions can be attributed to the different needs of advertisers, readers, owners, editors, politicians, governments, amongst others. The newspaper carries out two distinct communication functions. They work by transmitting information and bringing readers together as part of a community (Williams, 2009). The newspaper is a vehicle for the satisfaction of human wants and that in three diverse ways; it is primarily a collector and distributor of news, it is a vehicle of opinion and it serves as the great introducer of business from one trader to another. The most important function of a newspaper is the provision of a daily—or weekly as the case may be—supply of news and that not of any news nor of enough news but of all the news (Dibblee, 1915). The news media can best fulfil their functions in a democracy if there is a rich and pluralistic information environment that is easily available to all citizens (Norris, 2000). Societal influence of a newspaper achieved from practicing quality journalism could be a prerequisite for financial success. Social responsibility in the democratic system supports, rather than impedes, the fulfilment of a newspaper's business objectives, through the channels of obtaining public trust and achieving societal influence, which then feeds back into further fulfilment of the public mission, thereby creating a virtuous cycle (Meyer, 2004). The press in India has been ascribed a major role in monitoring the actions of politicians and in ensuring their responsiveness to droughts and floods that occur at frequent intervals. Readership of regional newspapers tend to comprise of local vulnerable populations who rely on action by state governments for

protection (Besley and Burgess, 2002). Newspapers that are State specific will report localised events. These factors play a great role in making the State government more responsive to local crises than newspapers published in other languages. Social movement scholars often depict the news media as playing a pivotal role in shaping whether social movements are able to bring about broader social change. By drawing attention to movements' issues, claims, and supporters, the news media can shape the public agenda by influencing public opinion, authorities, and elites (Andrews and Caren, 2010). Newspapers, even in the age of dramatic and technology-led change, still represents more than any other medium the essential of journalism: to find things out and tell others about them; to tell stories in a simple and accessible way; to explain; to root out hypocrisy and corruption among those who wield power, in so many ways, over the rest of us; to right wrongs and campaign; to provide the stuff of everyday conversation; to enrage and entertain; to shock and move; to celebrate and condemn (Cole & Harcup, 2010).

1.1.3 Components

The nature, form and content of a newspaper are often shaped by the perception that the newspaper has of its readers and what they want and how they should be addressed. Newspaper layout and design, as well as the language used, have been targeted to appeal to readers newspapers are seeking to reach, reinforcing their values and the way in which they see the world and themselves (Williams, 2009). Newspapers can now better understand their readers' habits and wants owing to market research, which helps them create material that will appeal to them.

The average daily newspaper includes a larger amount and variety of reading matter than most readers realize. The contents range from news of accidents and crime to humorous and serious verse, from market reports to a short story or a chapter of a novel, from dramatic and musical criticism to cooking recipes and cosmetic formulas, from argumentative editorials to reports of boxing matches and baseball games. Vivid description, spirited narrative, critical appreciation, logical argument, lucid explanation, moving pathos, vigorous appeals, wit and humour—all are often exemplified in a single issue of a well-edited newspaper. Scarcely any other form of

publication has regularly so great a variety of writing as the daily newspaper (Bleyer, 1913). Therefore, despite the popular notion that a newspaper serves just as a platform for the dissemination of current news and editorials, the typical daily paper offers its readers a range of amusing reading material in addition to a variety of guidance and helpful information.

News may be identified as hard news and soft news. Hard news is the observational role of journalism. Typically, hard news includes coverage of political, economic, or military significance, or social issues with political, economic, or military implications (such as crime coverage and stories about political demonstrations). Hard news stories also carry temporal imperatives—hard news indicates events that are current and time-sensitive (Sterling, 2009). Hard news concerns events potentially available to analysis or interpretation and consists of factual presentations of events deemed newsworthy (Franklin et al., 2005). The term soft news can be (and has been) applied to human interest stories, arts and entertainment, sports, celebrity gossip, society pages, and similar topics. In general, soft news stories are seen as less time sensitive and covering topics that are not viewed as seriously or as having as great a societal impact as hard news coverage (Sterling, 2009).

Galtung and Ruge (1965) offered 12 news values which, they suggest, are employed in gauging newsworthiness: frequency (events being favoured over processes); intensity (labelled ‘threshold’); unambiguity; cultural proximity (labelled ‘meaningfulness’); predictability (labelled ‘consonance’); unexpectedness; continuity (follow-up stories); composition (a balance of stories); references to elite peoples; references to elite nations; personification; and negativity. Galtung and Ruge predict that the more an event satisfies these criteria, the more likely it is of being reported as news.

Harcup and O'Neill (2001) suggested a list of ten news values which events must satisfy in order to be selected as ‘news’: reference to the power elite (individuals, organizations and nations); reference to celebrity; entertainment (e.g. sport, human interest, drama); surprise; good news (e.g. rescues, personal triumph); bad news (e.g. tragedy, accident); magnitude (degree of extreme behaviour or extreme occurrence);

relevance (cultural proximity, political importance); follow-up stories; and the newspaper's agenda (both politically and relating to the structure of the genre). Harcup and O'Neill (2017) developed an updated set of contemporary news values and added: exclusivity (result of interviews, letters, investigations, surveys, and polls), conflict (controversies, arguments, splits, strikes, fights, insurrections and warfare), audio-visuals (photographs, video, audio and/or which can be illustrated with info-graphics), share-ability (via Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media, drama (escapes, accidents, searches, sieges, rescues, battles or court cases). The above criteria are also governed by practical considerations, such as the availability of resources and time, and subjective, often unconscious, influences, such as a mix of the social, educational, ideological and cultural influences on journalists, as well as the environment in which they work, their position in the workplace hierarchy and the type of audience for whom journalists are producing news. In other words, who chooses the news, for whom, in what medium, and by what methods (and resources available), may be just as crucial as any inherent news values in any possible article.

Diversified as are the contents of a typical daily paper, they may be grouped in the following classes: local news, regional news, national news, international news, sports news, business news, editorials, editorial page articles, entertainment and advertisements.

Local news covers events that fall within a local context and are relevant to a small, locally defined and constrained audience and are determined by specific localities and geographical boundaries (Dimitrakopoulou, 2015). Local news is often touted as the mainstay of daily newspapers as most people rely on newspapers for local news. Local news may be the entire set of news topics (government, crime, school, sports, obituaries, etc.) originating in the local area, with the geographic boundary for what is local set in terms of a city or District or limits of a metropolitan area or state. However, the fundamental structure of reader interest in local news is based on news topics, i.e. local news is defined topically (McCombs and Winter, 1981). Local newspapers generally concentrate on local news. Local newspapers are a particularly

important source of information about local affairs; hence their circulation provides a good measure of citizens' intake of local information (George & Waldfogel, 2006). Roles of a local newspaper include campaigning on behalf of its readership on important issues and championing various causes (The Newspaper Society, 2004). Local newspapers should articulate the history and concerns of a local community and be central to local democracy by providing a forum for public debate (Franklin et al., 2005). State and local governments provide greater and more direct interaction with constituents than is the case with national politics. Politicians on the local or state level are more closely aligned with community issues, requiring greater public interaction. However, direct politician-to-citizen communication remains a challenge given constraints of time, cost, and sometimes distance. Local media are instrumental in this interchange because they serve as the primary mode of communication among officials, business, citizen action groups, and the general public. Given this role, local media can and often do help foster democratic processes. By covering local and state governments (including such vital functions as education, transportation, and health), media inform citizens of what these governments are doing (Sterling, 2009). By providing this kind of coverage, the media operate as "watchdogs" on the government, promoting transparency by periodically using investigative journalism and by holding leaders responsible for their actions.

Regional news refers to news within a particular geographical region or zone of a country. In the Indian context, regional news is difficult to define owing to the diversity of languages and scripts within a particular region. For instance, in addition to the various other languages and dialects prevailing in each region, the main languages spoken in the northern region of India are Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, the southern region consist of Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, and Oriya languages, the eastern region consist of languages such as Bengali, Assamese, Manipuri, Khasi, Mizo, Tripuri and so on, and the western region consists of Hindu and Gujarati languages. The linguistic complexity of each region creates a different kind of regional news. For instance, regional news for consumers from the State of Mizoram would be North East news, mainly news from the eight sister States.

National news operate within the boundaries of a specific nation-state and cover news that are of interest to a broader public, but are also territorially defined and bound. Though they address a greater public and promote a trans-local media agenda, they are still related to a greater or lesser number of localities within particular national boundaries (Hepp & Couldry, 2010). National news produces content that is related to a specific culture and promotes specific informational and cultural flows (Dimitrakopoulou, 2015). Within the boundaries of the nation, national news reports on stories and events of interest to the whole nation.

International news refers to the production of news around the world and reporting about foreign countries (Sterling, 2009). It frequently indicates coverage of nations other than their own by reporters.

Sports news may feature in newspapers beyond the sports pages, as scandal, policy or business stories but within the sports page readers are offered a considerate diet of statistics and competitions (Franklin, 2008). The concept of sports journalism has evolved over time by incorporating innovative features in news presentation to make sports news continuously interesting. To make the news piece interesting and in attempt to drag the reader, sports pages widened the spectrum of news content related to sports. Controversies are investigated, off and on field news are gathered and reported for interest in the sports stories (Somra & Kakkar, 2020). Newspapers increased the use of images and graphics to improve the visual appeal in reaction to the rise in market competition brought on by the introduction of visual media like television and new media.

Business news refers to reporting and writing about businesses and the economy. In addition, it commonly includes other beats such as labour, workplace, technology, personal finance, investment, and consumer reporting, as well as investigative reporting focusing on these topics. The field is also known as financial news. The common theme in all of this coverage is money—who spends it, who earns it, and where it comes from (Sterling, 2009). Consumers are increasingly turning to business news as they become more conscious of how the economy and stock market impact their daily lives.

Editorials have as their purpose the interpretation of news and of current issues and the discussion of matters of general interest, particularly with a view to convincing readers of the truth or the falsity of some proposition and of persuading them to act in accordance with the convictions thus created (Bleyer, 1913).

Entertainment as given in the daily newspaper, do not differ materially from similar matter published in other forms and cannot be considered distinctly journalistic types of writing. They do, however, provide the consumer with leisure reading material and is beneficial in attracting a larger audience base.

With the advent of new communication technologies and the globalized virtual world, a new media order has emerged, giving rise to transnational and international media. New media, often known as multimedia or digital media, relies on digital means to communicate. New media technologies include blogs, videos, websites and internet ads (University of Phoenix, 2022). New media transcend all national boundaries as well as the differences between different cultures and societies. They become detached from the symbolic spaces of national culture and are defined by the more 'universal' principles of international consumer culture (Morley & Robins, 1995). New media refers to a wide range of changes in media production, distribution and use. These are changes that are technological, textual, conventional and cultural. The key characteristics of the field of new media as a whole are digital, interactive, hypertext, virtual, networked, and simulated (Lister et al., 2009).

New communications technology allows for new, virtual community formation, on a global, local or special interest basis, thus blurring the boundaries of the nation-state (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001). There are no more defined localities (Hepp, 2008). Through the empowering use of social media and networks, citizens can create demand for particular kinds of content or even produce and distribute their own content transcending the national boundaries and addressing larger and differentiated segments of audiences (Dimitrakopoulou, 2015).

1.1.4 Classifications

The Registrar of Newspapers for India (*Press in India*, 2020) has classified newspapers based on:

a) *Circulation figures:*

- i. Small newspapers: Circulation up to 25,000 copies per publishing day
- ii. Medium newspapers: Circulation between 25,001 to 75,000 copies per publishing day
- iii. Big newspapers: Circulation of more than 75,000 copies per publishing day.

b) *Periodicity:*

- i. Daily
- ii. Weekly
- iii. Monthly
- iv. Fortnightly
- v. Quarterly
- vi. Half Yearly
- vii. Annual.

c) *Ownership:*

- i. Government
- ii. Individuals
- iii. Firm or Partnership
- iv. Society or Association
- v. Educational Institution
- vi. Trust
- vii. Public Limited Company
- viii. Private Limited Company
- ix. Organisation of Political Parties.

1.2 MARKETING OF NEWSPAPERS

Modern marketing philosophy asserts the importance of consumer oriented marketing practices. Success ensues when priority is given to satisfaction of needs and wants of the consumers instead of the business. Newspapers traditionally have been production-oriented, burdened with a complex manufacturing process that led to business strategies revolving around the newspaper and its problems, not around consumers and their needs (Fink, 1988). Newspapers are now switching to the marketing concept, looking upon themselves as products that must be tailored to suit consumer needs and which must be sold in a competitive marketplace, just like any other product. The marketing concept enables the management to create a consumer-oriented newspaper whose business philosophy is one of creating customer-satisfaction (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). At the core of any marketing plan resides the concept of marketing mix. This concept is just as crucial for a news organisation as it is for a manufacturer or retailer. The marketing mix is what influences how news is obtained, packaged, promoted, and delivered. This influences business policies and practises, and ultimately the journalist. The marketing mix was postulated by Jeremy McCarthy, a Harvard Business School professor in the 1960s and it comprises four elements: product, price, place, and promotion. Sterling (2009) states that the strategic mix of these elements have assisted the survival of news media organizations during economic downturn and increased competition. Perceiving the needs and values of the consumer as essential determinants for news reporting and information delivery, thus implementing modern principles of marketing in the daily activities of media organizations, has increased the quality and appeal of reporting and editorial content.

The newspaper industry is a two-sided market: besides the readers market there is also a market for advertising space, and the two are closely linked by inter-market network externalities. In other words, the willingness-to-pay of advertisers depends on the size (and sometimes on the composition) of the readership; readers' demand might also be a function of the amount of advertising (Argentesi and Filistrucchi, 2007). For newspaper organizations, marketing accomplishes three important and

interrelated functions: (1) to identify and create, distribute, and promote their products and services to answer to the informational, educational, and entertainment needs of their audiences; (2) to market their products and services to advertisers and third parties; and (3) to increase brand awareness and develop strategies to promote organizational growth. Newspapers deal with information and have a duty to present accurate, factual, and balanced reporting and analysis of news events to its audience. Marketing, on the other hand, and especially the “promotion” component, deals with persuasion, with the need and duty to generate or increase brand awareness and brand recognition, increase product or service recognition and demand, and ultimately increase sales. Journalism at its roots is descriptive; marketing is persuasive (Sterling, 2009). Information has become a commodity requiring effective packaging to be attractive to its intended audience. Today, content must resonate with audience needs and values. Given the quest for earnings, newspapers cannot survive without marketing. In addition, newspaper organizations make a significant portion of their revenues not only by selling information to readers, but by selling audiences to advertisers. Thus, as newspapers compete for customers for their advertising time or space, they must provide a news product which must be tailored to the needs of the business (advertising) audience, with a competitive price structure, and adequately promoted.

The newspapers need to develop market oriented perspective in order to survive the ever increasing competition within the industry and with other media outlets. The trend at the beginning of the twenty-first century is changing from “delivering information” to “making information resonate with the audience,” or packaging news to best meet the needs and values of advertisers and consumers.

1.3 THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

1.3.1 Global Perspectives

On every continent and in every market context, innovating news publishers are finding ways to adapt and thrive in the face of changing consumer behaviour and

competition that is driven, in large measure, by the rapid changes and challenges of digital technology. According to the World Press Trends (WAN-IFRA, 2019), the global newspaper industry is a 123 billion dollar industry serving at least 640 million paying news users and millions more through free products. Those audience numbers are expected to grow in the years ahead as forward-thinking publishers continue to innovate, deliver value to communities and thrive. Print newspapers still draws the largest paying audiences worldwide, though newspaper circulation has contracted narrowly (2%) during the past five years. The relative stability of this global figure is underpinned by growth in a small number of countries that include two of the world's largest economies, China and India. Growth in those countries, along with a small number of other developing economies such as Kenya and Vietnam, masks the turbulence felt across most of the rest of the news industry. There exists a wide variation in print circulation trends over the five years from 2014 to 2018. At the positive end of the scale, newspaper circulation has mushroomed more than 15% in China and nearly 8% in India. This contrasts starkly with performances on the other end of the scale, which shows that print circulation has more than halved in Romania (down 55%) and Australia (down 50%) during the same period.

In selected emerging economies, the print business is still booming, and there are nations where newspaper publishing never made it to substantial levels, leaving potential for growth in print (Kolo, 2019). Print newspapers are suffering declining readership and revenue in most of the developed world, such as in Europe and Australia, though in general the problems are not as severe as in the United States, particularly when it comes to revenue. But in much of the developing world, print newspapers are thriving, in some cases dramatically. The distinction between whether a nation's newspapers are suffering or flourishing depends in broad terms on whether the country is enjoying increases in population, education, literacy and income levels or is an already developed country with a mature newspaper industry, though some other factors appear to be relevant as well. The problems are greatest, generally, in developed countries where newspapers already are consumed by large percentages of the population and where there are a lot of media providing news and information. Print newspapers are thriving, meanwhile, in countries with untapped

and emerging population segments. In some parts of the world, such as India, reading a print newspaper is a prestigious activity. However, gains may be temporary as those countries shift to new technologies (Santhanam and Rosenstiel, 2011). According to the estimates of World Press Trends (WAN-IFRA, 2020), publishers are earning about 82 per cent of their total revenue from print and accelerating digital transformation strategy was the overwhelming top priority of the publishers. The reality in news media is that most newspapers are far from being digital businesses as print and its revenue still makes up the majority of their revenue. Print revenue is vitally important as those businesses try to transition to a more digital-focused strategy. It's still important for even the most advanced digital news organisations.

1.3.2 Indian Experience: From Missionary Spirit to Profit Motive

Media and communication technologies of various kinds have during recent decades been powerful tropes of social change in India. Few people around the world could be unaware that India has undergone a communication revolution (Ståhlberg, 2014). Indian media have served the world's largest democracy as a relentless watchdog. India's media inform, educate, and entertain a population of 1.4 billion, which is nearly one-fifth of the world's population. In stark contrast to some of the neighbouring countries where military dictators have restricted the press and democratic principles, India's free press has contributed to maintaining the country's democratic traditions. With expanding international investment, greater advertising expenditure, rising income levels, and a spike in consumer spending, a thriving economy has revitalised Indian media.

The genesis of newspapers in India occurred during the British rule, when in 1780 Augustus Hicky started the English language newspaper *Bengal Gazette* (Chaudhuri, 1955). Throughout the colonial period, the Indian press was made up of two distinct systems, the Indian language press and the English press. Though both the systems evolved during the period, their growth pattern was not uniform. While the English newspapers grew faster with educated elite as its audience, the Indian language

newspapers had a retarded growth due to lack of resources and lack of encouragement from the government. In spite of these odds, the language newspapers played a key role in India's struggle for independence (Ahmed, 1986). Traditionally, in the pre-independence period, the functioning of the Indian newspaper as the fourth estate had been more akin either to a mission or to a profession rather than to a business. The Indian newspapers owed its vitality, importance and influence to one great factor – its greatest journalists were men with a mission and men of integrity and courage (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), a religious, social and educational reformer who founded two of India's earliest weekly newspapers, *Sambad Kaumud* and *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, played a significant part in the fight for the freedom of the press. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), a nationalist and critic of British economic policy in India published the newspaper *Voice of India* in 1882. India's most famous nationalist leader, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) was an outstanding journalist in English and Gujarati. He claimed that the sole aim of journalism should be service (Jeffrey, 2013) and his newspapers, *Indian Opinion*, *Young India*, *Navajivan* and *Harijan* were dedicated to the cause of Indian freedom and a key component of the non-cooperation movements (Hofmyer, 2013). The Vernacular Press Act passed in 1878 was controversial due to its prejudiced attempt to control the newspapers published in Indian languages. It immediately caused the awakening of political consciousness and the start of national movement on a countrywide scale (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). Newspapers, especially, those in Indian languages, were suffused with nationalist values since many of them were founded by well-known freedom fighters and they did not shy from critical reportage even if the tone was at times less than dispassionate (Bhattacharjee, 2015). After India's independence in 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru's Congress government faced a newspaper industry divided into three major categories: the rapidly disappearing British owned English language newspapers, Indian owned newspapers which had been in the hands of nationalist sympathizers before independence, and newspapers acquired by Indian capitalists after independence (Jeffrey, 2013). The trends in ownership and organisation of newspapers began to change by the beginning of the 1950s and profit motive replaced the idealistic and missionary spirit of the former days. Influenced by the

process of democratisation and growth of technology, the press was transformed from craft to commercial venture (Nair, 2003). There are many media organisations in the country that are owned and controlled by a wide variety of entities including corporate bodies, societies and trusts, and individuals. The growing corporatization of the Indian media is manifest in the manner in which large industrial conglomerates are acquiring direct and indirect interest in media groups. There is also a growing convergence between creators/producers of media content and those who distribute/disseminate the content (Thakurta, 2012). Corporates are vying to take over media houses because they want to directly control and shape the discourse on political economy. With instances such as Reliance Industries taking over ownership of Network18 in 2014 and the Adani Group's takeover of news broadcaster New Delhi Television Ltd (NDTV) in 2022, corporates are entering the media business for the same reason that political parties and political families own media houses, to influence public opinion. By controlling the production, dissemination and exchange of political ideas, spin and hyperbole can win over substance and swing the public mood in their favour. It could normalise a communal and divisive discourse or challenge it, depending on how it affects profits (Bhushan, 2022).

The real challenges that lie ahead for the media in India are to ensure that growing concentration of ownership in an oligopolistic market does not lead to loss of heterogeneity and plurality. In the absence of cross-media restrictions and with government policies contributing to further corporatization, especially with respect to the television medium, diversity of news flows could be adversely affected contributing to the continuing privatization and commodification of information instead of making it more of a “public good”

India's newspaper market is now among the largest in the world (Sterling, 2009). The industry in 2021 witnessed a total of more than 225 million daily circulations (*Press in India*, 2021) compared to 24.3 million U.S. daily newspaper circulations (Pew Research Center, 2021). Newspaper revenues across India amounted to about Rs. 220 billion in 2021 with print advertising contributing about Rs. 151 billion (Basuroy, 2022). In the backdrop of increased emphasis of the Government of India

on digital literacy, high proportion of population under the age of 35 years, one of the lowest prices of internet, there has been a sharp rise in the presence and influence of digital media in the country (TRAI, 2022). About Rs. 900 million was estimated to be generated by the print industry through digital media in 2021. As of 2019, digital news reached approximately 80 per cent of internet users across India. The introduction of the government's Digital India initiative hand in hand with the increasing internet penetration over the recent years resulted in the country's digital population amounting to approximately 658 million active users as of February 2022. The traffic in the world's second largest internet market at this stage was largely dominated by mobile internet users (Basuroy, 2022). In the last two decades, the media and communication scene in India has transformed, partly as a result of liberalization, deregulation, and privatisation of media and cultural industries.

Newspapers in India are still selling well. In 2002, the Indian government eased a 1955 ban on foreign investment in magazines and newspapers. By 2008, it had approved 15 foreign investment bids for news and current affairs media besides approving publication of international newspaper facsimile editions. As newspaper readership stagnates in the United States and Europe, global companies such as the U.S.-based Blackstone Group; Britain's Pearson, publisher of the *Financial Times*; and Britain's Associated Newspapers, has invested in Indian media (Sterling, 2009). The print media is one of the most important pillars of democratic system in the country. The Indian press spread over 28 States and 8 Union Territories has shown upward trend in terms of registered publications, both at national as well as regional levels. As many as 1,44,520 publications (Newspapers & Other periodicals) have been registered in India till 31st March, 2021 witnessing a constant growth of the print media. The rise in the number of registered publications is a pointer towards the fact that proliferation of audio, visual and digital media has not adversely affected the substance and growth of print media (*Press in India*, 2021).

India is a linguistically diverse country, and the large array of languages in which newspapers are published is symptomatic of this. The Census of India 2011 reported the total number of languages as 121 comprising 22 Scheduled languages and 99

Non-Scheduled languages. Newspapers and periodicals are published in 189 languages and dialects (*Press in India*, 2021). Such pluralism is richly represented in the newspapers that reflect multicultural heterogeneity, diverse social values, and an array of linguistic traditions (Sterling, 2009). The vernacular newspapers were among the first industries in India to realize the commercial usefulness of a huge population. In the 1980s, the growing urban middle class hypnotized the world of Indian businesses – this was the intended market for household goods and television shows. Newspapers, instead, saw early on the potential of a much larger market: all those millions outside the main cities, newly literate and with limited economic means. It took some time for advertisers to be convinced, but since the turn of the millennium the vernacular masses have become a prime focus among powerful market-driven media organisations and communication-technology industries (Ståhlberg, 2014). The findings of *Indian Readership Survey, 2019* stated *Dainik Jagran*, a Hindi language daily newspaper, as the most read newspaper in India in 2019 followed by *Dainik Bhaskar* (Hindi), *Hindustan* (Hindi), *Amar Ujala* (Hindi), *Malayala Manorama* (Malayalam), *Daily Thanti* (Tamil) and *Lokmat* (Marathi). Among the English language newspapers, *The Times of India* had the highest readership in the country. In 2021, the Registrar of Newspapers in India (RNI) reported that Hindi dailies were among the highest number of all the languages (4349), followed by Urdu (1107), Telugu (1083), English (820), Marathi (617), Kannada (560), Gujarati (369), Tamil (180), Odia (132) and Malayalam (119). Language newspapers have grown in number and circulation and gained popularity as a result of improved rural infrastructure, rising levels of literacy, and innovations in printing methods.

1.3.3 Mizoram: A Home for the Print Media

Mizoram is located in the North Eastern part of India. A landlocked state, Mizoram shares interstate borders with the state of Assam in the north, the state of Manipur in the east, and the state of Tripura in the north-west. Additionally, Mizoram shares international borders with Myanmar in the east and south, and Bangladesh in the

west. Spanning 21,807 sq. kilometres, more than three-fourths of Mizoram's land area consists of forestland and is home to unique species of flora and fauna. Aizawl, the State capital, is located in the northern part of Mizoram, just north of the Tropic of Cancer. Mizoram has a population of 10,97,206 (2011 Census), and more than half of the population are involved in agriculture and allied sector activities. Its capital city, Aizawl, holds just above three lakh people or a third of the state's population. The economy has witnessed the highest contribution from the tertiary or service sector contributing a share of 48.06 per cent to the total Gross State Value Added (GSVA). The industry sector contributed 26 per cent while the agriculture and allied sector contributed 25.93 per cent to the total GSVA (Economic Survey of Mizoram, 2022).

The following years after Mizoram received statehood on February 20, 1987 witnessed high growth in number of newspapers (see *Appendix III*). These newspapers began with modest circulation and continued on without substantial increase in circulation figures. The newspaper industry remains entrenched with small newspaper organisations with low circulations. The advent of satellite and cable TV, together with introduction of more sophisticated printing technology and computers have, in a way, transformed media in Mizoram (Laldinliana & Jyoti Kumar, 2012). The main newspapers in Mizoram consist of Mizo language newspapers, English language newspapers and one Mara language newspaper. As per the Directorate of Economics and Statistics data of 2020, there are 95 dailies, 9 weeklies and 2 monthly newspapers in Mizoram. Out of these newspapers, only three are in English and one in Mara language. Mizo language is one of the registered tribal languages of India and the *lingua franca* of Mizoram. English newspapers that are published from the States of Assam and West Bengal include *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, *Telegraph* and *Eastern Chronicles*; however, they do not have considerable circulations within Mizoram.

According to *Press in India* (2021), the total number of newspapers and periodicals in Mizoram registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India were 206. *Synod* is the leading periodical (monthly) with a claimed circulation of 1,50,000 copies per

publishing day. Incidentally, *Synod* is published by the largest church denomination in the State, the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram and printed at the Synod Press, also owned by the church. In 2019, the Synod Press printed seven monthly publication for the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram that totalled 3,43,400 copies per publishing day. The seven monthlies printed are religious news and they are *Kristian Tlangau* (Church's organ), Synod Newsletter (Church's newsletter), *Kristian Naupang* (Monthly journal for Children), *Kristian Thalai* (Journal of Church's Youth Fellowship), *Ramthar* (Journal of Synod Mission Board), Agape (Journal of Church's Women Fellowship), and *Didakhe* (Bi-monthly journal of Theological Education) (Mizoram Synod, 2019). With 6,26,958 members in the church, its publications enjoy wide circulation. Religious news is nearly as old as religion itself. Given that religion is a cultural universal, its involvement in newspapers has been enduring and far-reaching. Despite the great number of secular media, a number of religious vehicles have remained influential. With the growth of various denominations as well as expanding general interest in religion, these publications offer alternative points of view and strengthen religious identity among readers. Throughout the world, for instance, *Christianity Today* (1956) created by the Billy Graham Evangelical Association, reports the news through a religious lens, as does the Buddhist magazine *Bodhi* (1997). Conservative publications such as *Commonweal* (1924) offered Catholic positions while *Commentary* (1945) conveys Jewish perspectives (Sterling, 2009). As reflected, the State of Mizoram where majority of the population are Christians closes all its commercial activities each Sunday. The newspapers for that reason do not publish on Sundays, except for the weekly newspaper *Zalen*, which is distributed on Sundays. The circulation of *Zalen* is within the capital city of Aizawl and reaches 17,000 copies per publishing day.

All the newspapers published within the State have been observed to consist mainly of local news. With the majority of the newspapers using tabloid size paper only a few newspapers are using broadsheet size paper. The number of pages range from two to twelve pages. Circulation of newspapers is mainly confined within the District of publication, with the exception of a few newspapers including *Vanglaini*, *The Aizawl Post*, *The Zozam Times*, *The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander*. Majority of the

newspapers use offset printing technique while there are still some newspapers using laser printing.

The newspaper industry, although characterised with low circulation and slow development, has potential to grow and expand. The dominance of Mizo language newspapers is evidence of the preference for local language newspapers. The high rate of literacy, the growth of population, the infrastructural developments, rising economy and rapid adaptation of technological advancements are propellants for growth of the industry.

1.3.4 Impact of COVID-19

As a global crisis, COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of people's life, be it health, security, personal finance or lifestyle. The impact of the pandemic can also be felt in the newspaper industry. The implications of the pandemic sharpened the already existing trends in the media market, such as the quantum leap from traditional media to new (digital) media and the rapid changes in consumer behaviour and consumption. From collaboration, diversification and innovation, media houses have used various strategies to regain market share even when ad revenues were plunging (Pandey, 2021). The global print industry has been affected by the unfavourable macroeconomic conditions like online availability of news and overall global economic slowdown caused by the pandemic. In addition, COVID-19 induced lockdown resulted in higher consumption through digital media causing changes in consumer choices (TRAI, 2022). The media in its digital forms saw an extraordinary rise in 2020. This phenomenon has occurred because audiences all across the world, especially in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns, faced such a great need for access to information. Moreover, forecasts indicate that this is a change in audience behaviour that is here to stay (WAN-IFRA, 2021). According to the Pitch Madison Report, 2021, digital was the only medium that grew in 2020 by 10 per cent. However, print advertising revenue, the 2nd largest in terms of market share of total advertising revenue in 2019 was the biggest casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic. Print media during 2020 lost as much as 40 per cent of its advertising revenue. Considering that newspapers could not be distributed owing

to strict lockdown, print media lost many advertisers. In 2021, print regained and registered a 39 per cent growth, with English and Hindi publications put together claiming 63 per cent of total advertising revenue.

According to analysis by India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) in September, 2020, COVID-19 resulted in revenue decline of over 67 per cent, which was the outcome of a 76 per cent drop in advertisement revenue and a 32 per cent drop in circulation revenue. The decline was higher for English print media than Hindi print media. The pandemic also led to closure of some editions and loss of jobs. The *Times of India* shut down two of its four editions in Kerala. Sakal Media closed operations of *Sakal Times* and *Gomantak Times*. Business Standard discontinued its Patna and Raipur Hindi editions along with the Sunday Business Standard. *Hamara Mahanagar*, a Hindi newspaper published from Mumbai, closed three editions, from Mumbai, Pune and Nashik. The English daily *Star of Mysore*, a 43-year-old evening daily, stopped publishing. *The Telegraph* closed its Jharkhand and Guwahati editions. The print edition of *Mail Today* was suspended in August, 2020. Journalists began to be laid off from April 2020 from a range of publications that included the *Times of India*, *Economic Times*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Mint*, *Business Standard*, and *Outlook*, among others. There is less information available about job losses in the regional language media. There were pay cuts, and reduction in page numbers to the point that the *Economic Times* in Delhi, for instance, was down to 10 pages on some days even in January 2021, less than the number of pages offered by its two nearest competitors (Ninan, 2021). To offset advertising revenues lost due to COVID-19, most of the newspaper organisations converted their free e-paper to paid ones. This enabled them to gain digital revenues through subscription fees and digital advertising.

The global pandemic created a risk for revenue for other industries as well. While the financial ruin it has brought to industries such as hospitality and tourism may be the most visible, its effects have been felt in every corner of the global economy. Propelled by circumstance and driven by necessity, businesses have recognised the evolving needs of their clientele and shifted to a digital-first model, introducing new

means by which users are empowered to shop and consume. For some companies, this move has been as simple as revamping their online presence and redesigning their website to be more user-friendly. Other businesses integrate features such as virtual and augmented reality to better help users visualise their products, offering digital consultations, and organising virtual tours of finished space (Gupta, 2021). Virtual took on a whole new meaning, whether it be events, seminars, awards, or even key announcements, which otherwise would have been hosted at physical venues. The key to marketing success during the lockdown was quality of output, on the right platform. Digital marketing had been gaining ground in marketing strategies in the business to business (B2B) space, but overnight it became the primary and only means, accelerating transition from traditional marketing. There was a visible increase in the use of social media by companies to get messages and new initiatives across, including aspects like product updates, new features, partnerships, and customer wins (Bharti, 2021).

The epidemic undoubtedly had an adverse effect on the economy as a whole. Many sectors such as print media, aviation, hospitality, auto and real estate have suffered, but there have been sectors that have thrived such as digital media, online gaming, ed-tech, med-tech and insurance. COVID-19 heightened the shift to digitisation, interminably redefining the overall business landscape with digital transformation. While digital marketing uses every touch point of our daily internet usage to reach out, traditional marketing has an immersive effect leading the customers to subconsciously attach themselves to a brand. Hence, post COVID-19, the key to marketing success for newspapers would be an optimum blend of traditional and digital marketing.

1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researcher in the process of literature survey has familiarized with the various concepts of newspaper marketing and readership survey. Some important research works are reviewed hereunder by following the thematic approach to highlight the main findings and are divided into newspaper industry, consumer behaviour of

newspaper readers, and impact of Information Technology (IT) and new media on newspaper industry.

1.4.1 Newspaper Industry

Jeffrey (2000) attempted to understand why Indian language newspapers grow, who pays for them to grow, who profits from their growth, who produces them, and who tries to control them. His research is based on all the public resources and on more than 250 interviews, the earliest of which dates from 1977. His study covered 12 major language newspapers in the country, in addition to English newspapers. He stated that the growth of Indian language newspapers, which had begun well before the 1990s, signifies the spread of Indian capitalism and its organizing principles and values. The need to show larger audiences to national advertisers drives the aggressive expansion of these newspapers. He also found that people read newspapers because of local news coverage.

Beam (2001) in his study showed that market-driven journalism does not appear to pay off with higher circulation or household penetration. However, the study showed that senior editors from market-oriented newsrooms express less uncertainty about their paper's environment than editors from other newspapers. They also feel more confident that they can adapt their paper to changes in its environment.

Besley and Burgess (2002) examined the role of newspapers in political economy and in ensuring that the preferences of citizens are reflected in the policy. The study showed that state governments are more responsive to falls in food production and crop flood damage via public food distribution and calamity relief expenditure where newspaper circulation is higher and electoral accountability greater. They found that regional newspaper circulation drives government activism.

Scheufele et al. (2002) explained how media influences local political involvement, issue awareness and attitude strength. According to their study, demographic variables and ideological differences are not influencing people's involvement in politics but local newspaper views are having an impact on people's political involvement, issue awareness and attitude strength. This study concluded that the

media by emphasizing certain attributes of an issue, conveys to the reader ‘how to think about’ an issue as well as ‘what to think about’.

Beam (2003) conducted a content analysis of more than 13,000 items on the main display pages in twelve daily newspapers and found that publications with a strong market orientation publish fewer items about government and public affairs and more items about lifestyle and sports than newspapers with a weak market orientation. But it also found that content for the public sphere continues to dominate the main display pages of both newspapers that embrace market-driven journalism and those that do not.

Nair (2003) attempted to relate the structural transformation of the newspaper industry in India since the 1960s to the large socio-economic and political changes. The process of democratisation seemed to be the dominant force that shaped the press structure and outcomes. A distinguishing feature of this process was the movement of politics away from the centre to the peripheral states, the real sites where negotiations between various class and group interests were most effectively conducted. An important aspect of this transition that saw the rise of dominant local interests was the changing role of language. In addition, the information technology revolution from the late 1970s freed an otherwise capital-intensive and cumbersome technology-based industry of its major barriers to market entry and expansion. The possibility of separation of printing and other departments made it easy for newspaper firms to spread geographically and save on transportation costs.

Jyoti Kumar (2003) conducted a study to identify the competitive strategies of Telugu newspapers to which the success or failure of the individual papers could be attributed. The study further attempted to analyse the socio-economic profile of the Telugu newspaper consumers and their consumption characteristics. The study revealed that merely imitating a market leader in its marketing strategies does not guarantee success. Further, the study proved the hypothesis of underperformance or unwanted performance of Telugu dailies, including the leader, in several news segments. Scanty readership of underperforming or unwanted segments of news is not capable of attracting sufficient ad revenues in the long run, justifying their costs.

In the process, the customers are denied of an opportunity to satisfy their other pressing newspaper needs.

Reid and Whitehill (2003) surveyed media specialists and advertising managers to measure opinions on national newspaper advertising for (1) ad delivery effectiveness, (2) sales effects, and (3) creative properties of media-delivered ads. High agreement was found between ad managers and media specialists. Newspapers fared poorly as a national medium for ad delivery effectiveness, sales effects, and medium-based creative properties of ads in comparison with network TV, but were judged effective at producing immediate sales pay-out and delivering both simple and complex ad messages. The more money spent in national newspaper advertising by a company, the more effective the medium was perceived by that firm's advertising manager.

Argentesi (2004) looks at a form of non-price competition that has taken place in the Italian newspaper market, whereby weekly supplements are sold with the newspaper at a higher price. The impact of this selling strategy is estimated using a logit and a nested logit model of demand on a panel of Italian newspapers. Results show that supplements increase the readership both in the weekday of issue and in the average weekday. This suggests that supplements are a way to attract new readers for the newspaper and this promotional effect is due both to business stealing and to market expansion.

Cho et al. (2004) analysed twenty-seven dailies identified with improved newspaper quality and found they had stronger circulation growth than did a national representative sample of 98 dailies. The study showed a positive relationship between increased newsroom investment and circulation growth.

Lacy and Martin (2004) analysed the impact of competition on newspaper circulation and advertising. Economic theory and research provide evidence that intense competition among newspapers will result in increases in newsroom budgets, changes in content and decreases in advertising cost per thousand. Evidence is less strong that competition decreases subscription prices, although this can happen under

some conditions. Considerable variation across newspapers can be found with all these relationships, which represent a variety of managerial decisions.

Lacy et al. (2004) in an exploratory study examined the relationship between private ownership of dailies and the number of weekly newspapers and weekly penetration in non-metropolitan counties. Results indicated that private ownership is associated with fewer weeklies in a county, a result consistent with economic theory that suggests private dailies may create barriers to entry for weeklies through nonaggressive pricing strategies and investment in newsroom quality.

Meyer (2004) searched for a correlation between credibility and profitability of newspapers using the influence model. The societal influence model posits that newspaper content quality increases societal influence and news credibility. Both drive circulation and profitability.

Picard (2004) explores how commercialism has diminished the importance of public service. He stated that economic and accompanying social changes in the newspapers have diminished the place of the public interest orientation that traditionally held a high place in newspapers. In addition, a wholesale commercialism of content has become the major factor determining media operation and content in the newspaper industry. Content is skewed by commercialism, and the market conditions in which media firms operate influence the strategies of companies and the content provided.

Rosenstiel and Mitchell (2004) in their study found that if a paper invests more in its newsroom, over time, it will increase revenue, circulation and profit substantially – much more than the cost of investing in the product.

Sridhar and Sainath (2004) performed a case study of Times Of India Group for innovations in marketing strategies, which are product, price, promotion and distribution related. A survey was conducted by the authors on an innovation in marketing strategy of trimming and slimming the size of the newspaper. The data collected from 357 readers of Bangalore were analysed. The readers were observed, in general, as positive and aware of the changes made by the newspaper. Such

understanding of sensitivity of readers is crucial for the success of marketing strategies.

Lowrey (2005) used institutional theory from the study of organizations to explore the degree to which newspapers and TV stations pursue partnerships for concrete benefits, and the degree to which they pursue them to keep up with perceived trends in the industry. Findings from a national survey of newspaper and TV news managers revealed that availability of resources and the goal-oriented pursuit of concrete benefits best predict initiation of partnerships. However, strength of commitment to partnering correlated more strongly with institutional factors—i.e., managers' professional involvement and the level of partnering of nearby “flagship” news institutions and competitors. This was the case even when controlling for business factors such as competition, penetration, and public ownership.

Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005) investigated the market for news under two assumptions: that readers hold beliefs which they like to see confirmed, and that newspapers can slant stories toward these beliefs. They have examined the roles of two forces in promoting accuracy in media: competition and reader diversity. Competition forces newspapers to cater to the prejudices of their readers. Reader diversity forces newspapers toward accuracy.

Sullivan (2006) observed that newspaper companies need to shift from their current manufacturing model to a service model if they are to regain their unique, trusted status and potential to grow. He contends that newspapers today have lost site of their audience and look at journalism as a commodity. By changing the way the newspaper caters to their audience, he believes this will ultimately win back the audience it is said to represent. Newspapers need to identify different value propositions for customers and investors which would allow newspapers to (re)define themselves and/or new business areas.

Asplund et al. (2008) in their study of regional newspapers in regard to price discrimination found that newspapers with a local competitor sell a larger part of their circulation at a discount than monopoly newspapers. Moreover, in competitive

markets, the use of discounts is inversely related to the newspaper's market share. Newspapers with the lowest market share were the ones with the most subscriptions at a discount.

Kaisii (2008) observed that not only that there are no pan daily newspapers in North East India but also most of the newspapers are of recent origin with the exception of *Assam Tribune* and *The Sentinel*, which are primarily based in Guwahati (Assam). The media as an industry in the North East India is yet to see its true picture since many of the newspapers are owned and edited by one person, if not remaining as a family business. There is relatively less scope to accommodate diverse opinions and views to provide larger perspective to the readers. Moreover, the inability to produce a pan North East India daily newspaper till date indicates that there is an absence of a common voice on various issues that is confronting the people of this region. Taking this sort of position only make the central government to conveniently assume the many conflicts in the North East region as mere law and order problem. The average circulation is low compared to its high literacy rate in the region, which is more than the national average. Consequently, the readership is low.

Picard (2008) conducted a study to investigate shifts in newspaper advertising expenditures and their implication for the future of newspapers. Using a US dataset from 1950 to 2005, this study explores advertising growth trends, the extent to which the relationship between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and newspaper advertising expenditures is being maintained, and changes in expenditures in different categories of retail, classified and national to determine whether and how the long term trends are shifting. The study reveals that the relationship between GDP and expenditures is weakening, that growth is not keeping pace with inflation, and that there is greater volatility in advertising than seen in the past. The study concludes that trends indicate the advertising expenditure will plateau and decline in the future, denying newspapers revenue growth that is critically needed for sustainability.

Chandra (2009) in his study aimed to establish the importance of targeted advertising in media markets. He showed that newspapers facing more competition have lower circulation prices but higher advertising prices than similar newspapers facing little

or no competition. He found that newspapers in more competitive markets are better able to segment readers according to their location and demographics. This leads to greater homogeneity in the characteristics of subscribers and raises advertisers' willingness to pay for such readers.

Ellman and Germano (2009) analysed how and why advertisers might influence media content. They studied how advertising affects the ability and incentives of media to provide high quality, independent news. They model the market for news as a two-sided market where newspapers sell news to readers who value accuracy and sell space to advertisers who value advert-receptive readers. They found that advertising automatically influences reporting in monopolistic media markets but that, paradoxically, with competing newspapers, increasing advertising eventually induces maximal accuracy.

Godes et al. (2009) studied the implications of two-sided competition on the actions and source of profits of media firms. They found that media firms may charge higher content prices in a duopoly than in a monopoly. This happens because competition for advertisers can reduce the return per customer impression from the ad market, making each firm less willing to under-price content to increase demand. Greater competitive intensity may thus increase content profits and decrease ad profits. These findings are in sharp contrast to those in a regular one-sided product market, in which competition typically lowers product prices and profits. In their study of competition across different media (e.g., between magazines and cable TV) they found that firms in a duopolistic medium may benefit from more intense competition from a monopolist in another medium. Each firm in the duopoly medium may bundle more ads and earn greater total profits than the rival firm in the monopoly medium.

Hollander (2010) through national survey found that there remains a hunger for local news. The print newspaper audience is made up of those with an interest in both local government and community news, while an increase online is seen only among those interested in community news. He found that interest in government news positively correlated with reading local print news. This is a result of local newspapers' emphasis on local government news.

Petrova (2011) in her study showed that places with higher advertising revenues were likelier to have newspapers that were independent of political parties. Similar results hold when local advertising rates are instrumented by regulations on outdoor advertising and newspaper distribution. In addition, newly created newspapers were more likely to enter the market as independents in places with higher advertising rates. Economic development, and concomitant higher advertising revenue, is not the only reason that an independent press expands; political factors also played a role.

Gabszewicz et al. (2012) in their study provided a theoretical explanation for the entry of free dailies in the newspaper and advertising markets. They developed a two-sided market model for the daily newspaper industry and used it to show that the growth of net advertising revenues per reader, i.e. of the difference between advertising revenue per reader and unit printing cost, is a likely explanation for the possible entry of a free daily newspaper in a newspaper market initially fully monopolized by a traditional outlet. Entering as a free daily is a way to avoid the increased competition following entry as a paid-for newspaper, especially a decrease in the price of the high-quality incumbent, and a way to secure a sufficient number of readers who are all the more valuable as the net advertising revenue per reader is sufficient.

Gal-Or et al. (2012) in their study investigated the role of advertising in affecting the extent of bias in the media. When making advertising choices, advertisers evaluate both the size and the composition of the readership of the different outlets. The profile of the readers matters because advertisers want to target readers who are likely to be receptive to their advertising messages. The authors demonstrated that when advertising supplements subscription fees, it may serve as a polarizing or moderating force, contingent on the extent of heterogeneity among advertisers in appealing to readers having different political preferences. When heterogeneity is large, each advertiser chooses a single outlet for placing advertisements (single-homing), and greater polarization arises in comparison to when the media outlet relies on subscription fees only for revenues. In contrast, when heterogeneity is

small, each advertiser chooses to place advertisements in multiple outlets (multihoming) and reduces polarization results.

Maier and Tucker (2012) made a comparison study of the digital and print newspapers and results indicated that online readers get a different mix of top news stories. Online newspapers focused on crime, disaster and sports while print offered more on politics, environment and education.

Bukhari (2013) discussed about the mushroom growth of newspapers in Kashmir (India). In a politically sensitive state like Jammu and Kashmir, the newspapers have been growing in number, but not in circulation. Apart from the poor circulation, the newspaper industry has not been able to shape itself as an institution in the Kashmir Valley. There are no salary structures for the employees, and no insurance cover is provided to them despite being vulnerable to all kinds of professional hazards. Only a few newspapers have the culture of having full-fledged reporters. Otherwise, the newspapers depend upon the news agencies.

Chandrasekhar (2013) discussed some possible implications of the impact of the internet on the print business and the directions they point to. He stated that the Indian print media is slipping relative to the past. The newspaper industry has even entered a phase when instances of advertorials and paid news are routine. This could mean that in the face of the technological challenge from the Internet, the print news business *per se* will not hold.

Schneider (2013) in her study observed that in the wake of economic liberalization and the enforcement of the consumption-oriented market economy, the newspaper market in India can be said to be changing from a linguistically 'split public', which was characterized by many asymmetries for decades, to an integrated multilingual 'consumer sphere'. She argued that in this new consumer sphere, the old existing and imaginary boundaries between 'English-language', 'Indian-language' or 'regional newspapers' are becoming increasingly fuzzy, whereas the new geographies of the 'regional' are now very important for the expansion and consolidation of daily newspapers.

Sharma (2014) assessed the responsiveness of supply chain in the newspaper industry at discrete events. Four key determinants - forecast uncertainty, demand variability, contribution margin, and time of delivery were found suitable to assess the responsiveness of the newspaper supply chain. Results indicate that not enough resources were allocated to meet the desired responsive levels in supply chain.

Kukreti and Sharma (2015) in their study investigated the trends, threats and opportunities underlying the growth of newspaper industry in India. Results revealed that the Indian newspaper industry is different with 25 per cent penetration of newspapers, considering a billion plus population. Moreover, the stiff competition among the newspaper firms infuses innovation, research and development. The Indian newspaper industry, unlike its counterparts in most part of the world, has not reached saturation yet and is expected to grow and reach its pinnacle in the next fifty years. Though the threat of internet and the fear of losing market to online consumption of news are real, the news in print is still undisputed ruler of the market, primarily due to accessibility and familiarity.

Li and Thorson (2015) conducted a time-series analysis of 10 years of a newspaper's content and financial data and confirmed the positive content and revenue relationship in cross-sectional data also exists in longitudinal data. Publishing more news content, particularly in shorter article length and more diverse topic areas, boosts the newspaper's circulation and ad revenue over time.

Kolo (2016) built a quantitative model for newspapers' profit margins to derive ten-year scenarios in a systematic way. The simulation is based on a conceptualisation of a business model that can be operationalized. It was designed and tested for specific newspapers in Germany, but based on general assumptions and of international applicability. He stated that even with optimistic values for print-online substitution, online usage still on the rise and mobile devices becoming widespread, additional digital revenues of newspapers' brands most likely cannot compensate for losses in print.

Matthew (2016) examined the critical role of the media in disseminating news in the context of self-regulation and the powers of the Press Council of India. The author opines that the present way of leaving the regulation to the media would create the possibility that it may misuse regulatory goals to its own business goals. Further it is stated that self-regulation would be workable only if due measures are taken by media outlets and they remain committed to the processes that are evolved.

Pandey (2016) stated that tribal languages have received insufficient attention in India. His study analysed registered tribal language newspapers and examined the conditions that support the growth of tribal languages in print media. Key findings were: Between 1957 and 2015, registered tribal language newspapers accounted for only 0.25 per cent of all newspaper registrations, whereas tribal communities have over the years accounted for at least seven and a half per cent of the country's population. About 90 per cent of tribal language newspapers were registered in 27 languages of seven North Eastern states. Mizoram accounted for about 50 per cent of all tribal language newspaper registrations in the country. The impact of political autonomy is reflected in the fact that in all the North East states, at least 60 per cent of tribal language newspapers were registered after the formation of the state. Likewise tribal language newspapers have flourished in autonomous tribal Districts. A large population size does not necessarily support the growth of tribal language newspapers. The central and eastern states where the bulk of India's tribes live have very few tribal language newspapers. Only 16 tribal newspapers including nine in Assam, two each in Nagaland and West Bengal and one newspaper each in Chhattisgarh, Tripura and Jharkhand filed annual statements in 2014-15.

Burg and Bulck (2017) analysed the traditional newspaper publishers surviving amidst an unfolding digital era. This is explored in a longitudinal (1990–2014) analysis of the Flemish market. Competitive pressure and changes in the newspaper market are related to publisher's strategic responses (cost leadership, differentiation, and focus) and their financing. The findings reveal a market that shifted from the mature stage of its product life cycle to the decline stage since 2008 and structural shifts in publishers' business operations. Realisation of cost-efficiencies, for

example, through expansion, is the key mechanism behind keeping up net operating profits and indicates resilience in a changing environment.

Asogwa (2018) in a study investigated newspaper readership pattern among residents of Enugu State of Nigeria within the lenses of gender. Specifically, attention was paid to the most preferred version (between online and print), the duration and purpose of reading newspaper. The result showed that gender significantly influences the most preferred version of newspaper read, the duration of reading newspaper and the purpose of reading newspaper.

Björkroth and Grönlund (2018) analysed the development and determinants of the profitability of newspaper publishing sectors of 12 European markets. The average profitability of newspaper publishing is shown to vary both across countries and over time. The results from their econometric estimation proved the assertion that the price–cost margins can not only be explained by the increasing uptake of Internet but also by factors reflecting scale economies and the degree of the competitive pressure.

Mitchell et al. (2018) in a study found that publics around the globe consume all types of news, but they are most interested in news that's close to home. In most of the countries surveyed, interests in local news are equal to or lower than interest in national news. People follow local news more than national news in just two countries – India and Indonesia. Globally, broad majorities follow national news. International news is a lesser part of people's media diet and there exists a demographic divide in news interest.

Vanamamalai and Vanlalruata (2018) conducted a study to map the culture of dailies in Mizoram and found that all the newspapers fall under the category of small newspapers. The news content is similar for all the newspapers with large number of government programmes covered. Innovative and investigative stories are lacking and connection with reliable news agency needs to be established.

Yun et al. (2018) in their study investigated how a newspaper's role is perceived by its local community. This perception is conceptualized as community capital and influences subscription/readership of the newspaper and willingness to visit local

retailers that advertise in the newspaper. Results suggest that subscribers tend to perceive the newspaper's community capital to be higher than nonsubscribers. Also, subscribers were more likely than nonsubscribers to visit businesses that advertise in the local newspaper.

Angelucci and Cage (2019) studied the consequence of reduction in advertising revenues on newspapers' content and prices of newspapers. It was found that a reduction in advertising revenues lowers newspapers' incentives to produce journalistic-intensive content. A drop in advertising revenues induces the newspaper to lower the quality of its content, which, concurrent with a decrease in the subscription price, changes the composition of the readership.

Kolo (2019) in an analysis of newspaper industries in their national contexts found that newspaper industries exhibit strategic clusters of similar challenges, imposed by digital transformation and socio-economic change. While growth of media in general, newspaper reach, and Internet penetration are dominant factors framing the prosperity of newspaper publishing, dynamics of advertising and circulation still vary substantially within such clusters. Only in very few countries, publishers achieve to collectively combine growing overall revenues with advanced digital transformation. The level of digital transformation of the newspaper industry within a country depends on the general level of Internet penetration with higher penetration leading to a disproportionately higher share of digital revenues.

Khanduri (2021) in a study focused on analysing the various factors responsible for the growth seen in Indian newsprint media markets while the global print media is showing a decline in revenues and market. The study analysed the impact of environmental dynamics in concurrence with marketing orientation and innovation strategies on Indian newsprint media firm's market and fiscal performance. It was found that inter-functional coordination, customer orientation and product innovation factors along with technology revolution are significantly associated with market and financial performance of newsprint media firms.

Patkar et al. (2021) in a study conducted on newspaper vendors in India found that the vendors maintained manual records while arranging bunches of newspapers leading to errors and delays in an industry that functions on time and speed. To considerably reduce the temporal demand in these situations, a design intervention was proposed for the newspaper distributors and vendors using the trending technology of this time – wearable (electronic technology or devices incorporated into items that can be comfortably worn on a body). They stated that these currently manual tasks can be made faster if digital assistance is provided.

1.4.2 Consumer Behaviour of Newspaper readers

Bush and Gilbert (2002) investigated characteristics of Internet users compared to newspaper readers. Consumers of each medium were compared based on their perceived materialism, shopping innovativeness, self-esteem, and volunteer inclinations. Results indicated that those individuals absorbed with the Internet tend to be more materialistic than those absorbed in newspapers. Those absorbed in the Internet or both media scored lower on self-esteem than those absorbed in newspapers. Furthermore, those absorbed in the Internet were significantly less likely to volunteer to a charitable organization than those absorbed in newspaper.

Hargrove and Stempel (2002) in a national survey of reader interest in international news showed that readers prefer good news more than bad news and news about ordinary people who do things that make news more than news about politics and government, economics or disasters.

d’Haenens et al. (2004) studied how readers consume and recall news presented in online and print versions of newspapers. It was found that news consumption seems to be dependent on the news category, reader gender and interest in a particular topic than on whether the news appears in print or online. Evidence indicates that online readers do not consume and retain news differently from readers of the print versions.

Chan and Goldthorpe (2007) explore the social bases of cultural consumption by examining the association between newspaper readership and social status. They

report a strong and systematic association between status and newspaper readership which is consistent with the expected link between status in the classical Weberian sense, on the one hand, and cultural level and lifestyle, on the other. The social status of respondent's father and best friend also has significant and substantial effects on newspaper preference. Results also indicated that the effects of status on newspaper readership are generally more important than those of class.

Riffe and Reader (2007) in a study of newspaper readers in the US found that Television is preferred for international and national news while newspapers are preferred for state and local news.

Sharma et al. (2007) in their study to capture impact of Internet on changes in consumer behaviour, with respect to reading news on internet found that Internet has barely affected the newspaper business. It has come out as complimentary to the newspapers. Further, Internet is found more popular in case of business/stock news, sports news and international news.

Armstrong and Collins (2009) examined student perceptions of campus and community newspaper credibility at the University of Florida using a Web survey. Interest in news content was found to be a statistically significant predictor of credibility for both local newspapers and college newspapers. In addition, students whose parents encouraged them to read a newspaper found both newspapers more credible than did their peers, and exposure to a newspaper was found to be a strong predictor of credibility for that newspaper. Results also revealed that White respondents find local newspapers more credible than other races.

Chyi et al. (2010) in their study explored the U.S. newspapers' online readership in the local market by comparing hybrid readers who access both the print and online versions and online-only readers. Survey data gathered from twenty-eight newspaper sites showed that hybrid readers outnumbered online-only users by a 2-to-1 margin and used their local newspaper sites more actively. Regression analyses identified predictors of site satisfaction and user type. These findings provide new perspectives

on the nature of multiplatform news consumption as readers weigh related goods of news and information.

Zerba (2011) conducted focus groups in three cities with young adults (ages 18–29) to understand why they don't read daily print newspapers. The study examined news media avoidances, like “inconvenience” and “lack of time,” to uncover underlying meanings. Results showed prominent non-use reasons have dimensions. Participants also suggested ways newspapers could improve. Participants were studied as two age groups, 18–24 and 25–29. Small group differences did emerge. The older group wanted less negative news, while the younger group justified it; the younger age group was more sceptical of the news and mentioned needing greater effort to understand it.

Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar (2012) assessed the media habits of select household customers in Mizoram in terms of their frequency of reading dailies, the number of dailies read by them and the factors contributing to the reasons for buying dailies, etc. With majority of the customers reading one daily everyday, the contents of the dailies proved to be the most important factor in buying or subscribing to a particular newspaper.

Fan (2013) developed a structural model of newspaper markets to analyze the effects of ownership consolidation, taking into account not only firms' price adjustments but also the adjustments in newspaper characteristics. The paper then simulates the effect of a merger in the newspaper market and studies how welfare effects of mergers vary with market characteristics. It finds that ignoring adjustments of product characteristics causes substantial differences in estimated effects of merger. Ownership consolidation resulted in decreases in content quality and the local news ratio, increase in subscription prices, which leads to a decrease in circulation of both newspapers.

Bansal and Gupta (2014) studied the psychological impact of newspaper advertisement on consumer and assessment of the effectiveness of the advertisement. The study also compared human perception of a newspaper advertisement versus the

intended perception of that advertisement. Psychological impact and perception are important aspects found to affect consumer behaviour. The study found that 40 per cent advertisements were informative whereas only 26 per cent were perceived to be informative by the common consumer.

Hansa Research Group (2014) conducted a study among the Indian youth (age group 16 to 25 years) and found that although all media are vying for their attention, there seems to be no loyalty. Newspaper readership is high at 8 per cent; however the frequency of reading a newspaper is relatively low. Front page, sports and city news are the three top sections on the youth agenda.

Thurman (2014) performed comparative and longitudinal analyses of the domestic and overseas consumption (measured by time-spent-reading and popularity) of UK national newspaper brands across their print editions and online channels (excluding mobile applications). The study estimated that a minimum 96.7 per cent of the time spent with newspapers by their domestic audience was in print. In terms of popularity, the print channel accounted for a majority of domestic daily readers.

Agarwal and Mehrotra (2016) in their study identified the factors considered important by customers in choosing the newspaper they subscribe to. News coverage (content) came out to be the most important factor in choosing a newspaper followed by quality of writing and supplements provided. Analysis of the impact of demographics in influencing importance of various factors showed gender, occupation and income to significantly affect the importance that different customers attach to the different parameters. Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) was calculated to find out the gap between importance and satisfaction with different factors and to find out the overall satisfaction of customers with newspapers which came out to be 74 per cent.

Dhande et al. (2016) analysed the preference of newspaper readers with respect to print or online versions. Gender, age, level of education and income were found to influence preference for newspapers. The overall trend is of more preference for

online newspapers however the difference with preference for print newspapers were not very significant.

Lee and Fujioka (2017) in their national survey in Taiwan observed that offline political participants spend more time reading print newspapers than those who participate less. Online political participants also read a larger number of print newspapers than do non-participants. They found that even though political participants go online through their cellular phone frequently, they do not necessarily read news on the internet and they are less interested in face-to-face communication with others. Their findings suggest that print newspapers provide quality information that participants need for their online political activities.

Anderson (2018) in his study examined how education, income, and age are related to newspaper use, and whether education is a predictor of media platform preference. The study found significant correlation between newspaper usage and education, income and age. Results indicated that there was a sizable amount of interest in news consumption across all educational and financial backgrounds. Those with less education tended to prefer getting news from television sources. Those who preferred print tended to be wealthier and more educated. Still, there is demand for news across all demographics analysed in this study.

Nongmaithem (2018) in her study of the newspaper reading habits of post graduate students in Mizoram University found that the majority of students read local language newspapers followed by English language newspaper. The study also showed that most of the students read their newspapers at home.

Kaur et al. (2019) conducted a study to provide an overview of reading habits and customer satisfaction towards newspapers. It was observed that young people are less keen to read newspapers and prefer to read news online. The growing popularity of online access of news has contributed for shifting newspaper consumption habits.

Pait (2020) studied the differences in patterns of news and content consumption across two generations in India, millennial (aged 22-37) and baby boomers (45-60). A majority of the millennial identified smartphone *Apps* as their primary source of

news. Whereas, the older generations preferred more of news channels and newspapers. Millennial preferred to read more about business, international news and geopolitics while the baby boomers showed greatest preference for news related to national affairs and politics.

Haron et al. (2021) studied the influence of technology, content, news credibility and brand trust on readers' news consumption behaviour in Malaysia. The study revealed that a large majority of the respondents read online news rather than printed ones. The results also show that technology, content and brand are significant predictors of Malaysians' news consumption whereas news credibility is not.

Paul and Nisbett (2021) in their study of the changing readership pattern among young people found that there has been an increase in consumption of digital content. Results indicate that perceptions of relevance of the content have remained the most significant factor for readership and the visibility and accessibility perspective is important for the readers.

1.4.3 Impact of Information Technology and New Media on Newspaper Industry

Ihlström and Palmer (2002) in their study of the perception of newspaper owners and users in regard to revenues for online newspapers revealed that management and users agree on the importance of archives, personalized and deep news content, and a role for the newspaper as intermediary. However, users are not willing to pay for increased multimedia or an e-commerce site sponsored by the news site. The study suggests a new business model for digital news products that includes content-based revenue generation through personalisation, archiving and versioning, approaches to advertising that involve more highly targeted market intermediation, and non-news activities covering advertisers and information brokerage.

Chyi and Lewis (2009) in their study of the use of online newspaper sites found that the newspaper's print edition reaches far more local readers than does its online counterpart across each of the 68 metro dailies examined in the US.

Johnson and Guteirrez (2010) made an analysis on how e-business models can be adapted to assist the newspaper industry in reinventing its business model. It was discovered that a combination of factors have contributed to the destruction of the traditional model of the newspaper industry including business model disrupters, changing consumer habits and audience fragmentation. It will continuously face disruption due to changes in consumer habits and preferences as well as technology. Organizations need to adopt a framework that includes continuous innovation, simple rules, and more flexible processes applicable to its current customer segment and potential customer segment in order to ensure that they are able to remain competitive in this ever changing and shifting environment.

Chyi et al. (2011) in their study uncovered a universal pattern regarding the oft-misunderstood demand relationship between online and print products under one newspaper brand. Growing from the portfolio management perspective and building on previous research conducted in the US and Hong Kong, this study examined the newspaper market in Taiwan. Secondary analysis of survey data collected from 7706 Web users confirmed that: (1) the print edition attains a much higher penetration relative to its online counterpart, suggesting that more people would rather consume the print edition over free Web offerings; and (2) compared with the general public, readers of the online edition were more, not less, likely to read the same newspaper's print edition. Such counter-intuitive findings carry important theoretical and managerial implications regarding the management of multiple product offerings under one newspaper brand.

Chyi et al. (2013) observed that while media scholars tend to take “media use” as an indicator of popularity or diffusion, media use alone does not fully capture the complexity of online news consumption. Given free online news offerings in most cases, consumers do not always use what they prefer, and most are not willing to pay for what they use. Their study identified three distinct factors—preference, use, and paying intent—as well as two key demographic variables—age and gender—each helping to explain a specific facet of online news consumption. To address the interplay among the key factors, the study presented two theoretical models via

structural equation modelling. The goal is to clarify the interrelationship among preference, use, and paying intent for online news, which helps to explain why most newspapers have difficulties monetizing online usage. Applying new conceptual and methodological approaches, this study synthesizes previous studies and advances research on the economics of online news consumption.

Ju et al. (2013) in their study of the top 66 US newspapers' social media presence empirically examined the effectiveness of Facebook and Twitter as news platforms. Twitter was found to be more effective than Facebook in terms of audience reach. While the results indicate a positive relationship among newspapers' Facebook, Twitter, Web, and print readerships, social media subscribers continue to represent a small fraction of print and Web users. Despite the hype about the potential of social media sites as news delivery channels, the magnitude of their contribution to Web traffic and advertising revenue seems underwhelming.

The rise of news aggregator sites is a notable phenomenon in the contemporary media landscape. Outperforming traditional news outlets, online news aggregators, such as *Yahoo News*, *Google News*, and the *Huffington Post*, has become major sources of news for audiences. Lee and Chyi (2015), through a national survey of 1,143 U.S. Internet users; integrated the uses and gratifications paradigm and an economic approach to predict aggregator consumption and examine market competition. In terms of consumption, among demographic factors, age and ethnicity are the two major predictors of aggregator use. Among psychological factors, opinion motivation is the only non-predictor of aggregator use, suggesting that users do not seek opinion-driven content when they visit aggregator sites. In terms of competition, this study uncovers non-competitive relationships between three major news aggregators and 13 major TV, print and social media news outlets

Aneez et al. (2016) examined the digital transition at three leading newspapers in India, the *Dainik Jagran* in Hindi, English-language *Hindustan Times*, and *Malayala Manorama* in Malayalam focusing on how they are changing their newsroom organisation and journalistic work to expand their digital presence and adapt to a changing media environment. All three newspapers were found to be proactively

investing in digital media technology and expertise, and adapting their editorial priorities, parts of their daily workflow, distribution strategies, and business model to the rise of digital media. They stated that investment of money in new technologies and in staff with new skills cannot change culture, ensure synergy, or align the organisation with new priorities. This requires leadership and broad-based change.

Greer and Ferguson (2016) examined how local newspapers across the USA use social network *Pinterest*. Newspaper *Pinterest* use showed greater concern for news content, rather than entertainment and only a small percentage of newspaper pin boards promoted the newspapers. The study also found that small circulation newspapers were more likely to feature pins dealing with promotion, compared with very large newspapers that featured more news, lifestyle and community boards. A strong correlation was found between circulation size and the number of *Pinterest* followers, which is largely a function of the larger potential audience for following *Pinterest* period. Observation made relates to the type of content newspapers are featuring on *Pinterest*, which is primarily news and lifestyle. Rather than using *Pinterest* to promote themselves, newspapers are simply using it as another means of disseminating existing content.

Jeon and Nasr (2016) studied how news aggregators affect the quality choices of newspapers competing on the internet. It was found that the presence of the aggregator induces each newspaper to specialize in terms of issues to cover, as the specialization boosts traffic from the aggregator. Under specialization, a newspaper's quality increase reduces the traffic to its homepage and increases the traffic to its high quality articles.

Myllylahti (2016) in her study evaluated how digital news publishers are in terms of revenue, and if moving digital only is a viable business model for them. The discussion about digital-only publishing model resurfaced after The Independent newspaper in the United Kingdom became the first paper to abandon print and to move online-only. This article examines if a similar move would offer a sustainable business model to other news publishers. The research is based on document analysis, and the publishers included are The NYT Co., Gannett, Fairfax Media and

Postmedia Network. The study concluded that, in general, news publishers are still print reliant in terms of their revenue, and moving digital-only would not be a viable option for them without substantial structural changes and cost cutting. The study found that The NYT Co. continues to be greatly reliant on print revenue even when the news organisation is heralded as a leader in digital content and subscriptions.

Tandoc Jr. and Johnson (2016) in their study examined news consumption patterns of college students by asking where respondents get breaking news and where this source leads them next. The findings, based on an online survey, show the majority gets breaking news from *Twitter* first, but *Twitter* also leads users to get more information from websites of traditional news organisations, whose news reports students view as more credible than *Twitter*. Users who use *Twitter* frequently get exposed to news first on the same medium. They get exposed to news not because they were motivated to access news to begin with, but because they happen to be in that communication space.

Lehtisaari et al. (2018) in their study focused on innovation and social media strategies in newspaper companies in the US and three Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden). The results, demonstrated that, in general, newspaper companies in the examined countries have not been very innovative when it comes to media production, business models, sources of funding, new models for content distribution, nor have they generally been active in creating their own platforms. Most of the innovation and social media strategies are focused on revenue creation, directly or indirectly. Yet, in both Nordic and US newspapers, new business models are mostly new combinations of existing revenue streams.

Olsen and Solvoll (2018) in their study analyse local newspapers' online paywall strategies and enquired how monetisation has affected the newspapers' offerings to users and advertisers. Based on interviews with 20 local newspapers in Norway, findings revealed that paywalls represent two different strategies: A brake strategy in the user market, whereby the newspaper targets existing customers with bundled and differentiated products to secure subscription revenue and protect print from web cannibalisation. In addition, an acceleration strategy, in the advertiser market,

focused on improving services with more relevant and valuable audiences and user behaviour insights from user data harvesting. Local newspapers have been relatively successful with balancing these two strategies, providing some optimism on paywalls' potential contribution to the funding of local journalism.

Aneez et al. (2019) in their study showed that English language Indian news users with internet access are embracing a mobile-first, platform dominated media environment with search engines, social media and messaging applications playing a key role in how people access and use news in a setting characterised by low trust in many news media, high concerns over the possible implications of expressing political views, and widespread worries about different kinds of disinformation.

Heckman and Wihby (2019) employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the state of mobile web publishing among US local newspaper. Analysis of the mobile version of news website across the 50 states yielded an uneven picture, with innovation lagging in key areas. A survey with local owner-proprietors in a large state suggests that devoting attention to mobile audiences may be associated with revenue opportunities, and the ability to innovate is not necessarily associated with firm size. Most of the newspapers are not taking full advantage of mobile design in terms of advertisement placement. Local newspapers are substantially lagging behind industry leaders in terms of mobile site optimization which implies lack of technical literacy among local level publishers that could be contributing to stalled mobile innovation.

Thurman and Fletcher (2019), in an attempt to understand the determinants of newspaper use for newspapers' online editions investigated to what extent digital distribution has disrupted previously observed cohort effects, bringing younger audiences back to newspaper content. The annual time spent with UK newspapers by their younger, middle-aged, and older British audiences was calculated for 1999/2000—before, or just after, newspapers started to go online—and for 2016, when digital distribution had come of age. The results show (1) the time spent with newspaper brands fell by 40 per cent, even as online platforms made access easier and cheaper; (2) the proportional decrease in time spent was greatest for the youngest

age group and smallest for the oldest; and (3) there are important variations between individual newspaper brands, a result of differences in their multiplatform strategies. Digital distribution has, therefore, had little impact on previously observed cohort effects (age being the principal determinant) but has enabled changes in media use that have shaped the attention given to newspapers and will continue to do so.

Yousuf et al. (2019) in their study examined the online niches of English-language newspapers in Bangladesh by analysing stories and user engagement on the Facebook pages of five highest circulated newspapers. Based on the theory of the niche, this study analysed data on 17,687 Facebook posts downloaded programmatically. Results indicated that users read these newspapers for in-depth news stories and features on diplomacy, national security, lifestyle, science, technology, and international events. The study identified a gap between what these newspapers offer and what their users want.

Mudgal and Rana (2020) attempted to trace the journey of newspaper from print to digital and to prognosticate the future of print newspaper and e-newspaper in the Indian subcontinent. They concluded that although print newspapers are not going anywhere in the near future owing to their willingness to reinvent themselves, the future of newspaper is digital. The study states that the growth in newspaper readership in India depicts higher preference towards local language newspapers with extensive coverage of local news.

Saragih and Harahap (2020) in their study aimed to analyse the challenges of print media journalism in the digital era. The results showed that the biggest challenge of journalists in the digital information era is synonymous with the competition between mainstream media and new media, in this case online media. To survive, conventional media must be able to maintain credibility and trust in the information presented. This credibility and trust of the community can only be built by the spirit of professionalism of journalists who adhere to the ethics of journalism, which is to present factual information that is well verified.

Yadav (2020) surveyed different sectors of society to obtain information on people's reading habits and patterns, to gauge whether physical newspaper distribution will follow the same pattern in India as in the USA where there is a noticeable decline. His study showed that a large number of youth want access to information that is summarized and easily available and they showed interest in revisiting old articles and information which is available in online archives. It was found that although there is a shift from printed newspapers to e-papers it is yet to create a huge impact on the printed version.

Hassan et al. (2021), in their study analysed the challenges faced by newspapers in the age of digital communication. The study revealed that the challenges include the general decline in reading culture globally, lack of interactivity, readers' preference for free news, and the need to minimize the cost of production and distribution as well as provide timely updates.

Mathai and Jeswani (2021) examined the effectiveness of print media marketing in today's highly competitive digital era for the Indian telecommunication industry. A model was proposed to gauge the effectiveness of print media on customer retention for the telecom industry. The study was conducted with 200 customers from various telecom service providers, using a survey questionnaire which was administered to them. Research findings indicate that the migration to online sources is inevitable although print media has not become obsolete. It is also revealed that the print media alone is not effective and hence is unable to retain the consumers. The integration of print media marketing with digital and social media marketing is the recommendation to reinforce awareness and retention.

Venati (2021) in his study aimed to explore the strategies like adoption of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), web design, or mobile web application optimization for e-media firms to improve website visibility on *Google* search engine on one hand and simultaneously ensure engagement of the visitors/users on the other. Based on the findings, through comparison made between few firms within the industry, certain recommendations are made towards the benefits of mobile web application and improvement of User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) for not only

increasing the engagement of the customers but also to reach a wider audience, for a budding e-media firm.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Indian-languages newspapers in most of the regions of India have been expanding in terms of circulation and advertising revenue. However, in small linguistic States such as Mizoram, though there is a growing demand for vernacular dailies, the newspaper industry is facing serious challenges such as small readership base, physical distribution in the hilly terrain, and inadequate advertising support.

Marketing of newspaper is not comparable to the marketing of a product like toothpaste or a ball pen or a detergent soap (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). The newspapers play a significant role in shaping the public opinion in any society and they influence all sections of the people as citizens rather than mere customers. Being a media product, newspaper marketing dwells on the knowledge of various disciplines such as journalism, mass communication, business management besides marketing and media economics.

The total circulation of Mizo language daily newspapers surpasses the total circulation of English language newspapers that are published in Mizoram. The national newspapers such as *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, *BusinessLine* and *Eastern Chronicles* which are being published from other States could reach the readers in the capital city of Aizawl either in the late evening or on the next day only. Their circulations are too limited and confined to mostly the institutional buyers. This is mainly due to the fact that the State is not well-connected by any railway line due to its hilly terrain. Guwahati-Aizawl is not a preferred route for the national dailies (English) as the road transportation involves more time and cost. In view of this, the dailies published in Mizoram are the main source of news and views among the print media, and therefore, need to strive for achieving superior quality in respect of news contents, maintenance of journalistic standards, performing agenda-setting functions, improving distribution efficiency and most importantly, in understanding the ever-changing needs of the readers and advertisers. It is in this context, the present study is conducted to explore the marketing strategies or practices followed by the leading

newspapers published in Mizoram. Further, it is attempted to enquire into the consumption behaviour of newspaper readers. The study is expected to provide insights to the entrepreneurs interested in publishing of newspapers, media managers, advertisers, and other stakeholders concerning media.

The dailies published in Mizoram have been facing stiff competition among themselves, in addition to national dailies, magazines, and competition from electronic media such as TV, and radio, the digital media and the New media (social media). Although the number of newspapers published has been increasing in the State, their circulations have not increased significantly despite Mizoram being a highly literate State in the country with over 91 per cent of literacy rate even in 2011 Census. The print industry in Mizoram has adopted sophisticated printing technology in terms of offset printing and laser printing to improve the printing quality of newspapers. However, physical distribution of the newspaper in the hilly terrain poses a serious challenge to the marketers. Expansion of circulation by establishing new publication centres in other places in the State requires additional investments and motivation on the part of the publishers. Another serious constraint faced by the newspapers published in Mizoram is relating to advertising support. Advertising is the financial heart of the newspaper. The newspaper is to be created as a successful advertising medium, because readers alone do not come close to fully supporting it financially. It is advertisers, contributing 80 per cent or more of total revenue, who determine whether a newspaper will succeed financially (Fink, 1988). The readers' loyalty should be translated into advertiser support. In other words, a circulation-advertising imbalance – high circulation costs, low ad revenue – creates a cost structure so high that the newspaper is vulnerable to disruptions in internal operations or external environment. It is here the newspapers published in Mizoram are subject to disadvantageous position as they find it difficult to create advertising revenue. Hence, the study of newspaper market in terms of its characteristics, entrepreneurial motivations, inter-intra media competition, circulation and advertising performance, and buyer expectations and satisfaction assumes significance in a remote, highly literate and tribal dominant society of Mizoram.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to identify the marketing practices adopted by the daily newspapers in Mizoram and to study the consumption behaviour of newspaper readers in the State.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To study the characteristics of the newspaper market in Mizoram in respect to the number of players (language-wise), ownership, technology, marketing performance in terms of circulation and intra and inter-media competition.
2. To identify the marketing strategies *viz.* product, pricing, placing, promotion, and space selling of the dailies in Mizoram.
3. To enquire into consumption behaviour of newspaper readers in the State.
4. To offer suggestions for improvement of marketing performance of dailies.

1.7 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated and tested in the study:

1. H₀₁: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels.
2. H₀₂: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualifications.
3. H₀₃: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the local news.
4. H₀₄: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the national news.
5. H₀₅: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.
6. H₀₆: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

The study is exploratory in nature and is expected to identify and evaluate the marketing strategies adopted by select newspapers in Mizoram. Exploratory research is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem for which very little information is available. The study is conducted based on primary and secondary sources of information.

1.8.1 *Scope of the study*

For the present study, the sampling frame constitute five daily newspapers in Mizoram that are registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) and are empanelled under the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), the erstwhile Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. However, none of the dailies published in the State have enrolled as member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC). Table 1.1 shows the selected newspapers and their RNI registration number, DAVP newspaper code number and daily circulation as on 2022. Out of the five newspapers, *Vanglaini*, *The Aizawl Post* and *The Zozam Times* are published in Mizo language. The remaining two newspapers namely, *The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander* are published in English language. As discussed, the five leading dailies namely, *Vanglaini* (Mizo), *The Aizawl Post* (Mizo), *The Zozam Times* (Mizo), *The Mizoram Post* (English), and *Highlander* (English), published in Mizoram were selected for the study. All these newspapers are claiming to have state-wide circulation. Therefore, newspapers confining their circulations only to specific towns or Districts are not included in the study. In addition, only the daily newspapers published in Mizoram that are empanelled with the CBC have been selected.

Two considerations went into the selection of two different language dailies: 1. English being the associate official language and the main medium of intellectual exchange, the English dailies are read by the majority of policy-makers, decision-makers and administrators. 2. The Mizo language newspapers are read by the masses and reach the majority of the population in the region.

Table 1.1: Select Daily Newspapers in Mizoram and their RNI Registration Number, DAVP Empanelment Code Number and Daily Circulation as on 2022.

Newspaper	RNI Registration Number	DAVP Code	Publication Centre	Daily Circulation (2022)
<i>Vanglaini</i>	34227/79	520010	Aizawl	35,000
<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	MIZMIZ/2003/12043	520013	Aizawl	13,000
<i>The Zozam Times</i>	MIZMIZ/2006/16849	520015	Aizawl	13,000
<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	MIZENG/2002/10461	100992	Aizawl	44,000
<i>Highlander</i>	24501/1972	100520	Aizawl	30,000

Source: Compiled based on the data provided by the Registrar of Newspapers for India and the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information, Government of India.

As per the data provided in the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram (2020), there were 95 daily, nine weekly and two monthly newspapers in Mizoram, with 33 daily newspapers in Aizawl District.

1.8.2 Sources of data

The study relied on primary data and secondary data.

a. Primary data: The sources of primary data are given below:

- i. **Structured Questionnaire for Newspaper Organisations:** A structured questionnaire (*Appendix-I*) was administered to the newspaper organisations, which has been designed to obtain information from the managerial perspective. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the publishers of the five select daily newspapers. The questionnaire consisted of: general information of the publisher, historical background of the newspaper, growth and present status of the newspaper, pricing of the newspaper, newspaper revenue, distribution and promotion of the newspaper.
- ii. **Interview:** An open-ended interview was conducted with the publishers of the select newspapers to gain insights on the publishers' perception about the industry. Moreover, data on the daily newspapers published in each

administrative District of the State were collected by telephone interviewing of the editors or publishers.

- iii. ***Structured Questionnaire for the Select Newspaper Readers:*** A structured questionnaire was administered to the readers of the select newspapers (*Appendix-II*). This questionnaire has been designed based on the literature surveyed (e.g. Jyoti Kumar 2003; Padmaja 2008). The questionnaire was designed to study the consumption behaviour of the newspaper readers and consisted of three parts: Part I deals with the socio-economic background of the readers; Part II deals with the readership preferences in terms of regularity of reading newspapers, preferential contents of newspaper, time of reading newspaper, type of news, perception of coverage of news items, level of satisfaction, first source of news, and so on, and; Part III deals with the media habits of the readers.

The universe of the study comprise of all the readers of the select daily newspapers in Mizoram. A sample size of 450 readers was selected for assurance of 95 per cent confidence level with a probability of 5 per cent margin of error. The desired sample size for population above 1,00,000 with 5 per cent margin of error and 95 per cent confidence level is 400 (Glenn, 1992). The sample was drawn from Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) area. The AMC area has been selected as majority of the circulation of the select newspapers are within the AMC area and Aizawl being the capital city of Mizoram has the largest population in the State. For this purpose, the AMC area was divided into four clusters of places namely Aizawl North, Aizawl East, Aizawl West, and Aizawl South. Thus, the cluster-wise sample was of 25 readers of each of five dailies, totalling 125. However, the researcher found it extremely difficult to identify 100 intense readers of *Highlander* from four clusters in view of very limited circulation of the daily. Therefore, the researcher was compelled to confine to only 50 intense readers of *Highlander*. The intense readers of the select dailies were selected as sample by following the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling refers to a

group of non-probability sampling method in which units are selected because they have characteristics that the researcher needs in the sample. In other words, the purposive sampling method relies on the researcher's judgement when identifying and selecting the respondents that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives. It is particularly useful in newspaper readership surveys for obtaining rich information out of limited resources. The intense reader is one who reads at least one of the select newspapers frequently (at least three times in a week) with interest. Readership experience of three years is another criterion for drawing the purposive sample of the intense readers.

The questionnaire for the newspaper readers was translated into Mizo language and the answers to the questionnaires were again translated into English to facilitate analysis. The questionnaires were distributed to the readers of the select newspapers with the help and guidance of newspaper distributors as they possess the necessary information in choosing the right respondents. The Reader survey was conducted prior to COVID-19 pandemic.

b. Secondary data: For the secondary data, the newspapers were collected and observed for the contents, especially the type of news presented and advertising space allotted. Extensive literature review was undertaken on different studies, carried out both internationally and nationally, in the area of the newspaper industry and consumer behaviour of newspaper readers. In addition, data were collected from the office records of newspaper organisations of the select dailies and from the reports by Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, and Planning and Programme Implementation Department in Government of Mizoram. Other reports include:

- i. *Press in India* published by Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI).
- ii. Circulation figures published by Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC).

- iii. *Indian Readership Survey* published by Media Research Users Council India (MRUC India).
- iv. Reports published by Press Information Bureau (PIB), Government of India.
- v. *World Press Trends Report* published by WAN-IFRA.
- vi. *Digital News Report* published by Reuters Institute
- vii. Annual Reports published by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF)
- viii. *India's Media and Entertainment Report* published by KPMG
- ix. *FICCI-EY Report* published by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young
- x. Reports published by Pew Research Center, USA
- xi. *World Trends Report* published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- xii. Annual Reports of Mizoram Journalists Association (MJA)
- xiii. *Marketing Whitebook* published by BusinessWorld

1.8.3 Tools for analysis

The data collected and tabulated from the questionnaire and other secondary sources has been analysed using appropriate statistical tools to draw inferences as per the objectives of the study. The software used for analysis of data was SPSS. Descriptive statistics was used for describing the responses of the respondents in different categories. To test the hypothesis, Chi-squared tests of independence were used to test the significant association.

1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Advertisement or (ad): A message printed in the newspaper in space paid for by a company, organisation or individual.

Broadsheet: A newspaper printed on a large sheet of paper, measuring about 40x55 cms (16x22 inches). Broadsheets are often considered to have a greater depth of reporting.

Classified advertising: Advertising space usually purchased in small amounts by the public and placed under a special classification. Advertisements grouped by subject

usually appearing under categorical headings in a section of a newspaper such as auto sales, employment opportunities or rental properties.

Column centimetre: Advertising space one column wide and 1 centimetre deep

Display Advertising: An advertisement in relatively large type, usually with headlines, border, signature, and illustrations that can appear on any page throughout a newspaper.

Edition: One version of the newspaper for the day. Some papers may have three editions with certain updates and changes from the previous ones. So there may be several editions of one issue of a paper.

Editorial: The leading article or leader - a special column stating the opinion of the editor usually on a key issue of the day. It is usually in a different type face, in a special identifiable location. In larger papers editors have a say in the editorial but several people are assigned to write the leader on various days.

Feature: A story which concentrates on issues other than those with straight news value. Features are usually longer and written in a different style from news stories. They elaborate, amplify or provide background to news reports. They may also deal with subjects as varied as travel, personal finance, fashion and computers.

Headline; Display type placed over a story intended to catch the reader's attention and signal what the story is about.

Laser Printing: Printing technique that uses a non-impact photocopier technology in which there are no keys striking the paper. When a document is sent to the printer from the computer, a laser beam "draws" the document on a selenium-coated drum using electrical charges.

Layout: It includes the arrangement of text and illustrations on a page, whether editorial content or advertisements. Newspaper layout is designed to communicate visually and easily the important and current news of the day

Newsprint: A low-grade, machine-finished paper made from wood pulp and a small percentage of sulphite pulp, used chiefly for newspapers. It is thin enough to be economically manufactured, but thick enough to be printed on both sides.

Offset Printing: Printing technique in which the inked image on a printing plate is printed on a rubber cylinder and then transferred (i.e., offset) to paper.

Tabloid: A newspaper half the size of a broadsheet.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Newspaper organisations lack sufficient records and documents to supply required data to the researcher.
- The circulation figures in Mizoram do not come under Audit Bureau of Circulation. The researcher used claimed circulation from the publications and it may not be authentic. However, the claimed circulation figures give an indication of the performance of the newspapers.
- The readership survey is conducted based on the assumption that the responses are true and hence, no statistical test has been performed to study non-response bias and consistency of individual response.
- There is limited literature available with regard to the newspaper market in Mizoram.

1.11 CONCLUSION

Newspapers are a critical part of the news landscape. The consumption of newspapers has a profound impact on people and society. The nature, form and content of a newspaper are often shaped by the perception that the newspaper has of its readers and what they want and how they should be addressed. A typical daily newspaper provides local news, regional news, national news, international news, sports news, business news, editorials, editorial page articles, entertainment and advertisements. Classification of newspapers may be made on the basis of circulation figures or periodicity or ownership status.

Newspapers have become a commodity requiring effective marketing to be attractive to its intended audience. Given the quest for earnings, newspapers cannot survive without marketing. The newspaper industry around the world is witnessing changes in its environment, brought forth mainly by changes in consumer behaviour, technological development and globalization. The market scenario is drastically different in different countries. Print newspapers are suffering declining readership and circulation in certain developed countries. Contrarily, print newspapers are still thriving in certain nations. In India, with a population of 1.4 billion, the newspaper industry is confronting the challenges and opportunities. The multiplicity of language presents the newspaper industry with abundant prospects as local readers are deeply attached to their languages and prefer newspapers in their own mother-tongue. The digital revolution if looked at in terms of the opportunities can benefit the newspapers that recognise the changing habits of newspaper consumption. The rises in population, literacy and communications have created a sustainable market for the newspapers. The newspaper market in Mizoram is characterized by mushroom growth of newspapers over the years with low circulation. The dominance of Mizo language newspapers is evidence of the preference for local newspapers. The newspaper industry has ample opportunity to thrive especially considering the level of development in the State.

Considerable and substantial literature were reviewed and explored. Nevertheless, there exists a research gap in the context of marketing of newspapers in Mizoram. Studies focused solely on the context of newspaper marketing relating to Mizoram have not been made. The study is thus expected to provide insights to the marketing practices of newspapers and consumer behaviour of the readers. The study is also expected to offer suggestions on appropriate marketing strategies for the newspaper industry in Mizoram.

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CHAPTER - 2
THE NEWSPAPER MARKET IN INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO
MIZORAM:
CHARACTERISTICS, CIRCULATION AND COMPETITION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the newspaper market in Mizoram in the context of its characteristics, circulation and competition scenario. The newspaper market in India has been detailed from a macro angle and it is followed by a discussion of the evolution of newspapers in Mizoram, a small state of India's North East. The characteristics of the newspaper industry in Mizoram have been discussed in terms of language, distribution, pricing, advertising and ownership pattern. Circulation of the daily newspapers and the prevailing competition are analysed.

2.1 THE NEWSPAPER MARKET IN INDIA

One of the largest newspaper markets in the world, India's newspaper market, is a myriad of language, script, culture, and politics. The diversity of the newspaper industry is unlike any other. According to *Press in India (2020-2021)*, the industry in 2021 had a total of 1,44,520 publications (newspapers and other periodicals) with more than 386 million copies published in 189 different languages and dialects. With a readership of 400 million (*Indian Readership Survey, 2019*) newspapers in India are still selling well. Despite the extraordinary expansion of the internet and other media, newspapers have not lost its charm. With increase in literacy level, better living standards, and growing population, the newspaper industry remains robust.

Since the inception of the first newspaper *Bengal Gazette*, a four-paged weekly published in English in 1780, the newspaper industry has witnessed colossal growth. The largest circulated daily in 2021, *Dainik Bhaskar*, a Hindi language newspaper, had a circulation of more than 3.8 million copies (*Press in India, 2020-2021*). The largest circulated English Daily, the *Times of India*, had a daily circulation of more than 2.1 million copies.

2.1.1 Circulation

The total number of daily newspapers in India in 2021 stood at 9750 as shown in Table 2.1. It is evident from Table 2.2 that the growth of daily newspapers in the last decade has been phenomenal in both number of newspapers and their circulation. The number of newspapers has more than doubled from 4396 in 2010 to 9750 in 2021. Their combined circulation was more than 225 million copies. The number of daily circulation has increased by more than 50 million in the last decade accounting for 58.7 per cent of the total circulation of all the periodicals. Table 2.1 shows the number and circulation of registered publications in 2020-2021.

Table 2.1: Number and Circulation of Registered Publications in 2020-21

Periodicity	Number	Circulation
Daily	9,750	22,58,56,735
Weekly	11,252	9,46,98,202
Fortnightly	2,997	1,86,66,704
Monthly	7,472	4,27,43,427
Quarterly	677	21,61,520
Half Yearly	141	1,24,081
Annual	121	9,36,850
Others	314	12,94,854
Total	32,724	38,64,82,373

Source: *The Press in India, 2020-2021*

Table 2.2 shows the number and circulation of daily newspapers from 2010-11 to 2020-21.

Table 2.2: Number and Circulation of Daily Newspapers: 2010-11 to 2020-21

Year	Number	Daily Circulation
2010 – 2011	4,396	17,56,65,243
2011 – 2012	4,929	19,69,51,390
2012 – 2013	5,767	22,43,37,652
2013 – 2014	6,730	26,42,89,811
2014 – 2015	7,871	29,63,02,606
2015 – 2016	8,905	37,14,57,696
2016 – 2017	9,061	27,53,61,253
2017 – 2018	8,930	24,26,90,557
2018 – 2019	10,167	29,15,35,681
2019 – 2020	9,840	25,84,22,000
2020 - 2021	9,750	22,58,56,735

Source: *The Press in India, 2020-2021*

2.1.2 Languages Newspapers

In the post-independence era, Indian newspapers sustained its influential role on two fronts. First, the urban elite relied on the English-language newspapers, which was a dominant legacy of the British Raj. Second, the regional-language newspapers played a vital role in educating and informing a significant section of Indians who prefer to read and view media in their native language (Sterling, 2009). The linguistic complexity of India is unlike any other country. While the Constitution of India does not designate a particular language the status of national language, Hindi and English are designated as the official languages. The Census of India 2011 reported the total number of languages as 121 comprising 22 Scheduled languages and 99 Non-Scheduled languages. There are 189 languages and dialects in which newspapers and periodicals are published in India (*Press in India*, 2021). Such pluralism is richly represented in the newspapers that reflect multicultural heterogeneity, diverse social values, and an array of linguistic traditions (Sterling, 2009). In 2021, the Registrar of Newspapers in India reported that Hindi dailies were among the highest number of all the languages (4349), followed by Urdu (1107), Telugu (1083), English (820), Marathi (617), Kannada (560), Gujarati (369), Tamil (180), Odia (132) and Malayalam (119). The total circulation of daily newspapers in all the languages was more than 225 million copies. Table 2.3 provides a glimpse of the main languages and their circulation in 2021.

**Table 2.3: Number and Circulation of Daily Newspapers in 2020-21 –
Language-wise**

S. No.	Language	Number	Daily Circulation
1	Assamese	20	4,42,495
2	Bengali	72	35,62,936
3	Bodo	3	89,824
4	Gujarati	369	89,73,870
5	Hindi	4,349	10,36,19,621
6	Kannada	560	70,76,403
7	Kashmiri	2	24,867
8	Konkani	1	867
9	Maithili	1	Not available
10	Malayalam	119	63,92,055

11	Manipuri	5	1,55,275
12	Marathi	617	2,06,97,816
13	Nepali	6	1,08,255
14	Odia	132	55,43,591
15	Punjabi	73	20,23,902
16	Sanskrit	10	1,56,694
17	Santhali	2	26,075
18	Sindhi	8	1,85,228
19	Tamil	180	47,94,289
20	Telugu	1,083	1,47,89,526
21	Urdu	1,107	2,18,06,994
22	English	820	2,05,04,961
23	Bilingual	176	42,51,384
24	Multilingual	16	3,76,608
25	Others	19	2,53,199
Total		9,750	22,58,56,735

Source: *The Press in India, 2020-2021*

Given that newspapers are published in multiple languages, such diversity is a unique feature of the Indian newspaper market. It has several marketing implications. Though a foreign language, English being a link language has the potential to create large newspaper markets across the states and throughout the length and breadth of the country. As such the market for English newspapers is capable of attracting larger advertising revenues (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). Hindi daily newspaper circulation surpassed English dailies since 1979. In 2021, Hindi publications retained the largest share in circulation with 45.88 per cent of the total claimed circulation of all daily publications, followed by Urdu publications at 9.65 per cent of the total claimed circulation. Hindi is spoken by more than 40 per cent of the total population and this manifest into a lucrative business opportunity and competitive advantage for Hindi newspapers. Other languages such as Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Telugu and English claimed circulation of more than 5 million copies. These language newspapers have positive brand equity and have developed and managed their newspaper brands as unique to the people based on their mother tongue.

The Hindi daily with the country's highest readership, *Dainik Jagran*, according to the *Indian Readership Survey, 2019*, has achieved this status by recognising new opportunities and consumer-centric strategies. The publishers possessing foresight

understood the language newspaper market and undertook expansion of publication centres and creation of attractive newspapers to enhance advertising revenues. Delivery of newspapers to rural populations was logistically difficult in the years after independence. Low literacy and technical difficulties in printing different languages further retarded its growth. Now, a combination of better rural infrastructure, increasing literacy and revolution in printing techniques has resulted in the spread of language newspapers (Jeffrey, 2013).

2.1.3 Literacy

Literacy is considered as one of the bases on which the newspapers grow (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). For people to be motivated to read a newspaper it must be available to them and they must be able to read (Jeffrey, 2015). Post-independence, India has witnessed major increase in literacy as can be seen in Table 2.4. The country's literacy rate which was barely 18 per cent in 1951 jumped to 79.2 per cent in 2021 (National Statistical Office, 2021). The ability to read can contribute to the increase in number and circulation of newspapers as the desire to be informed about events and people increase. Literacy, more often than not, translates into potential readers for the newspapers. Table 2.4 shows the literacy rate in India from 1951 to 2022.

Table 2.4: Literacy Rate in India

Census year	% Literate	Number (million)
1951	18	50
1961	28	100
1971	35	162
1981	44	234
1991	52	352
2001	65	560
2011	74	778
2021	79.2*	1,390**

Source: Census of India, 2011

* National Statistical Office, 2020-21; **Statista.com, 2022

Between 1951 and 2021, the number of literates in India increased by 27 times to provide 1,390 million potential readers. However, rates of literacy vary from one

region to the other. The State of Kerala, which has the highest literacy rate in India, has an exemplary history of committed newspaper readers. The State has a readership of 83.1 per cent (*Indian Readership Survey, 2019*). The State of Uttar Pradesh with a literacy rate of 69.72 per cent has 2164 dailies, the highest number of dailies in India. Literacy alone does not make people newspaper readers. The ability and desire to buy a newspaper are the other prerequisites. However, the addition of literates to the potential pool of newspaper buyers helps the odds for newspaper organisations (Jeffrey, 2013). In addition to literacy, transport infrastructure and technological innovations are important for a flourishing newspaper industry. Effective distribution to reach readers on time is possible only with efficient transportation system. Total readership in India stands at 34.5 per cent with states such as Goa (56.5%), Himachal Pradesh (54.5%), Tamil Nadu (52.3%), Uttarakhand (42.8%), and Maharashtra (42.1%) having high readership (*Indian Readership Survey, 2019*).

2.1.4 Ownership

In India during the early years of independence, there were three different types of newspaper owners. First, newspapers run by nationalists willing to lose money on their publications in order to further the cause were published during the nationalist struggle against the British. Second, some Indian families worked in the newspaper industry to support their families rather than leading the fight against British rule. Third, English newspapers were published by British businessmen for financial gain and the amusement of fellow Britons and their Indian allies. The first two categories, in some forms, survived the departure of the British (Jeffrey, 2013). Currently, the ownership pattern, in 2021, showed that Individuals (84.28%) followed by Private Limited Companies (6.69%), owned the majority of newspapers. Indian governments produced departmental reports, magazines, and newspapers but nothing to rival the daily newspapers. Government owned newspapers numbered at a mere two whereas in sharp contrast, 8218 newspapers were owned by Individuals. Table 2.5 shows the ownership of daily newspapers in 2020-2021.

Table 2.5: Ownership of Daily Newspapers 2020-21

Form of Ownership	Number of Newspapers	Percentage
Government	2	0.02
Individual	8,218	84.29
Firm/Partnership	118	1.21
Public Limited Company	326	3.34
Private Limited Company	652	6.69
Society/ Association	82	0.84
Trust	86	0.88
Organisation of Political Parties	6	0.06
Educational Institutions	0	0.00
Others	260	2.67
Total	9,750	100

Source: The Press in India, 2020-2021

India's diversity of languages and scripts fostered diversity of ownership. A newspaper established in one language may find it challenging to operate in another language region due to cultural differences. As a result, newspapers are essentially transformed into emblems of regional pride. (Jeffrey, 2015). The multiplicity of languages offers some guarantee against a national domination of print media by one or two chains (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). However, concentration of ownership in newspapers is common in India. The First Press Commission in 1953 observed that out of the 330 dailies published at that time, five owners controlled 29 newspapers and 31.2 per cent of the circulation while 15 owners controlled 54 newspapers and over 50% of the circulation (Government of India, 1954). A considerable degree of concentration in ownership of newspapers was evident, the cause of which could be attributed to economic and technological influences.

In this decade, most of the newspapers are owned by media companies that besides newspapers, venture into other media and businesses. Chain ownership, cross media ownership and conglomerate ownership prevails in the media landscape. The largely circulated newspapers in India belong to media houses that have ventured into other media such as television, radio, digital and other print publications. Some of the media companies are also found to be expanding into other types of business operations such as manufacturing, real estate and finance. Media houses have taken

newspapers as a stronghold and augmented it with digital versions and other media businesses.

Of the ten top dailies that had the highest readership in 2019 (*Indian Readership Survey*, 2019), each had different ownership, as shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Type of Ownership of Newspapers with Highest Readership in 2019

Newspaper	Language	Founded	Readership (million)	Ownership	Cross Media Ownership
<i>Dainik Jagran</i>	Hindi	1942	16.9	Jagran Prakashan Ltd (family with limited stock exchange listing)	Print, Radio, Digital
<i>Dainik Bhaskar</i>	Hindi	1958	15.6	DB Corp Ltd (family)	Print, Radio, Digital
<i>Hindustan</i>	Hindi	1936	13.2	HT Media Ltd (family with limited stock exchange listing)	Print, Radio, Digital & Podcast, OTT
<i>Amar Ujala</i>	Hindi	1948	9.7	Amar Ujala Ltd (family)	Print, Digital
<i>Malayala Manorama</i>	Malayalam	1889	8.6	Malayala Manorama Company Ltd (family)	Print, TV, Radio, Digital, OTT
<i>Daily Thanti</i>	Tamil	1942	7.4	Daily Thanthi Pvt Ltd (family)	Print, TV, Radio, Digital
<i>Lokmat</i>	Marathi	1957	6.3	Lokmat Media Pvt. Ltd (family)	TV News, Digital
<i>Rajasthan Patrika</i>	Hindi	1956	5.9	Rajasthan Patrika Pvt Ltd (family)	Print, TV, Radio, Digital
<i>The Times of India</i>	English	1838	5.6	Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. (The Times Group) (family)	Print, TV, Radio, Digital
<i>Mathrubhumi</i>	Malayalam	1924	4.8	Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company Pvt Ltd (family)	Print, TV, Radio, Digital

Source: For readership, Average Issue Readership, *Indian Readership Survey*, 2019, fourth quarter; for ownership, individual company websites.

Each of the newspapers in Table 2.6 are owned or controlled by a different family. Most of the newspapers are private limited companies. The few public companies are still largely controlled by the founding families. The two largest circulating and most read daily newspapers in India, *Dainik Bhaskar* and *Dainik Jagran*, are both family-controlled companies, competing with each other in the Hindi language market (Jeffrey, 2015).

Dainik Bhaskar is owned by the Dainik Bhaskar Group controlled by the Agarwal family, which also owns other newspapers such as *Divya Bhaskar*, *Divya Marathi*, *DB Star*, *Saurashtra Samachar* and several other print supplements. The Dainik Bhaskar Group also ventures into radio, owning *94.3 MY FM* with 30 stations in seven states across the country. The group has also ventured into online media with a website and mobile application available for all its newspapers.

Dainik Jagran is owned by Jagran Prakashan Limited which is a public company limited by shares but majority is controlled by the Gupta family. The company publishes other newspapers that are circulated across 13 states in the country such as *Mid-day*, *Nai Dunia*, *Inext*, *Inquilab*, *Punjabi Jagran*, *Sakhi* and *Khet Khalihaan*. The company also owns *Radio City 91.1 FM* with 39 stations across the country. The company's online portfolio has nine websites across genres like news, education, blogging, health, classifieds, youth and videos.

Hindustan is owned by HT Media Ltd, a public company listed on both the BSE and NSE, of which the majority is owned and controlled by the KK Birla family, mainly the daughter of KK Birla, Shobhana Bhartia. The company also owns two other newspapers namely *Hindustan Times* and *Mint*. Radio stations owned by the company are *Fever 104 FM*, *Radio Nasha 107.2* and *94.3 Radio One*. It also has an online edition of all its newspapers in addition to its lifestyle and entertainment websites, *DesiMartini* and *Healthshots*.

Amar Ujala is published by Amar Ujala Limited, a private company owned by the Maheshwari family. The company has an online edition of its newspaper and also publishes educational books and magazines *Saflata* and *Samyiki*.

Malayala Manaroma is a newspaper owned by Malayala Manorama Company, a private company controlled by the Mappillai family. The company has an online edition of its newspaper and has television news channel in Malayalam called *Manorama News*, along with a Malayalam general entertainment channel, *Mazhavil Manorama*. It also publishes several lifestyle, finance, entertainment and health magazines including a Malayalam women's magazine, *Vanitha* and English weekly called *The Week*. The company also owns a radio station *Radio Mango 91.9* and an OTT platform, *ManaromaMax*.

Daily Thanti is published by Daily Thanthi Private Limited, the Daily Thanthi Group. The group also runs a news channel in Tamil Nadu, *ThanthiTV*, an English daily *DT Next*, an evening daily *Maalai Malar*, a radio station *HelloFM*, magazines and a digital version of its newspapers *Daily Thanti* and *DT Next*.

Lokmat is published by Lokmat Media Pvt. Ltd, a private company owned and controlled by the Darda family. Lokmat Media has a diversified portfolio of publishing, broadcasting, digital, and entertainment. It also publishes *Lokmat Samachar* and *Lokmat Times* newspapers in addition to magazines. It owns a 24-hour news channel, *News18 Lokmat*, through a joint venture with Network18 Group.

Rajasthan Patrika is published by the Rajasthan Patrika Private Limited, owned and controlled by the Kothari family. The Patrika Group also publishes *Patrika* newspaper, another Hindi daily and digital version of its newspapers on mobile and web platforms. It owns a radio station *Radio Tadka* with 18 stations across six states. The company also has a 24-hour news television channel *Patrika TV*.

The Times of India is published by Bennett Coleman & Company Limited, also known as the Times Group, owned and controlled by the Jain family. Bennett

Coleman & Company Limited also publishes other newspapers such as *Navbharat Times*, *Mumbai Mirror*, *Maharashtra Times*, *Ei Samay*, *The Economic Times*, magazines such as *ET Magazines*, *ET Wealth*, *Brand Equity* and other supplements. It also owns an English news TV channel, *Times Now* and other channels such as *Movies Now*, *MNX*, *Romedy Now*, *MN+*, *ET Now*, *ISports*, *Zoom*, *ET Now Swadesh*, and *Times Now Navbharat*.

Mathrubhumi is published by Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company Private Limited, owned and controlled by the Kumar family and PV Chandran family. The Mathrubhumi group, in addition to publishing digital versions of its newspaper, also owns several lifestyle, entertainment, health and children magazines and books. It has a production house, MBTV (Mathrubhumi Television), which produces films and serials. It owns a radio station *Club FM*, 24-hour news channel *Mathrubhumi News* and a speciality entertainment TV channel *Kappa TV*. It also owns the radio station *Radio Mirchi 98.3*.

India has several families running substantial newspaper businesses. In addition to the newspapers listed above, owners of other major publications are also observed to be family owned or controlled. The Hindu Group is owned by the Kasturi family, publishing newspapers such as *The Hindu* and *Business Line* and magazines such as *Frontline* and *Sportstar*. ABP Private Limited or the ABP Group owned by the Sarkar family publishes newspapers such as *Anandabazar Patrika*, and *The Telegraph*. The concentration of ownership across different media sectors – Print, TV, Radio, and Digital, by the media companies is remarkably evident as well. Privatization of media sectors, including radio and satellite TV, has deepened the trend of concentrated ownership.

There is a conflicting point of view between academia, industry and the concerned ministry whether media ownership concentration is an issue or not (Vasanti, 2017). Newer technologies have led to democratization of knowledge, but also created cross media ownership and concentration as a by-product which then creates a system of control and manipulation of knowledge and such control of the information sector by

a few people can be a danger for the democratization of knowledge and democratic processes (DeSouza, 2017). Operating in a free market, in the absence of any regulations otherwise, the Indian media industry is poised to get highly concentrated in a few hands in the near future (Bhattacharjee, 2017).

Over the past few years, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) had sought recommendation from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for formulation of policies imposing restrictions on ownership of companies, on cross media ownership and vertical integration. TRAI had suggested that cross media ownership has resulted in a monopolistic market and suggested a regulatory body for checking market monopoly (TRAI, 2022). The Indian Newspaper Society (INS) countered the suggestion and stated that there should not be any cross media restrictions between newspapers and their digital entities as it will make it impossible for print media to survive amidst cost cutting measures, reduced consumption, declining resources and its accompanying challenges (*BusinessLine*, 2022). Other stakeholders argued that cross media ownership will not adversely impact plurality and does not need to be monitored separately since there were regulators like the Press Council of India (PCI), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) that regulate the media and actively study harmful competition patterns in the market and sufficiently ensure accountability and transparency (Chatterjee, 2022).

2.1.5 Technology

Printing technology for newspapers has been through a revolutionary change in India. A printing press in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in the state of West Bengal (now Bangla) became the first publication centre for a newspaper in India in 1780. An English weekly newspaper, *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*, opened the gates of opportunity for the language newspapers. Additionally, the development of computer technology and offset printing in the 1970s proved to be a game changer for language newspapers. This ideal technology allowed for the convenient printing of different and unique scripts. Due to efficacious printing, it was with ease that Hindi language newspapers crossed the English circulation (Jeffrey, 2015). Combined with advances

in the technology of printing presses, the availability of low-cost newsprint allowed newspaper publishers to offer their product at prices affordable by the working class making newspapers a true “mass medium”. In today’s digital world, computers and digital technologies, including the internet, are commonly used by newspapers in gathering and reporting the news. Digital technologies are widely used in news gathering, whether journalists utilise email to follow up on source interviews, the internet to find public records, or Google for initial research. On a wide range of articles, digital cameras and satellite imagery are also frequently employed. Newspapers have been significantly changed by technology. From faster printing techniques, affordable newsprint, accessibility of the internet to advances in digital technologies, newspapers have benefited from advances in technology.

An important advance in technology, social networks have altered the style and content of communication. Social media has become a source for the public to receive news or at least a pathway to it. In addition, newspaper reporters have used online media such as *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *Twitter* to provide breaking news and updates of news (Greer & Ferguson, 2016). Use of social media is rapidly growing. India, ranking second in the world in terms of user numbers, reached 755 million social media users in 2022 (Dixon, 2022). There are nearly 239.65 million *Facebook* users, 230.25 million *Instagram* users, and 23.6 million *Twitter* users making it the leading country in terms audience size (Basuroy, 2022). The heavy shift toward the digital media by consumers thus necessitates newspaper organisations to devote their resources to new opportunities within the digital economy of India.

The media world has been witnessing the unprecedented rise of digital, especially in the past couple of years. Internet penetration rate in India went up to nearly 47 per cent of the total population in 2021, from just about four per cent in 2007. Nearly half of the population of 1.37 billion people had access to internet (Basuroy, 2022). Multi-media consumption, i.e. the consumption of newspaper, TV, radio and digital, has increased over the years, with consumption of all four media, any three media and any two media reaching 10 per cent, 19 per cent and 24 per cent respectively in 2019 (*Indian Readership Survey*, 2019). The digital population in India amounted to

approximately 658 million active users as of February, 2022 (Basuroy, 2022). The ever growing digital user base has inspired marketers to be creative not just about their ads but also about newer ways of serving them. With advertisement revenues constantly increasing and the digital media gaining importance in the media mix, focus should not just be on the short term but also on long term impacts (Banerjee, 2020). While traditional news media such as broadcast and print have maintained their supremacy time and again, the new era of news has witnessed acceleration towards the digital sphere. This shift in consumer behaviour has highlighted that companies that are looking for sustainable growth opportunities need to focus on digital penetration and devote their resources to new emerging opportunities to accomplish their growth pursuits. A heavy shift has been witnessed towards the regional market, which is now becoming a catalyst of the digital economy of India. To achieve and maintain sustainability, every media company must have an innovation mind set, to explore new revenue streams that can be incorporated into their diversification strategy. Enabling multi-platform delivery and embracing new distribution platforms like digital will be vital for sustenance (Pandey, 2021). Development is inseparable from continuous integration with the internet/mobile media, as such multi-party integration helps to expand their own scale, realize rich and diversified media forms and content products, and continuous business innovation (Zhao & Li, 2021). Consequently, the print media is rapidly embracing new technological innovations and progressively utilizing e-services by launching e-versions of their print newspapers, magazines, etc.

About Rs. 900 million was estimated to be generated by the print industry through digital media in 2021. As of 2019, digital news reached approximately 80 per cent of internet users across India (Basuroy, 2022). A significant number of these online users access the news through their smartphones which has propelled the use of news aggregators like Google News and Daily Hunt. A news aggregator is an online platform or software device that collects news stories and other information as they are published and organises them in a specific manner. This is accomplished in several ways. Some aggregators are curated by people to whom certain types of information is of particular import and others use HTML (hypertext mark-up

language) coding on the websites of news-gathering organizations to create RSS (really simple syndication) feeds and other public notifications of instant updates to news content regarding a specific subject (Hanff, 2019). News aggregators such as Google News, Daily Hunt, InShorts, Helo, UCNews and Newsdog have larger reach than Indian news publishers. They are increasingly focused on hyperlocal content coverage, aiming to create or source content for small towns in India and in regional languages. In this way, aggregators directly compete with local and national publishers (*Times of India*, 2019). This developing feature of journalism allows for very personalized editorial control and has changed how individual audience members interact with the news. The upsides to the growing use of news aggregators include the increased relevance of selected news to the end user, faster access to breaking news, advertising that is more targeted, and an increased personal agency for an audience that had been passive. Among the downsides to the growing use of news aggregators are the increased pressure on journalists for speed, the erosion of the distinction between news gathering and re-publication, intrusive advertising and lack of professional editorial role.

Currently, most large news organisations have paywalls that limit outsider access to news and are increasingly focused on subscriptions to help drive their business (*Tribune India*, 2022). Paywalls have become a popular model for online news monetizing, and they generate additional revenue for newspapers (Myllylahti, 2016). *Mint*, the financial newspaper published by the Hindustan Times Group had the highest annual subscription fees of about Rs. 2,949 as of November, 2022 (Mint, 2022). *The Times of India*, an English daily newspaper with the highest readership among English dailies according to IRS, 2019, charges annual online subscription fees of Rs. 599 as of November, 2022 (*Times of India*, 2022). Leading international brands abroad such as *Financial Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* began to build online subscriptions a decade or more ago, and now have more subscribers online than for their print editions. The *Financial Times* for instance put its online content behind a pay wall in 2002, and reached a milestone of a million paying readers in 2019. The *New York Times* started charging for digital content in 2011 and reached a figure of 7 million paying subscribers during the

COVID-19 pandemic (Ninan, 2021). Social media plays a crucial role in news consumption. News and social media have become inextricably linked. Social media is now among the most used news sources worldwide, outpacing radio, print news publications, blogs, and word-of-mouth. *YouTube*, *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* are commonly used for news access. Many internet users will see the breaking stories on their feed and go to the news sites to learn more. Social media platforms offer a wide audience reach and newspapers lean towards them for higher visibility and higher return on investments.

The process of digitisation is not just to the news business. In the fields of book publishing, music and film, for example, the way in which content is produced and delivered to the reader, listener and viewer has changed, and is changing, dramatically. The physical wholesale and retail outlets that stock and sell these services packaged as products are disappearing as 'download' becomes the mode of delivery and/or consumption (Chandrasekhar, 2013). In 2021, video subscriptions dominated the digital content market in India with Rs. 54 billion in revenues and digital revenues from audio accounted for over Rs. 1 billion (Basuroy, 2022). The key players from over-the-top (OTT) and video services were *Disney+Hotstar*, *Netflix* and *Amazon Prime Video* while *YouTube* continued to dominate online video streaming.

2.1.6 Regulation

Regulation is law specific to a particular occupation, industry or potentially harmful activity, additional to the general, criminal law and civil tort. The extent of such regulation can be structural regulation (to ensure plurality), or content regulation (e.g. to uphold journalistic ethics) (Franklin et al., 2005). In accordance with the philosophical notion of press freedom, the Indian Press is free to publish anything it wishes and to adhere to politics and public affairs, although being subject to particular provisions under the general legislation. No government permission is needed to launch a newspaper except for registration with the government.

Governments have fought to regulate the printing press ever since it first spread to India in the seventeenth century. The British, as a foreign power, were concerned that the printed material may incite and organise rebellion. Newspapers that preached nationalism too fervently were required to pay good behaviour bonds or forced to close, though pre-publication censorship was rare (Jeffrey, 2015). From the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 to the Press Emergency Act of 1931, the British government sought to control and regulate the vernacular press. After independence, newspapers came under the purview of the Information Wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting which administers the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, the Press Council Act, 1978, the Press Information Bureau (PIB), the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), and framing of policy guidelines for rate fixation of government advertisements on print and allocation of newsprint to newspapers. Other Acts passed include Delivering of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954; Working Journalists (Conditions of Services) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955; Newspaper (Price and Page) Act, 1956; and Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of Publications) Act, 1960. There is no formal body that exclusively deals with the freedom of Press in the country. All matters concerning the freedom of the Press falls under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, which states that “All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression.” These freedoms are restricted under Article 19(2) that prevents absolute power under 19(1).

A Press Commission in 1954 to inquire into the workings of the press led to the creation of two institutions, the RNI in 1956 and the Press Council of India (PCI) in 1966. The RNI, a central government body, was intended to monitor the industry and to maintain a register of newspapers, collect statistics, allocate newsprint and foster small publications. The PCI regulates the media and attends to complaints, oversee ethics and set standards but has no power to enforce rulings. It issues Norms of Journalistic Conduct which gives an extensive code of conduct for journalists and general journalistic propriety. The present Council functions under the Press Council Act, 1978. It is a statutory, quasi-judicial authority functioning as a watchdog of the press, for the press and by the press.

Other regulators like the SEBI and the CCI actively regulate competition in the market to ensure accountability and transparency (Chatterjee, 2022). The recently released Central Media Accreditation Guidelines 2022, which supersede the Central News Media Accreditation Guidelines 1999, stipulate the eligibility conditions for accreditation of working journalists (Raman, 2022).

The PIB is the nodal agency for Government of India for communication and dissemination of information about the programmes, policies, schemes and achievements of the government through all means including press, electronic media and social media with a view to inform and empower people. It provides accreditation facility to journalists which provide accredited journalists access to government buildings within Delhi-NCR. Journalists in the other parts of the country have to seek state government-issued press accreditation. There are 2450 accredited journalists comprising of print and television journalists (PIB, 2021).

An agency that supplements the regulation of newspapers in the form a voluntary self-regulatory body is the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC). Founded in 1948, it is a not-for-profit, voluntary organisation consisting of publishers, advertisers and advertising agencies as members to verify circulation figures. It investigates and guarantees the size of the circulation of its member newspapers. The ABC serves as a guide to Indian marketers, particularly advertisers. ABCs membership and circulation figures thus differ from figures by the Registrar of Newspapers for India. The Audit Bureau, along with readership surveys, provides the ways that allow newspapers to sell themselves to advertisers; thriving newspapers cannot survive without advertisers; and for most newspapers, thriving means growing (Jeffrey, 2000).

News media self-regulation—the monitoring of news production by the profession itself as opposed to external control—is one of the mainstays of the concept of press freedom. In general, the public values the ability of news media to report freely, to criticize freely, to serve as its watchdog; but simultaneously, the public expects journalists to uphold certain ethical standards, be mindful of the rights of both

readers and subjects, and to be, as far as possible, truthful and balanced in their reports (Sterling, 2009).

Regulations on Newsprint

Newsprint refers to the low-quality, non-archival type of paper normally used to publish newspapers. Made from wood pulp, it is thin enough to be economically manufactured, but thick enough to be printed on both sides (Sterling, 2009). The Government of India in the Union Budget, 2019 imposed an import duty of 10 per cent on newsprint to encourage domestic publishing and printing industry (The Hindu, 2019). The import duty was later reduced to five per cent (Hindustan Times, 2020). Prior to the import duty sanctioned in 2019, an import of newsprint from other countries was made duty free, which amounted to roughly half the annual consumption of the Indian newspaper industry. Post COVID-19 pandemic, newsprint cost jumped 20 per cent due to demand-supply imbalance, prompting news publishers through the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) in 2020 to petition the government for waiver of 5 per cent import duty to help cut cost and for a stimulus package for the newspaper industry (The Hindu, 2021). The request of INS was not successful as of 2022 (Chatterjee, 2022). The Indian Newsprint Manufacturers Association (INMA) in their website state that India's demand for newsprint is at around 2.2 million tonnes per annum, but 68 per cent of this demand (1.5 million tonnes per annum) was met by imports, mainly from Canada and Russia. According to INMA, domestic produce consumption is severely impacted due to target dumping of overproduced newsprint by exporters leading to a steep fall in price of imported newsprint (INMA, 2022). By 2021, costs of newsprint the world over started increasing steeply. In the wake of depressed demand for print media during the pandemic, paper mills had started diversifying into other areas. However, when the economy began recovery from the pandemic in 2021, demand for newsprint increased. Demand overtook supply and resulted in the sharp rise in price of newsprint (The Economist, 2021). Meanwhile, the Russia-Ukraine conflict disrupted import of newsprint from Russia, a major exporter. Combined with reduced capacity of domestic manufacturers, increased energy costs and supply disruptions in raw

materials, the price of newsprint soared, thus directly affecting the newspapers and their cost of production. Disruptions in supply of raw materials for manufacturing newsprint can also be attributed to lack of wastepaper, which is the essential raw material. The procurement process of wastepaper by the paper mills manufacturing newsprint in India is often delayed due to lack of proper waste segregation which leads to recycling of only less than half of the waste papers in the country (The Print, 2022). The increased cost of newsprint combined with the decrease in advertising revenue has posed the greatest challenge for the newspaper industry.

2.1.7 Advertising

Advertising revenues are crucial to newspapers and provide a large part of their income. Advertising revenues offset the purchase cost for the consumer. Competition for these considerable advertising revenues is fierce and newspapers' reliance on advertising impacts significantly on all aspects of their production and distribution (Franklin et al., 2005). Newspaper advertisements typically appear in media contexts surrounded by other advertising and non-advertising material, such as editorial texts and pictorials (Simola et al., 2013). For advertisers, newspaper advertising has traditionally accounted for the lion's share of all advertising expenditure, and, despite the introduction of other advertising media, it has continued to maintain its premier status in most countries of the world (Terpstra & Sarathy 2003). Newspapers were forced to compete with magazines in the late 1890s, with radio in the 1920s, commercial television since the 1950s, and more recently with the internet (Wells et al., 2003). When making advertising choices, advertisers evaluate both the size and the composition of the readership of the different outlets. The profile of the readers matters because advertisers want to target readers who are likely to be receptive to their advertising messages (Gal-Or et al., 2012). Several factors have been responsible for the high popularity of newspapers as an advertising medium, namely: (a) the extensive population coverage achieved, reaching practically every member of society (with the exception of the very young and the very poor); (b) the low cost per exposure resulting from its broad coverage, as well as the relatively low cost of producing the advertising material; (c) the greater flexibility offered in scheduling

advertising on any day of the week, as well as preparing advertisements at very short notice; (d) the ability to provide extensive, detailed information about the company's offering, without essentially any limitation in copy length; (e) the high appreciation accorded to newspapers by consumers as a timely and credible information source; (f) the fact that the reader can take as much time as required to read the advertisement and refer to it at a later point in time; and (g) the provision of a bridge between the national advertiser and the local retailer, through cooperative advertising and quick sales promotion programmes (Leonidou et al., 2006).

Even now, income from advertisements is the main source of revenue for newspapers in India (*Press in India*, 2021). Subscriptions and news-stand sales alone may not provide substantial revenue. As per the reports of RNI in 2021, 871 dailies derived more than 75 per cent of their income from advertisements and 1562 dailies derived 50 to 74 per cent of their income from advertisement. 2296 dailies received 75 per cent or more of their advertisement revenue from government sources.

Advertising in newspapers may be in the form of classified advertisements and display advertisement from the government or private entities. Classified ads are small, inexpensive ads run by individuals selling goods and services, and also listing of real estate and employment opportunities. Although the ads are small and inexpensive for the advertiser, they add up to big revenue for the newspaper (Ashford, 1991). Display advertisements are national and local advertising which comes from area merchants who want to disseminate information about prices and products and services at their stores or product advertising for national brands. The Government advertisements include both advertisements released by the CBC, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as well as display and tenders issued by the central as well as state government agencies. The CBC empanels newspapers that meet the parameters set out in the advertisement policy of the central government. The newspapers/publications are classified into three broad categories: Small, with a circulation of up to 25,000 copies per publishing day; Medium, between 25,001 and 75,000 copies per publishing day and Big, with a circulation of above 75,000 copies per publishing day. Classified advertisements contribute less advertisement revenues

as they are more readership drivers than revenue drivers. Display advertisements are either national or local. The Indian government provides advertising support to regional language newspapers in Bodo, Dogri, Garhwali, Khasi, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Mizo, Nepali, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Urdu, and other tribal languages. It extends similar concessions to newspapers published in remote hilly and border areas and in Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman Nicobar, and eight north eastern states.

In spite of advertising being necessary for the survival of the newspapers, there appears a question as to whether its effect may be detrimental to the quality and quantity of regular and credible news. The fundamental purpose of a newspaper may be repressed by the space required for advertising. The inter-link between news, circulation and advertising is strong. News development remains the key to circulation growth. Larger circulation attracts more advertising. A distinctive circulation lead over its rivals is capable of driving home a competitive advantage in attracting adequate ad revenue in newspaper business. Advertising is the financial heart of the newspaper (Jyoti Kumar, 2003).

India has one of the fastest-growing advertising industries, recording nearly Rs. 750 billion in revenues in 2021, indicating a speedy recovery since the COVID-19 pandemic. Television advertising across India generated the highest revenue amongst all other ad media in 2021, amounting to Rs. 313 billion. Digital and print advertising retained their positions as the second and third largest revenue earners (Basuroy, 2022). Except for cinema all other media forms saw an increase in advertising revenues. India has experienced rapid development in digital advertising in recent years. Mobile advertisements took up the greatest proportion within this group, driven by the Digital India project, the fast use of smartphones, and the availability of inexpensive data. The shrinking urban-rural divide, which allowed for a more uniform reach of all internet information, was another cause. Social media made up the highest share in terms of format for ads in this category, followed by paid search. With the highest levels of online video consumption among digital users in the country, the outlook for growth remained optimistic.

Despite digital media overtaking print in terms of advertising revenue, the latter continued to retain an integral position for ads even with one of the slowest growth rates. However, the country's sizable print sector faces a rough future due to the rise in production costs and the digitalization of major periodicals. The revenue from print advertising across India in 2021 was about Rs. 151 billion. This was an increase from the previous year when the industry was adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Projections for 2024 suggested a continued increase in revenues amounting to Rs. 169 billion. Hindi and English accounted for the highest shares in advertisements in the Indian print industry in 2021. Together, they contributed over 60 per cent and Marathi, Telugu and Tamil made up the highest share among regional languages. In 2022, the Indian government spent over Rs. 1.7 billion on advertisements in newspapers distributed among more than six thousand newspapers (Basuroy, 2022).

Advertising is the financial backbone of the print news industry. Newspaper publishers are seeing their share of the advertising pie shrinking in the digital space (Laghate, 2021). The escalation in use of digital media has affected advertising in print newspapers. The print sector is forced to move into the digital media because the consumer is spending more time on these platforms and therefore advertising revenues are moving to these platforms as well. However, newspapers are yet to yield benefits from digitization due to competition from tech giants like *Facebook*, *Google*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, etc. *Facebook* and *Google* dominate digital ad spend and together accounted for 60 per cent of all the digital advertising in 2019 (Gill, 2019). The publishers allege that these tech giants are making money by advertisement on the strength of their news content though *Facebook* and *Google* claim that they are basically helping publishers by directing traffic to their website. *Google* and *Facebook* have grown into ad behemoths, with advertising accounting for the vast majority of their revenue last year, \$181.69 billion and \$86 billion, respectively in 2021 while in contrast; the news-publishing industry's ad revenue has steadily declined (Hagey, 2021). INS, an association representing around 800 publishers, approached *Google* asking it to compensate them for carrying their content online and share 85% of the ad revenue. It pointed out that *Google* must pay for news

generated by the newspapers, which employ thousands of journalists - at a considerable expense - for gathering and verifying information (*The Economic Times*, 2022).

2.2 THE NEWSPAPER MARKET IN MIZORAM

2.2.1 Evolution of Newspaper Industry

Newspaper in the state of Mizoram had a humble beginning. Following the introduction of the Mizo alphabets by the erstwhile missionaries using the Roman scripts in the last decade of the 19th century, literacy while still very low, was growing. This was evident when, in 1898, a handwritten four-page newspaper called *Mizo Chanchin Laisuih* was published by the British administrators and sent to the Mizo Chiefs. It contained orders and instructions of the British administration and events taking place in the Mizo villages (Lalthangliana, 2014, Thirumal & Lalrozami, 2010). The Mizo Chiefs, if they could not read, would engage a literate person to read for them and their villages. Bearing in mind that an entire village attained information from one newspaper, the figure would be low in terms of circulation, however, the readership of the newspaper would have been extensive. In addition, since the newspapers were handwritten, production was limited to only a few copies per publication. *Mizo Chanchin Laisuih*, as the first of its kind among the Mizo, stirred the need of the people for news and information about other people and places and bolstered the creation of other newspapers.

A landmark for newspapers in Mizoram happens to be the publishing of two newspapers during 1900 to 1919. The first one entitled *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* was published by the Government in 1902. The second one named *Kristian Tlangau* was published by the Presbyterian Church in 1911. The influence of these two newspapers resonates even to this day. They serve as a main reference to the socio-economic, cultural, religious, and political environment of the period (Lalthangliana, 2010, Lalzama, 2017, Lallianchhunga, 2011, Ralte, 2008).

Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu laid a firm foundation for the development of press and newspapers in Mizoram. Established in November, 1902, the newspaper was published for almost 40 years till 1941. At its initial stage, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* was printed at Dina Nath Press in Sylhet, Bangladesh and later at the Loch Printing Press in Aizawl, Mizoram (Lalzama, 2017). It was a weekly fourteen page newspaper that dealt with a wide variety of topics: from local news to information about world affairs, tips about hygiene, suggestions on how to earn money, proper religious practices, the blessings bestowed by the government and the main thrust was to induce the readers to look critically at their own society and to improve it (Pachau & Schendel, 2015). Undertaken in its early years by the British missionaries, it employed Mizo editors from 1911 onwards (Lalthangliana, 2014). It was quickly observed that newspapers had the capacity to educate the general public in great magnitude. This unprecedented effect was appreciated by the Mizo people and more so by the government and the missionaries. Although it was a secular newspaper, the missionaries who established schools used the newspaper to issue guidelines regarding lessons and disseminate translated hymns or Bible verses. *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* established a tradition of reading. Many were inspired to read and it supplemented the Government's efforts toward improvement of literacy. The circulation records are not available; however, teachers of all the schools are known to have subscribed to the newspaper. In addition, judging from the worth of the newspaper in Mizo history, it can be assumed to have been substantial for its time.

Kristian Tlangau, which means Christian Herald, was another pioneer monthly newspaper in Mizoram. Published since October 1911, it was a Christian newspaper committed to inform and inspire the Mizo Christians and to educate them on secular topics as well. Circulation began at 350 copies in 1911 and reached 43000 copies by 2021. A unique feature of *Kristian Tlangau* is that it was initiated not by the Government or the missionaries, but by the early educated Mizo Christians. Funded by the Mizo founders, it was printed at the Lushai Christian Press. The Lushai Printing Press was renamed Loch Printing Press which in 1973 was changed to Synod Press (Lalthangliana, 2017).

The church denominations of Presbyterians and Baptists both set up printing presses in Aizawl and Serkawn respectively, and printing became one of Mizoram's first industries. Before presses were established in Mizoram in the 1910s, printing in Mizo language was done mostly in Chennai, Sylhet, Allahabad and Kolkata. Printing was a mission monopoly in Mizoram. The missionary presses produced religious tracts as well as educational material and they were of great importance in spreading literacy (Pachau & Schendel, 2015). Other newspapers, both secular and religious, sprouted in the subsequent years. Several newspapers were published by different church denominations, non-government organisations, political parties and individuals. Published by the Salvation Army in 1931, *Sipai Tlangau*, an eight page monthly newspaper was printed at Lila Printing Works, Calcutta. Its readers were mainly members of the Salvation Army and it contained sermons, news from all over the world and the development of Salvation Army in the State (Lalthangliana, 2004). *Tlawmngaihna*, a monthly newspaper, was published by the Baptist Mission in South Mizoram in 1934. It was later renamed *Robawm* and printed at the Lushai Mission Press, Lunglei (Lalzama, 2017).

The first newspaper published in the State by an association was by the Lushai Student Association (later known as Mizo Students Association or *Mizo Zirlai Pawl*) in 1938. A 12 page newspaper named LSA Chanchinbu was published every three months. It was later renamed *MZP Chanchinbu* after the Lushai Student Association was renamed *Mizo Zirlai Pawl*. The newspaper is noteworthy in its contribution to Mizo literature. The young editors were driven by the desire to educate their readers and preserve Mizo culture and literature (Lalthangliana, 2004).

The first weekly newspaper published by an individual, Mr. Liankhuma was *Tun Hapta Kar Chanchin* in September, 1939. A six page newspaper, it contained local news and news about World War II. The first daily newspaper in Mizoram, *Nitin Chanchin*, was published in 1939 by Superintendent A.G. McCall and printed at Thangkunga Press. The newspaper was valuable during its time as World War news received by the Superintendent were quickly disseminated through the newspaper (Lalthangliana, 2004).

An era of news development began when political parties were allowed to be formed in 1946. Given the effect newspapers can have in the community, the newly formed political parties utilised newspapers to influence their readers. The first newspaper affiliated to a political party was *Zoram Thupuan*. Established in December 1947, it was a four page weekly newspaper of the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO). Printed at P.T Press, it began with 500 copies and reached 1560 copies by 1955 (Lalthangliana, 2004). A newspaper affiliated to the Mizo Union political party, *Mizo Arsi* was published by Mr. H.K Bawichhuaka in 1948. The General Secretary of the party automatically took up the position of editor of the newspaper (Lalrambuatsaiha, 2012). It was a four page weekly newspaper that reached 950 copies in circulation. *Mizo Arsi* is notable for being the first newspaper to charge a price for advertising in the newspaper from individuals as well as the government. The three editors of the newspaper made the decision on August 16, 1955 (Lalthangliana, 2004). *Thu leh Hla*, a monthly newspaper was published by the Mizo Academy of letters which was in 1965.

Most of the newspapers established before the start of insurgency in 1966 experienced disruptions in their production during the insurgency period. While newspapers were not high in circulation and profits, they proved resilient, and even more newspapers continued to be established. *Tawrhawm* was such an example. Established in 1968, it was a daily newspaper that exists till today. *Mizo Aw* began its daily circulation in 1970 and was established by Shri Lal Thanhawla who entered politics thereafter and became the chief minister of Mizoram twice. After Mizoram became a centrally administered union territory in 1972, the number of newspapers increased. The first English newspaper published in Mizoram was the *Highlander*. Established as a weekly newspaper in 1972, it became a daily newspaper from 1979. It intended to cater to the needs of the non-Mizo residents and officials in the State. In 1972, *Romei* began in 1972 as a weekly newspaper and started its daily circulation in 1973.

The following years after Mizoram received statehood on February 20, 1987 witnessed mushroom growth of newspapers despite having a small segment of

population. These newspapers began with modest circulation and continued on without substantial increase in circulation figures. The newspaper industry remained entrenched with small newspaper organisations with low circulations. The largest circulated newspaper, *Vanglaini*, started as a weekly newspaper in 1978 with the youth as its initial target market. It became a daily from 1984 and was the first newspaper to adopt web offset printing technology.

The Presbyterian Church has the highest circulated monthly newspaper in Mizoram as per RNI data, *Synod*, with circulation of 1,50,000 copies (*Press in India*, 2020).

As per the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram, there were 95 dailies, nine weeklies and two monthly newspapers in Mizoram with 33 daily newspapers in Aizawl District in 2020.

2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

2.3.1 Language

The people in Mizoram consist of several sub-tribes like the Lushai, the Hmar, the Ralte, the Paihte, the Pawi, the Hualngo, and so on. Each of these sub-tribes has different dialect of their own. The Lushei sub-tribe with its various clans dominated in terms of number of people and the number of Chiefs. Over the years, the Lushai dialect, more commonly termed as *Duhlian* dialect, became the lingua franca of the land. As the different sub-tribes or clans were collectively known as Mizo, the most common dialect, the Lushai dialect, came to be known as the Mizo language (Lalzama, 2017). Prior to the British administration and the subsequent influence of Christian missionaries, the Mizo people had no written language or script and communication was purely oral (Rohmingmawii, 2011). Traditional cultures, folktales, poems, chants, and songs were handed down orally from one generation to the next. In 1894, the pioneer missionaries prepared a 24 letter alphabet in Roman character for the Lushai dialect, which cemented its use as the common language. This new form of writing was taught by the missionaries gradually absorbing the other dialects. It set the foundation of the Mizo language. The missionaries were instrumental in standardizing the Mizo language by making a unified process of

assimilation of a large number of dialects of the different sub-tribes of the land (Lalzama, 2017).

The newspapers published in Mizoram are in Mizo language except for three English language newspapers and *The Times of Maraland*, which is in Mara language. This opens up the possibility of the Mizo language market to spread throughout the geographical area of the State. A single newspaper however has not been able to capture or reach out to the entire State due to financial and logistics challenges. The Districts or specific areas generally have their own newspapers catering to their local news requirements.

English newspapers exist in the State, however, only three daily newspapers are published locally, that is, within the State. English newspapers that are imported from the States of Assam and West Bengal are *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, *BusinessLine* and *Eastern Chronicles*. These are distributed directly from the agency to different departments of the Government and a few subscribers.

2.3.2 Ownership

All the daily newspapers in Mizoram are owned by individuals. There is complete absence of chain ownership or conglomerate ownership, unlike other parts of the country. Only one case of cross media ownership has been observed where *Vanglaini* owners acquired a stake in ZONET, one of the two leading cable networks in Mizoram. There are some weekly and monthly newspapers that are owned by societies and churches. The highest circulated monthly newspaper, *Synod*, is owned by the Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram Synod. Ownership of all the newspapers is confined to Mizo proprietors. The newspaper industry in Mizoram has not experienced a non-Mizo owner apart from the missionaries and British officials who established the pioneer newspapers. However easy it may appear to transplant newspaper techniques and set up successful newspapers regardless of language, in practice a business that so depends on language and local knowledge insulates itself against outsiders (Jeffrey, 2015). Having to work in another language and culture throws up barriers to outsiders.

2.3.3 Journalists

Established in 1972, a single journalist association, the Mizoram Journalists' Association (MJA), exists in Mizoram and the nodal agency of the association is the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (I&PR), Government of Mizoram. Headquarters of the association is located in Aizawl and the area of operation extends to the whole of Mizoram. The association, as per their general report of 2020, claimed 192 members. No training is required to become a member journalist. However, a working journalist is considered by the MJA as a person who has run a newspaper or magazine or who is engaged in news gathering and photo-journalism for at least a year (MJA Constitution, 2015). District MJA are established in all the seven main Districts outside the Aizawl District area and they report their activities to the general headquarter. The association is governed by an executive committee consisting of the elected office bearers, eleven elected members of the executive committee, five members appointed by the president of the association and presidents of a District MJA.

In addition to protecting the freedom of the Press, MJA has been able to take up varied activities for the wellbeing of its members and contribution to the community. From organising charity funds to attending and reporting on government programmes, the association plays an active role in the public sphere. The association, in coordination with the Government, has been able to send their members on Press tours all over the country since 1974. Accreditations of journalists, including press photographers, are granted by the State Press Accreditation Committee, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Mizoram. The MJA enjoys a Journalist Welfare Fund of Rs. Twenty lakhs annually from the Government of Mizoram, through the Directorate of I&PR, which is used for medical reimbursement for the member journalists.

2.3.4 Technology

The newspaper industry in Mizoram has been quick to adopt new printing technology in recent years. It survived the end of the last century with antiquated printing technology. Newspapers initially used cyclostyle printing which were later upgraded to offset printing machines. Offset printing machines have changed the face of the industry bringing developmental changes to an industry that was bound by old technology. It has also resulted in the increase in number of newspapers throughout the State. Most of the newspapers in Mizoram are tabloid size and only a few use broadsheet sizes. The number of pages of the newspaper ranges from two to 12 pages. Only four newspapers provide colour in some pages and none of the newspapers provide full colour pages. Although the newspaper industry was quick to adopt the latest printing technology, it has not been as quick in adopting the latest digital innovations, especially the social media which has been discussed later in this chapter.

2.3.5 Advertising

Newspapers typically have wide coverage and audience diversity. This makes it an effective information carrier and plays an important role in advertising. Classified advertisements are advertisement generally dealing with offers of or requests for jobs, houses, apartments, used cars, and the like. Display advertisements are advertisements that often use special attention-getting devices, as large size, display type, and illustrations. Newspaper advertisements can be beneficial for both the readers and the newspapers. Newspaper readers benefit from newspaper advertising through exposure to different types of advertisements. Growth in advertising can help growth in newspapers or even sustain them.

Advertisement revenue is the main source of revenue for the newspapers in Mizoram. For most of the newspapers, the cost of advertising is Rs. 130 per column centimetre or non-government advertisements as on October, 2022. For Government advertisements, the Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Mizoram has regulated the cost of advertising in newspapers by fixing the cost of

classified advertisements at Rs. 130 per column and display advertisements at Rs. 4000 per full page (I&PR document, 2020). The Department gives out the advertisement to the newspapers with the condition that newspapers have at least one year of publication. The total amount spent by the Department, on behalf of the Government, on advertisements in newspapers ranges from Rs 7 lakhs to Rs. 14 lakhs per month.

The newspapers empaneled with the CBC receive advertisements from the Central Government. The rate structure for payment against advertisements released by DAVP is worked out as per recommendations of the Rate Structure Committee to only those newspapers whose circulation is certified by ABC/RNI.

2.3.6 Pricing

Price is the amount of money charged for a product or service or the sum of the values that the consumers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service (Kotler, 2000). Pricing decisions have an impact on suppliers, sales people, distributors, competitors and customers.

The cost of publishing a newspaper may include the cost of newsprint, machineries, labour, and collection of news, electricity, administrative costs and other varied indirect costs. Pricing based on the cost of production would be high and may not attract readers. Thus, to reduce the price of the newspaper, space selling for advertisements becomes necessary.

The price of newspapers in Mizoram varies with the size of the newspaper. *Vanglaini* has the highest price in the market with Rs. 8 per copy as on October, 2022. Newspapers namely *The Aizawl Post*, *The Zozam Times* and *The Mizoram Post* charge Rs. 6 per copy. Prices of other newspapers range from Rs. 2.80 to Rs. 5 per copy.

2.3.7 Distribution

Distribution is one of the main elements of marketing mix and plays a crucial role in the success of newspapers. It is assumed by the newspaper subscribers that their

daily newspapers will be made available to them in the morning or at their earliest convenience. This necessitates the newspaper organisations to manage their physical distribution system to satisfy their readers.

Distribution of newspapers is directly affected by transport facilities. Thus it is imperative to highlight the situation of the transport infrastructure in Mizoram and how it has affected the growth of the newspaper industry. The transport infrastructure in Mizoram is technically road based as the hilly terrain limits other forms of transport. There is a small metre-gauge rail link at Bairabi at the north border that is 130 km from the capital city of Aizawl. There is only one airport at Lengpui which is 44 km from Aizawl which connects to the cities of Kolkata, Guwahati and Delhi. Helicopter services are available in eight destinations within the State and connect the main District headquarters. Road transport is thus the main means of transportation. However, the terrain of Mizoram does not permit easy accessibility to roads as the slopes of hills ranges from 20 degrees to 80 degrees and the average elevation is 900 metres above sea level. Consequently, an area within one km from a motor-able road does not necessarily mean easy access because of its slope and deep gorges between the hills (Lianhmingthanga, 2018).

The daily newspapers of each District of the State typically confine their circulation within their District if not their town or city. Only few of the daily newspapers circulate beyond the District in which it is published. This is mainly due to logistic problems. Delay in delivery arising out of transport problems particularly during the monsoon season is common.

Distribution within the capital city of Aizawl is directly to the distributors from the publisher. Some of the newspapers organisations deliver their newspapers to different distribution centres and hereafter the distributors collect and distribute to individual subscribers. Newspapers are delivered to the subscribers mainly between 6 am and 8 am. Distribution in other Districts of the State is directly from the organisations to the distributors who deliver to the subscribers.

2.3.8 Registration with the Government

Out of the 95 daily newspapers in Mizoram, 51 (57%) dailies have registered with the RNI in 2022. Only five of the 95 dailies are empaneled with CBC. For registration with RNI, the newspapers need to register themselves with the office of the District commissioner in the state. In addition, the newspapers need to get a postal registration from the post office as one of the conditions for attaining RNI is the posting of a copy of the newspaper to the RNI office daily for a year. Further, in order to avail the government advertisements, the newspapers require certification by the Department Information and Public Relations, Government of Mizoram.

2.4 CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

The growth of any newspaper is often measured by its circulation. Circulation for a newspaper business is the basic determinant of profit, though newspapers cannot survive out of the sales revenue of the copies sold. The newspaper mainly sustains on advertisement revenue. But the determinant of advertising revenue is again the newspaper and its acceptance by the customers. The more the circulation, the more advertisers prefer to buy space in them so that their message can reach more people. The more the circulation the paper enjoys, the more it charges its advertisers (Jyoti Kumar, 2003).

Newspapers in Mizoram fall under small and medium newspaper category as categorised by the Registrar of Newspapers for India, Government of India. Circulation of up to 25,000 copies per publishing day are categorised as small newspapers and circulation between 25,001 and 75,000 copies per publishing day are categorised as medium newspapers. District-wise claimed circulations were collected for all the daily newspapers in Mizoram.

2.4.1 Newspapers in Aizawl District

As per Census, 2011, Aizawl District has a total population of 4,00,309 and a population density of 112 per square kilometres, the highest in Mizoram. The literacy

rate of the District is 97.89 per cent and is the District of the capital city of Aizawl. As per government records there are 33 daily newspapers, three weekly newspapers and two monthly newspapers. However, the government records and actual number of daily newspapers do not coincide. Some of the newspapers have stopped circulation and closed down their organisation. Table 2.7 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Aizawl District in 2009 and 2021.

Table 2.7: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Aizawl District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Aizawl Observer	300	700
2	Chhawrpial	500	1,000
3	Dingdi	800	500
4	Entlang	400	1,000
5	Harhna	300	400
6	<i>Highlander</i>	1200	30000
7	Hnehtu	700	200
8	Huapzo	Not available	400
9	Khawpui Aw	600	1,000
10	Lenlaini	600	1,000
11	Lentlang	Not available	500
12	Mizo Arsi	500	600
13	Mizo Aw	1,500	700
14	Mizo Express	400	800
15	National Observer	Not available	
16	News Link	1,800	3,000
17	Romei	400	500
18	Sakeibaknei	600	400
19	Tawrhbawm	2,000	4,000
20	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	5,000	12,000
21	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	Not available	40500
22	The Zoram Voice	Not available	1,500
23	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	5,000	12,000
24	Thlirtu	Not available	1,000
25	Thuthar	Not available	
26	<i>Vanglaini</i>	22,000	20,000
27	Virthli	1,700	1,000
28	Youth Herald	300	1,000
29	Zawlbuk	Not available	500
30	Zawlkhawpui	Not available	400
31	Zo Rin	Not available	2,000

32	Zoram Politics	Not available	
33	Zoram Tlangau	300	700

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

The highest circulation for the leading newspaper in 2021 is 22,000 copies. Most of the newspapers have circulation ranging from 300 to 2000 copies. Many newspapers that are published in the District do not show a substantial improvement on the circulation front.

2.4.2 Newspapers in Champhai District

As per Census, 2011, Champhai District has a total population of 1,25,745 and a population density of 39 per square kilometres. The literacy rate of the District is 95.15 per cent and the District is situated in the north-eastern part of the State bordering Myanmar and the state of Manipur. As per government records there are 8 daily newspapers in the District. Table 2.7 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Champhai District.

Table 2.8: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Champhai District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Pasaltha	1,400	1,000
2	Lenrual	500	1,200
3	Rihlipui	1,400	1,000
4	Si Ar	500	900
5	Khawzawl Times	500	1,000

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

All the five dailies of Champhai District are two page newspapers of the same size. Circulation ranges between 900 and 1200 copies.

2.4.3 Newspapers in Kolasib District

As per Census, 2011, Kolasib District has a total population of 83,955 and a population density of 61 per square kilometres. The literacy rate of the District is 93.50 per cent and is situated in the northern part of the State bordering the state of Assam. As per government records there are nine daily newspapers and one weekly newspaper in the District. Table 2.8 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Kolasib District.

Table 2.9: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Kolasib District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Kolasib Today	500	700
2	Vairengte Aw	Not available	500
3	Kolasib Aw	200	1,000
4	Chhuahtlang	500	700
5	Rengkhawpui	Not available	800
6	Turnipui	1300	600
7	Duhlai	Not available	500
8	Zingtian	Not available	1,000
9	Zoram Kanan	Not available	520

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

2.4.4 Newspapers in Lawngtlai District

As per Census, 2011, Lawngtlai District has a total population of 1,17,894 and a population density of 46 per square kilometres. The literacy rate of the District is 65.88 per cent and is situated in the south-western part of the State bordering the countries Myanmar and Bangladesh. As per government records there are seven daily newspapers in the District. Table 2.9 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Lawngtlai District.

Table 2.10: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Lawngtlai District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Chhawkhlei Times	Not available	1,200
2	Lairam	1,740	1,000
3	Lawngtlai Post	500	560
5	Phawngpui Express	500	600
6	Rameng	500	500
7	Rauthla	500	1,000

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

There are seven dailies running in the District with circulation ranging from 500 to 1200 copies per publishing day.

2.4.5 Newspapers in Lunglei District

As per Census, 2011, Lunglei District has a total population of 1,61,428 and a population density of 36 per square kilometres. The literacy rate of the District is 88.86per cent and is situated in the southern part of the State bordering the countries Myanmar and Bangladesh. As per government records there are 15 daily newspapers and 5 weekly newspapers in the District. Table 2.10 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Lunglei District.

Table 2.11: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Lunglei District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Calathea(H)	170	300
2	Changdam	Not available	800
3	Daifim	Not available	800
4	Daily Post	Not available	Not available
5	Hlimthla	Not available	2,400
6	Hnahthial Times (H)	150	250
7	Hnahthial Today (H)	150	350
8	Hnamdamna	300	2,000
9	Huihchhuk (H)	Not available	500
10	Lawhleng	Not available	Not available

11	Lunglei Times	350	1700
12	Lungsen Post	Not available	250
14	Ralvengtu	1,500	1,000
15	Vulmawi	820	1,000
16	Ziakfung		800
18	Zochhiar	300	500
19	Zunzam	450	300

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

There are 19 daily newspapers in Lunglei District with circulation ranging from 250 to 2400 copies per publishing day.

2.4.6 Newspapers in Mamit District

As per Census, 2011, Mamit District has a total population of 86,364 and a population density of 29 per square kilometres. The literacy rate of the District 87.03 per cent and is situated in the north-western part of the State bordering the states of Assam and Tripura and the country Bangladesh. As per government records there are 4 daily newspapers. Table 2.11 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Mamit District.

Table 2.12: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Mamit District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Mamit Times	500	700
4	Kumtluang	Not available	150

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

There are two daily newspapers in Mamit District with circulation of 150 and 700 copies per publishing day.

2.4.7 Newspapers in Serchhip District

As per Census, 2011, Serchhip District has a total population of 64,937 and a population density of 46 per square kilometres. The literacy rate of the District 97.91

per cent and is situated in the middle part of the State bordering the country Myanmar. As per government records there are 10 daily newspapers. Table 2.12 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Serchhip District.

Table 2.13: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Serchhip District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Hrangturzo	Not available	500
2	Laisuih	500	700
3	Lamkal	500	120
4	Lenkawl	480	500
5	Ramlai Arsi	500	800
6	Serchhip Times	520	1,500
7	Serkhawpui	500	500
8	Vantawng	400	800
9	Zawlbuk Aw	400	500
10	Zothlifim	Not available	500

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldinliana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

There are 10 dailies in Serchhip District with circulation ranging from 120 to 1500 copies per publishing day.

2.4.8 Newspapers in Siaha District

As per Census, 2011, Siaha District has a total population of 56,574 and a population density of 40 per square kilometres. The literacy rate of the District 90.43 per cent and is situated in the middle part of the State bordering the country Myanmar. As per government records there are 9 daily newspapers. Table 2.13 shows the circulation of daily newspapers in Siaha District.

Table 2.14: Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Siaha District in 2009 and 2021

SN	Name of Newspaper	2009 Circulation	2021 Circulation
1	Buannel	200	150
2	Chhim Aw	350	300
3	Kawl Eng	200	550

4	Moonlight	350	500
5	Saiha Post	150	Not available
6	Times of Maraland	100	500
7	Tipa Express	200	500

Source: 2021 figures are collected from the individual newspapers, and 2009 figures are taken from Mizoram Journalist Association report (Laldiniana and Jyoti Kumar, 2012).

There are seven dailies in Siaha District with circulation ranging from 150 to 550 copies per publishing day.

2.5 COMPETITION

Every organisation is part of an industry. Almost all organisations face competition either directly or indirectly. Thus, industry and competition are vital considerations in making a strategic choice. An industry is a group of companies offering products and services that are close substitutes of each other. The industry provides the context in which an organisation operates while competitors vie for the same set of customers by offering more or less identical products (Kazmi, 2006). Newspapers, within its industry, compete in two connected markets. They face rivalry for the sale of content to consumers, and at the same time, they compete for advertisers seeking access to the attention of these consumers (Argentesi and Filistruchhi, 2007). In addition, newspapers face competition from other media such as Television, Radio, magazines, and the internet.

Understanding newspaper competition requires different economic model than classical models of competition. Most newspaper markets have other forms of mass media that compete for advertising and for the attention of consumers. However, newspaper competition is often described as ranging from oligopoly to monopoly, depending on the market. When there is only one firm, the market is a monopoly. If a newspaper is a monopoly, consumers and advertisers will substitute to other forms of mass media when prices are too high. In oligopolistic markets, only a few firms compete, each individual firm's actions will influence the response of other firms.

Explicit pricing agreements are illegal, so oligopolies must depend on tacit understandings to maintain pricing discipline (Lacy & Martin, 2004).

Since all organisations evolve in a competitive environment, differentiation has become paramount and sometimes vital. In addition to being constantly careful not to lose the market share already acquired, the organisations must continually reaffirm its differences to maintain and create its own competitive advantage. The five forces model, developed by Michael E. Porter, allows business executives to anticipate trends within an industry and changes in competition in order to influence it by making strategic choices that will enable them to obtain or maintain a competitive advantage. The complete analysis examines five forces: customer bargaining power, supplier bargaining power, the threat of substitute products, the threat of new entrants, and intra-industry competition. The first four elements operate independently from one another whilst intensifying the rivalry within the industry (Michaux, 2015). In addition, it is useful to look inward and perform a SWOT analysis. SWOT identifies company-specific strengths and weaknesses and where there is room for improvement. Porter's five forces look beyond a single firm to the competitive landscape that will come into play.

2.5.1 Competition within the Newspaper Industry

A rise in the population of India as well as an increase in literacy rates and better standards of living attribute greatly for the increase in the distribution of dailies (Kukreti & Sharma, 2015). These factors create a foundation for a large readership base. In the case of India, not only is there a growing readership base, there is an increasing desire to be aware of government policies and political trends. Such demand has given rise to numerous daily newspapers, particularly in vernacular languages which cater to localized or regional groups.

As readers become progressively more aware and discerning, newspapers have to continually present fresh news in a relatable manner in order to gain and maintain readers. This requires investment in news gathering, printing technology and

distribution. Not only do newspapers have to contend with changing news consumption habits, but they must also compete with other newspapers. Thus, it is imperative for newspapers to initiate innovative processes and remain relevant. Newspapers have adopted various tactics to address the same. Namely, from employing new technology to manipulate layout and feel of the printed paper, to content innovation, to running specific ad campaigns, to launching an additional publication to target niche readers (Kukreti & Sharma, 2015).

Within the newspaper industry in Mizoram, as per the statistics given by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram in 2020, there are 95 daily newspapers, 9 weekly newspapers and 2 monthly newspapers in Mizoram. Table 2.14 shows the District-wise distribution of the newspapers in 2020.

Table 2.15: Number of Registered Newspapers in 2020– District-wise

SN	District	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
1	Aizawl	33	3	2
2	Champhai	8	0	0
3	Kolasib	9	1	0
4	Lawngtlai	7	0	0
5	Lunglei	15	5	0
6	Mamit	4	0	0
7	Serchhip	10	0	0
8	Siaha	9	0	0
	Total	95	9	2

Source: Directorate of Information and Public Relations, 2020

The competition between the newspapers is mostly confined within the administrative Districts as circulations are limited within the Districts. Only a few daily newspapers such as *Vanglaini* distribute in all the Districts. Newspapers from outside Mizoram, mainly English newspapers, are circulated primarily to the government offices and their circulations are low. Late arrival of the newspapers to the distribution agents from the publishing cities of Kolkata, Guwahati and Silchar makes it difficult to compete with the local newspapers which are distributed at prime time. The sources of news for most of the newspapers are the press releases of the Information and Public Relations Department and the internet. The newspapers

do not subscribe to any national or international news agencies. This creates similarities in the news contents of different newspapers (Vanamamalai et al., 2018).

2.5.2 Growth of other media and its implications

Newspapers compete with other media for consumers. Newspapers offer news and other information that may not be available elsewhere, and newspapers' format and publication cycle differ from those of other mass media. News media are naturally differentiated by their nature and distribution systems. Newspapers provide some types of information better than radio and televisions, but radio and television news have their advantages as well. Newspapers compete for advertising as well. Companies that buy advertising have a mix of media aimed at reaching groups of potential buyers with a message that will influence them to buy. Newspapers are successful at selling advertisements when they reach those groups with the type of ads that might influence members of the group. The degree of competition depends on the willingness of consumers and advertisers to substitute other media products for the newspapers. This willingness depends on prices, on whether consumers and advertisements perceive newspapers as a substitute for other media products, and on whether consumers choose to fit newspapers into their mix of media products (Lacy & Martin, 2004).

New technologies have impacted the newspaper industry, both in the past and the present. In the last century, newspapers saw some readers and advertisers migrate to radio and then to television, while, in this century, some readers and advertisers have departed for the internet. In response to both developments, newspapers have made changes in order to maintain their appeal, offering new types of content, adjusting their formats, looking for new sources of revenue, and streamlining their operations, among other strategies (Varney, 2011). In the last two decades, the media and communication scene in India has transformed, partly as a result of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization of media and cultural industries. The increasing availability of digital delivery and distribution mechanisms has created new markets for media and communication products (Narayan & Narayanan, 2016).

The newspaper industry is confronted with serious challenges from the increasing role of the internet and the changes in media consumption habits. Competition for newspapers come in the form of alternate sources of gaining information and entertainment, namely magazines, television, radio, internet, film industry and various streaming services, or over-the-top (OTT) content. The most visible change is the visual media. Television in India has grown exponentially, from *Doordarshan* to 900 permitted private satellite TV channels (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2021), which makes India home to the world's most competitive and crowded media market. The Indian entertainment industry as a whole is rapidly growing; the television market is substantial, with 197 million homes owning a television set as of 2018, it is the fastest growing segment (ibef.org, 2020). The media ecology of a globalizing country with many ethnicities has grown fascinatingly diverse. It enriched the media landscape, expanded democratic domains, and empowered citizenry in ways that were not conceivable earlier (Ninan & Chattarji, 2013). With rising incomes and changing lifestyles, demand for certain types of products and services are on the rise. As digital technology advances and its reach increases, the entertainment industry is projected to see continued rapid growth (ibef.org, 2020). However, most of such entertainment sources are dependent upon a power supply. Until the fluctuating electricity supply and broadband services are resolved, it is reported that other media is far from being a threat to print media, namely newspapers (Kumar & Sarma, 2015). The internet has witnessed extraordinary expansion in India and there were 64.6 crore active internet users aged 2 years and above as of December 2021 and mobile phones have remained the key device for all internet usage across sectors (Nielsen - Bharat 2.0 internet study, 2022). The remarkable growth achieved by All India Radio (AIR) has made it one of the largest media organisations in the world. With a network of 262 radio stations, AIR today is accessible to almost the entire population of the country and nearly 92% of the total area. AIR broadcasts in 23 languages and 146 dialects catering to a vast spectrum of socio-economically and culturally diverse populace. The News Services Division, of All India Radio broadcasts 647 bulletins daily for a total duration of nearly 56 hours in about 90 Languages/Dialects in Home, Regional, External and DTH Services. 314 news headlines on hourly basis are also being

mounted on FM mode from 41 AIR Stations. 44 Regional News Units originate 469 daily news bulletins in 75 languages. In addition to the daily news bulletins, the News Services Division also mounts number of news-based programmes on topical subjects from Delhi and it's Regional News Units (prasarbharati.gov.in, 2022).

Newspapers in Mizoram compete in news dissemination with other media, namely, radio, television, magazines and the internet. Television news sources are mainly *Doordarshan* (TV channel owned by the Government of India), local cable TV channels of *LPS* and *ZONET* and regional, national and international news programmes. Radio news sources are *All India Radio AIR Aizawl 100.1 FM*, *All India Radio North Eastern Service 100.7 FM*, and *Red 93.5 FM*. Competition from weekly or monthly news bulletins of different non-government organisations like the YMA, different denomination churches and several trade or sports associations Online news sites, national and international, compete for the reader's attention. Several newspapers in Mizoram have made their newspapers available in digital platforms through their websites, in pdf format or through an App. *Vanglaini* have made an online version of its newspaper available since 2015. Other newspapers like *The Aizawl Post* and *The Mizoram Post* have also created online versions of their newspapers.

2.5.3 Growth of Social Media and its Implications

The internet and social media have revolutionised communication and networking the world over and Mizoram is no exception. Social media is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation. With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interaction on a large scale has become easier for individuals than ever before. Citizens and consumers who otherwise had limited voices could now share their opinions with many. The low cost and accessibility of new technology also allowed more options for media consumption than ever before – and so instead of only a few news outlets, individuals now have the ability to seek information from several sources and to dialogue with others via message forums about the information posted. At the core of this on-going revolution is social media.

Social media allow some form of participation. At bare minimum, a profile must be created that allows for the beginning of the potential for interaction. This quality in and of itself sets social media apart from traditional media where personal profiles are not the norm (Manning, 2014).

All social media involve some sort of digital platform, whether that be mobile or stationary. Not everything that is digital, however, is necessarily social media. Top social media platforms include *Instagram*, *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *TikTok*, *Pinterest*, *Snapchat*, *LinkedIn* and so on (Adobe.com, 2022). There is a wide range of social media, but the leading type is social networking. Whether one needs to connect with friends, to follow the news, or to expand one's business network, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *LinkedIn* keep attracting users. Platforms like *Instagram* and *YouTube* focus on photo and video exchange. Blogging networks, as well as visually focused networks such as *Pinterest*, are where users share interests, and messengers like *Facebook Messenger* and *WhatsApp* are used primarily for texting (Statista, 2022).

Social media and newspapers share a common function where they both allow people to seek information. This information may range from political campaigns to local issues to disaster relief to finding products and services through advertisements. The mode of delivering the information, however, is vastly different. As India prides itself on its Information Technology (IT) prowess, newspapers need to consider myriad complexities and contradictions inherent in the internet revolution (Ninan & Chattarji, 2013). Social Media has made a major impact on how we receive our daily news. News consumption habits are evolving and readers are choosing to connect via mobile and other web based platforms more and more. Many people decide to get news from mobile applications or *Apps* on their phone as it is convenient to read. While online news consumption is rising due to increased access of internet and broadband services, internet penetration in India is relatively low compared to other developing and robust economies. As a result, the majority of Indians continue to depend upon newspapers as their source of news (Kukreti & Sharma, 2015). News still matters, but the methods of finding news have changed. This makes it crucial for

print news outlets to understand who their audiences are and how they can best satisfy readers' needs. Understanding base characteristics that can predict newspaper use is the key to a publication's survival (Anderson, 2018). With the proliferation of new media outlets, the growing competition for audiences and, crucially, advertising revenue will also intensify. Text-dominated Web sites could increasingly become substitutes for newspapers as people become more comfortable reading on screens and screens become more portable. Just how much of a threat these sites are depends on the relative utility of the content to readers (Lacy & Martin, 2004).

The online and social media presence of newspapers in Mizoram is given in Table 2.16

Table 2.16: The Online and Social Media Presence of Newspapers in Mizoram in 2022

Newspaper	Website	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	You Tube
<i>Vanglaini</i>	Vanglaini.org	<i>Vanglaini</i>	<i>Vanglaini</i>	@VanglainiDaily	NA
<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	NA	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	NA	NA	Aizawl Post
<i>The Zozam Times</i>	thezozamtimes.in	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	NA	@thezozamtimes	NA
<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	themizorampost.net	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	NA	NA	NA
<i>Vairengte Aw</i>	vairengte-aw.blogspot.com	Vairengte Aw Daily	NA	@vairengteaw	NA
<i>Zalen¹</i>	zalen.in	NA	zalen_news	NA	NA
<i>Zawlbuk</i>	NA	Zawlbuk Daily Evening Newspaper	NA	NA	NA
<i>Zo Rin</i>	NA	Zo Rin	NA	NA	NA

Note: ¹A weekly news magazine

Source: Primary data

As evident from Table 2.16, out of 95 daily newspapers in Mizoram, only eight newspapers are utilising digital media in one form or the other. Digital news and social media has not been used by the newspaper organisations to its full potential. The ability of social media to facilitate communication between individuals and as

representatives of organisations has not yet been explored and applied by most of the newspapers. The increase in online presence by the newspapers is not directly proportional to the increase in use of internet and social media by the population of Mizoram. An individual can now follow the news, even from the same organisation, across multiple platforms. How news is consumed is changing rapidly, and newspaper organisations need to observe and act accordingly. The power of social media is evident from a survey on social media's impact on purchase decisions of consumers where more than 70 per cent bought products because of social media influence (Statista, 2022). The use of mobile phones has increased rapidly and has become the main platform for digital news consumption (WAN-IFRA, 2020-2021). In 2020, 53 per cent of India's total population accessed the internet from their mobile phones and this is expected to grow to 96 per cent by 2040. As of February, 2022, the country's digital population amounted to approximately 658 million active users and was dominated by mobile internet users (Basuroy, 2022). Social media sites which are easily accessible on mobile phones, laptop, tablet and desktop provide, directly or indirectly, a platform in which news is consumed. Social media outlets, such as *Twitter* and *Facebook*, are considered as means to disseminate news very rapidly to a large number of people. In addition, there is a growing audience for short but fast bits and pieces of news. However, users who use social media get exposed to news not because they were motivated to access news to begin with, but because they happen to be in that communication space. These incidental exposures can lead the user to other online sources to get more information, especially the newspaper website. This can increase website traffic and improve the popularity of particular newspapers (Tandoc & Johnson, 2016). Thus, it becomes imperative for the newspapers to have social media presence and provide timely news which can increase social media to online news consumption pattern and the general popularity of the newspaper.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Despite the extraordinary expansion of the internet and other media, the newspaper market in India has proved to be resilient and managed to grow. With increase in literacy level and growing population, the newspaper market has shown a healthy growth. Since the inception of the first newspaper *Bengal Gazette* in 1780, the newspaper industry has witnessed colossal growth with its highest circulated newspaper, *Dainik Bhaskar*, obtaining a circulation of more than 3.8 million copies per publishing day. The total number of daily newspapers in India in 2021 stood at 9750 with a combined circulation of more than 225 million copies. The newspapers are owned mostly by individuals and according to the reports of the *Press in India*, 2021, there were 8218 (84.29%) individually owned newspapers. Only two newspapers (0.02%) were owned by the Government. Newspapers are published in multiple languages and this is a unique feature of the Indian newspaper market. In 2021, the RNI reported that Hindi dailies were among the highest number of all the languages (4349), followed by Urdu (1107), Telugu (1083), English (820), Marathi (617), Kannada (560), Gujarati (369), Tamil (180), Oria (132) and Malayalam (119). With 74 per cent of literate population, the newspaper market is vast and with great potential for future growth. With revolutionary changes in the printing technology, the newspaper industry has advanced with the capability to print in multiple languages with different scripts.

The evolution of the newspaper market in Mizoram began in 1898 with the publication of a hand-written four page newspaper, *Mizo Chanchin Laisuih*. It has progressed to a total of 95 daily newspapers in 2020 out of which only three are in English language and one in Mara language. National newspapers that reach the State are *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, *BusinessLine* and *Eastern Chronicle* which are directly distributed to the Government departments and a few private subscribers. Ownership of the daily newspapers is confined to individuals with complete absence of chain or conglomerate ownership. There is extensive coverage of local news in the newspapers of Mizoram and national and international news occupying only a page or two. Majority of the newspapers are tabloid size papers and only a few, namely

Vanglaini, *The Aizawl Post* and *The Zozam Times*, use broadsheet size papers. The number of pages of the newspaper ranges from two to twelve pages. Only four newspapers provide colour in some pages and none of the newspapers provide all coloured pages. The price of newspapers in Mizoram varies with the size of the newspaper and number of pages and range from Rs. 2.80 to Rs 8 per copy. Newsprint, as it is not manufactured within Mizoram, is imported from other states, which leads to increase in cost of production. Offset printing technology has brought developmental changes to the industry resulting in increase in the number of newspapers throughout the State. Advertisement revenue is the main source of revenue for the newspapers. For Government advertisements, the Information and Public Relations Department, has regulated the cost of advertising in newspapers at Rs. 130 per column and display advertisements at Rs. 4000 per full page. The newspapers empaneled with the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) receive advertisements from the Central Government. There is only one journalist association, the Mizoram Journalists' Association (MJA), which, according to its general report from 2020, claimed 192 members.

For a single newspaper, access to all the geographical parts of the state is difficult due to the hilly terrains. Except for a few newspapers like *Vanglaini* and *The Aizawl Post*, most of the daily newspapers of each District of the State typically confine their circulation within their own District if not their town or city. The price of the newspapers varies with the size of the newspaper and ranges from Rs. 2.80 to Rs 8 per copy.

Based on the circulation figures claimed by the newspapers, the newspapers in Mizoram are classified as small newspapers. The circulation figures of 95 different daily newspapers in Mizoram range from 200 to 20000 copies per publishing day in 2021. The highest circulated monthly newspaper in Mizoram, *Synod*, has a circulation of 1,50,000 copies (*Press in India*, 2021). The daily newspapers, save a few exceptions, of each administrative District of the State typically confine their circulation within their District, if not their town or city. The circulation of the newspapers in Mizoram is low compared to its high literacy rate. The newspapers have not grown in terms of circulation and the growth of any newspaper is often measured by its circulation. Circulation for a newspaper business is the basic

determinant of profit, though newspapers cannot survive out of the sales revenue of the copies sold. The newspaper mainly sustains on advertisement revenue. But the determinant of advertising revenue is again the newspaper and its acceptance by the customers. The more the circulation, the more advertisers prefer to buy space in them so that their message can reach more people. The more the circulation the paper enjoys, the more it charges its advertisers (Jyoti Kumar, 2003).

Newspapers compete in two connected markets. They compete with one another for consumers' attention while also competing for advertisers. In addition, newspapers face major competition from other media such as Television, Radio, magazines, and the internet. Within the industry, the competition is mostly confined within the administrative Districts as circulations are limited within the Districts, if not towns or cities. National newspapers do not pose a threat for the local newspapers as the former's circulation is mainly to the government officials. Competition also exists from weekly or monthly news bulletins of various non-government organisations, different church denominations and several trade or sports associations. Competition for newspapers also come in the form of alternate sources of gaining information and entertainment, namely, magazines, television, radio, the internet, or over-the-top (OTT) video streaming services. Within Mizoram, television news sources are mainly *Doordarshan* (TV channel owned by the Government of India), local cable TV channels of *LPS* and *ZONET* and regional, national and international news programmes. Radio news sources broadcast within Mizoram are *All India Radio AIR Aizawl 100.1 FM*, *All India Radio North Eastern Service 100.7 FM*, and *Red 93.5 FM*. (Prasar Bharati, 2022). Competition also arises from the internet and social media platforms, including *Instagram*, *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *TikTok*, *Snapchat* and so on. News consumption habits are evolving and readers are choosing to connect via mobile and other web based platforms. News is still valuable, but how we find it has changed.

CHAPTER-3

MARKETING STRATEGIES OF SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

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CHAPTER-3

MARKETING STRATEGIES OF SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

The main aim of this chapter is to examine the importance of marketing strategies in the newspaper industry. This chapter attempts to identify the marketing strategies of select newspapers in Mizoram in terms of their product, pricing, placing and promotion decisions.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Marketing is about changing beliefs in the minds of customers. It is persuading customers to believe that your products and services are important, and that they deliver a better value than the competition. Smart companies see marketing as an investment. That is because the marketing function may be the most critical in any organization (Nelson, 2016).

Marketing is the process by which companies engage customers, build strong relationships, and create customer value in order to capture value from customers in return. Marketing must be understood not in the previous viewpoint of making a sale but rather in the contemporary sense of satisfying customer needs. Thus, marketing is engaging customers and managing profitable customer relationship (Kotler, 2018). The American Marketing Association (2017) defines Marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.”

Customer engagement, value, and relationships are at the centre of marketing strategy and programmes. Companies intentionally design an integrated marketing mix, which is the set of tactical marketing tools – product, price, place and promotion - that the firm blends to produce the response it desires in the target market. It consists of everything the firm can do to engage consumers and deliver customer

value. The many possibilities can be delineated into four groups of variables – product, price, place and promotion (Kotler et al., 2018). Product refers to the combination of goods and services offered to the target market. Price is the amount of money customers must pay to obtain the product. Place includes company activities that make the product available to target consumers. Promotion refers to activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it. These elements are blended in a way an organisation can satisfy the needs and wants of the market. The success of a company depends profoundly on the efficient management of these strategically important elements.

Each firm strives to build up such a composition of 4Ps which will create the highest level of consumer satisfaction and meet organisational objectives. The marketing mix is assembled keeping in mind the needs of target customers, and thus varies from one to another depending upon available resources and marketing objectives. As the needs of the customers and the environmental factors change; the marketing mix must be adjusted accordingly (Jain & Singhal, 2018).

3.2 MARKETING STRATEGIES OF NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

Newspapers compete not only for readership or audience but also for advertisers, who in turn are attracted by the possibility of reaching potential consumers. Hence, the newspaper industry is a two-sided market: besides the readers market there is also a market for advertising space, and the two are closely linked by inter-market network externalities. In other words, the willingness-to-pay of advertisers depends on the size (and sometimes on the composition) of the readership; readers' demand might also be a function of the amount of advertising (Argentesi & Filistrucchi, 2007). For newspaper organizations, marketing accomplishes three important and interrelated functions: (1) to identify and create, distribute, and promote their products and services to answer to the informational, educational, and entertainment needs of their audiences; (2) to market their products and services to advertisers and third parties; and (3) to increase brand awareness and develop strategies to promote organizational growth. Newspapers deal with information and have a duty to present accurate, factual, and balanced reporting and analysis of news events to its audience.

Marketing, on the other hand, and especially the “promotion” component, deals with persuasion, with the need and duty to generate or increase brand awareness and brand recognition, increase product or service recognition and demand, and ultimately increase sales. Journalism at its roots is descriptive, marketing is persuasive. Information has become a commodity requiring effective packaging to be attractive to its intended audience. Today, content must resonate with audience needs and values. Given the quest for earnings, newspapers cannot survive without marketing. In addition, newspaper organizations make a significant portion of their revenues not only by selling information to readers, but by selling audiences to advertisers. Thus, as newspapers compete for customers for their advertising time or space, they must provide a news product which must be tailored to the needs of the business (advertising) audience, with a competitive price structure, and adequately promoted (Sterling, 2009).

While a newspaper can be viewed as a disposable manufactured product, its inherent value lies in the services embedded within the product rather than the physical product itself. Although the two fundamental services that newspapers provide – information and medium for advertising - arrive simultaneously on the readers’ doorstep in the same manufactured bundle, those service businesses have their own dynamics (Ashford, 1991).

Both journalists and marketing practitioners use media channels to deliver information to their audiences. This proximity, combined with the need for media organizations to actively compete in the marketplace, has blurred to some extent the differences between marketing and journalism yet at the same time, has diversified and modernized both fields. Marketing forces continuously shape the journalist's world as the consumer's need for news and informational channels dynamically change. In an era of troubled media and general economics, marketing becomes even more important. In order to respond to the demand of increased competition among traditional and newer news outlets, newspapers apply marketing principles not only to promote their products, but to the basic core of how news and editorial content is written and collated. The trend at the beginning of the twenty-first century is changing from “delivering information” to “making information resonate with the

audience,” or packaging news to best meet the needs and values of advertisers and consumers (Sterling, 2009). Marketing is the customer-oriented process of creating, pricing, distributing, and promoting goods or services. Hence, implementing modern principles of marketing in the daily activities of newspapers can increase the quality of newspapers and appeal of reporting and editorial content.

3.2.1 Product

A product is defined as a bundle of attributes (features, functions, benefits, and uses) capable of exchange or use, and usually a mix of tangible and intangible forms (American Marketing Association, 2017). The goal of a business is to create products with value for consumers. For a newspaper organisation, the product is the newspaper itself. A newspaper's role is to discover novel information on matters of public interest and to relay it as quickly and as accurately as possible to readers in an honest and balanced way (Randall, 2007). Newspapers are innately perishable and in spite of its short life span must be capable of delivering value to the consumers. The product of a newspaper organisation comprises of not just the physical newsprint but the content of the newspaper. Information is the main element of a newspaper and the nature of information emphasized is determined by the target market.

The information provided by newspapers are commonly categorized as local news, regional news, State news, national news, international news, business news, sports news, entertainment and advertisements. In order to capture the maximum market, newspaper organisations try to develop their products as per the taste of their subscribers (Padmaja, 2008). The newspaper, as a product, has a special characteristic – the same product is sold to two different groups of users, namely readers and advertisers. It sells news and views to one group i.e., the readers, and sells space to the other group i.e., the advertisers. Newspaper differs from other consumer products as it has an all-round impact – social, political, economic and cultural, on the ultimate user of the product. Where most consumer products cannot be used without possessing them, one can read a newspaper without buying it. As such, newspapers are capable of creating time and place utilities devoid of possession utility. Readership, whether paid or unpaid, creates an increased awareness of the

product thereby increasing sales and providing a basis to attract more advertising revenue through space selling. Newspapers are classified as convenience goods in respect of the buying behaviour of consumers. However, in reality, it appears the newspaper is nearer to specialty goods owing to the brand loyalties it creates. Brand loyalties are irrationally strong in the newspaper market. They are purchased through an unwritten psychological contract for longer periods than what they appear to be. In India, about ninety per cent of newspaper sales are against one month unwritten contracts since they are supplied customarily on credit for a month. But trade practice proves most of the customers continue for at least a few years. Such loyalties and such contracts are not experienced with other products (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). Hence, the product element of the marketing mix in the newspaper industry is a significant basis for success.

In today's highly competitive digital era for the media industry, migration to online sources is inevitable although print media has not become obsolete. Print media alone is not effective and hence is unable to retain the consumers. The integration of print media marketing with digital and social media marketing is necessary to deliver news to the consumers (Mathai & Jaswani, 2021). A major driving factor for the online news industry is the consumers themselves. The classic prime target of print news, primarily male, is no longer the main consumer of online news. Older people and younger people of both genders are now regular users of online news. Younger people, who have grown up with the internet, are used to free content and are very price-conscious (Van der Beek et al., 2005). The rise of mobile phones as the overwhelming platform for digital news consumption continues, with 4G and 5G easing the consumption of content. News content use on desktop is declining as audiences shift to mobile, and mobile increasingly is the primary news consumption device (WAN-IFRA, 2020-2021).

The initial design of online news sites was heavily inspired by the design of printed newspapers. News sites were conceived as 'electronic newspapers' or 'digital newspapers' but today they can be seen as a genre of their own with special design and content elements (Eriksen & Ihlström, 2000). These elements include a move from print to multi-media as the news is not only presented as text but as audio and

video as well. News is only a part of many other services at the news sites. There is interaction among the users/readers who debate and chat at the sites. Games, crosswords, and even support online shopping are increasingly common on newspaper websites (Palmer and Eriksen 2000). The conceptual foundations of the digital news product take the best of paper, broadcast and digital documents, providing significant coverage of a local area, strong descriptions and articles covering national and international news with specific viewpoints, and the ability to support local, national and international merchants through advertising. The immediacy of information provision and the availability of multi-media enable the digital news product to be responsive to readers in a way that the time constraints of publishing a paper version do not. The digital news product also provides the ability to search for archival data and the ability to navigate the content in a customized way for each potential user. Archiving and indexing provides access to earlier editions and historical sources. One of the newspaper's most valuable assets is its trademark and reputation. The readers trust the newspaper to have an honest approach to both news and related offerings (Ihlström & Palmer, 2002).

3.2.2 Pricing

Price is the amount a customer must pay to acquire a product (American Marketing Association, 2017). It is the sum of all the values that customers give up to gain the benefits of having or using a product or service. Even though non-price factors have gained increasing importance, price has been the major factor affecting buyer choice (Kotler et al., 2018). Newspaper is the only tangible product which is sold at a significantly lower price than the cost of production. The newspaper industry is a peculiar one in which one group, namely the advertisers subsidises another group namely the readers (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). Amidst rapid inflation, newspaper prices tend to remain relatively constant as consumers are sensitive to price. The pricing decision is crucial for a newspaper since the proportion of revenue derived from sales is substantial. Even though the newspaper can affect its revenue by adjusting its advertising rates or quality, advertising is crucially dependent on circulation and so on the price of the newspaper (Fisher & Konieczny, 2006). Since the demand for advertising space rises with increases in circulation and the circulation demand rises

with increases in the quantity of advertising, pricing decisions become complicated (Blair & Romano, 1993). Newspapers have been extremely reluctant to charge readers a higher price for their daily read despite rising costs. Newspapers make a marginal loss on every copy sold because the reader pays less than what it costs to produce, print and deliver each copy. This deficit is offset by advertising (Guha, 2019). Newspapers often have to apply predatory pricing regardless of the cost of production due to competitive price struggle in the industry. Otherwise, newspapers cannot retain readership and circulation levels (Padmaja, 2008). On the other hand, an advantage of the newspaper industry is that firms set two prices: one for subscriptions, and another for advertisements, that are markedly different as regards the importance of switching costs. The cost of switching to another newspaper is high for subscribers and low for advertisers. The average buyer of advertising space is much less attached to a particular newspaper than the average subscriber. This is deduced by the ease with which buyers of advertising can change advertising channels in response to a change in the cost of reaching consumers. Readers, on the other hand, grow accustomed to a newspaper's content and style, and are therefore less willing to switch due to a modest increase in the subscription price (Asplund et al., 2005). As part of a company's overall proposition, price plays a key role in creating customer value and building customer relationships. It must be embraced as an important competitive asset. Price decisions must be coordinated with product design, distribution, and promotion decisions to form a consistent marketing programme (Kotler et al., 2018).

The traditional print media has two major foci – news and advertising. Newspaper revenue comes primarily from individual or corporate subscribers; and from sales of advertising space. Despite the declines in print advertising and on-going challenges with digital advertising globally, advertising is still the single most important source of income, followed by subscriptions. In 2020, publishers worldwide were earning about 82 per cent of their total revenue from print, and that revenue will prove vital for publishers pivoting or continuing to transition to a more digitally-focused business (WAN-IFRA, 2020-2021). The contribution of digital subscription revenue and digital advertising revenue to the newspaper organisation is increasing. With

internet users and digital news consumption increasing over the years, the pricing decision of online news has become an important marketing decision. As mentioned in Chapter-1, in order to generate additional revenue for newspapers, paywalls have become a popular model for online news and newspapers are charging subscription fees for their online news content. *Mint*, the financial newspaper published by the Hindustan Times Group had the highest annual subscription fees of about Rs. 2,949 as of November, 2022 (*Mint*, 2022). The *Times of India*, an English daily newspaper with the highest readership among English dailies according to IRS, 2019, charges annual online subscription fees of Rs. 599 as of November, 2022 (*Times of India*, 2022).

3.2.3 Placing

Place refers to the act of marketing and carrying products to consumers. It is also used to describe the extent of market coverage for a given product (American Marketing Association, 2017). Placing involves activities that make products available to customers when and where they want to purchase them. Traditional marketing models describe the exchange and distribution process in terms of movement through supply chains, distribution channels, logistics organization, transportation networks, inventories, retail outlets, delivery systems, intermediaries and agents for assortment, conveyance, consignment, and shipment. But the exchanges that occur in the marketing system nowadays are much more than just a process of delivery, distribution, or logistics, and moving things from place to place. One reason why it is more than about transport and logistics is due to the fact that customers place great importance on where products originate. The “place of origin” label can provide a form of quality assurance for buyers and this may apply to raw materials, manufacturer, and is particularly influential for agricultural produce. Another reason why distribution is much more than about the delivery of goods and services is because choosing which channels of distribution to operate in is such a major decision in the formulation of marketing strategy. This is particularly crucial nowadays as the range of traditional, social, and online retail options have expanded enormously (Stewart & Saren, 2014).

Newspaper distribution consists of sending newspapers to a distribution centre or drop-off points or to retailers and customers. Several distinctive features make the newspaper industry stand out from other industries. The strict delivery deadline and zero inventories lead to a very short time frame for production and distribution. There is pressure from the newsroom to encourage the start of production as delayed as possible in order to include the most news, while there is pressure from production and distribution to start production as early as possible. Consequently production and outbound distribution are intimately linked and should be coordinated in order to achieve the objective of on-time delivery performance at minimum total cost. (Furnes et al., 2014). Regarding the channel of distribution for newspapers, the middlemen between the publishers and the subscribers are the distribution agents. Convenient distribution points and good relationships with the distribution agents can pave a way for increased sales. The distribution process for a printed newspaper is unique in that the subscribers expect their product to be delivered at their doorsteps daily. It has become a prerequisite for the distribution agents to remember the newspaper preferences of the subscribers. Time is of the essence in newspaper distribution as newspapers are highly perishable to both the publisher and the subscriber. This necessitates proper and timely delivery of newspapers to retain subscribers (Padmaja, 2018). Newspapers are classified as perishable goods, which is a product that either loses its significant value if stored or will cause economic loss if delivered late. Late delivery of a newspaper may result in the loss of a customer. Newspaper companies cannot print the news section of the newspaper in advance because of the requirement of the news be timely (Hurter & Buer, 1996). Reverse logistics is also not possible for newspapers as old newspapers are no longer useful to both the publishers and subscribers except for recycling. Since most readers do not have direct contact with publishers, the distribution agents represent the publishers. And vice-versa, the distribution agents represent the readers to the publishers.

The popularity of online news provision has increased rapidly, as people's hunger for the very latest information continues to grow. In the print world, the creation of news is the work of journalists and authors, while in the online world content providers work alongside journalists and authors on news creation. Value in the traditional

media market is delivered by newspapers and magazines and, although these companies also have an online offering, new value adding players such as info-brokers are emerging. Traditionally, the finished content was delivered by retailers, whereas on the internet many news aggregators have taken over the distribution of digital content to the end consumer. The value chain of the online news suppliers is identical, regardless of whether they originate from the print/electronic media groups, or whether they are entirely internet-based. On the internet, all these groups compete directly with one another because all of them offer content. Media companies have moved quickly to make use of the internet as an alternative distribution channel, but online news is an entirely different business from offline news, with different needs: not only does it require a relatively sophisticated technology infrastructure, but also a new way of reporting information. Both these requirements lead to increased costs for the provider but, since the internet consumer is used to free information, generating revenue is both difficult and pressing (Van der Beek et al., 2005).

According to India Digital News Report, 2019, consumers with internet access are embracing a mobile-first, platform-dominated media environment with search engines, social media, and messaging applications playing a key role in how people access and use news. *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* are particularly widely used, with 75 per cent of consumers using *Facebook* (52% use it to get news), and 82% using *WhatsApp* (52% use it to get news). Other social media widely used for news include *Instagram* (26%), *Twitter* (18%), and *Facebook Messenger* (16%).

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way news organisations worked and will work in the future. The pandemic necessitated innovation in delivering news to the consumers and digital technology became the saving grace for newspaper organisations. According to World Press Trends Report in 2021, globally, the overall decline in revenue due to the pandemic was 11 per cent in 2020. However, digital reader revenue and digital readership continued to increase significantly – up nearly 27% and 36%, respectively in 2020 – as audiences’ seek quality journalism amid an uncertain time rife with misinformation and distrust. Publishers now lean into digital subscriptions and audiences-first strategies as pillars of a sustainable future. If

publishers have been muddling their way through a long-term digital transformation strategy, the shock waves of the pandemic have put those plans into overdrive. Accelerating digital transformation strategy has become the overwhelming top priority for most publishers. Executives from organisations that have a strong culture of innovation are reporting greater digital audiences and higher profits and are more optimistic about their firm's prospect to fully recover from the coronavirus pandemic in the future (WAN-IFRA, 2020-2021). In India, COVID-19 gave a decisive push to a transition that has accelerated ever since the advent of *Jio*, an internet service provider, in 2007. The entry of *Jio* and other competing internet service providers significantly widened the universe of internet users and moved a generation of news consumers from the broadsheet to the smart phone (Ninan, 2021).

3.2.4 Promotion

Promotion is one of the action areas of marketing, expressed through a set of activities and means of informing and attracting potential buyers to points of sale in order to meet their needs and desires and, implicitly, to increase the economic efficiency of the activity of the producing entity (Alexandrescu & Milandru, 2018). Building good customer relationships calls for more than just developing a good product, pricing it attractively, and making it available to target customers. Companies must also engage customers and communicate their value propositions to customers. Marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers – directly or indirectly – about the products and brands they sell. A company can promote its product through eight major modes of communications – advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth marketing and personal selling. These communicating channels may be personal and non-personal and within each are many sub-channels (Kotler et al., 2013).

For a newspaper organization, the promotion process would be to capture an idea or a fact that will help to sell the newspaper in the broadest sense of the word, and to put the idea into effect or to capitalize upon the fact. It is the function of promotion to increase the sales of the newspaper, including both circulation and advertising; this

may be accomplished either directly or indirectly. A direct campaign may be launched with the purpose of obtaining more subscribers, selling more newspapers, or increasing the sale of advertising space. The indirect campaign will find expression in good will or institutional promotion calculated to produce favourable attention and publicity for the newspaper.

Promotional effort takes one of two forms: (1) that aimed at the reader; (2) that directed at the distribution agents of the newspaper. The tools used may range from merchandize prizes, premiums, discounts, editorial promotion, advertising, instituting awards, sponsoring events and word-of-mouth. Newspaper is a medium that promotes other business, and it may seem to not need promotion itself. However, with changing marketing scenario, it is imperative to opt for aggressive promotional activities (Padmaja, 2008). Promotional efforts are also necessary for promoting the advertising spaces in the newspaper as newspapers rely heavily on advertising support. Advertising space is not a homogeneous commodity but something whose value (to the well-informed buyers in the advertising agencies) depends on the characteristics of a newspaper's readership (Thompson, 1989). Negotiations between seller and buyer of advertising space mean that the actual rates paid can be very different from the published rates. Newspapers with high income readership are generally able to charge more per copy than those whose readers are mainly working class or elderly. Many advertisers are prepared to pay a premium to reach a relatively small number of readers who are likely to have high disposable incomes of their own and who may also be in charge of corporate budgets (Franklin, 2008).

Digital media offers vast opportunities to the newspapers in terms of attracting digital readers. The internet could be exploited commercially with sufficient imagination and investment. Readers are more likely to trust newspapers than other sources (Myers 2006) and online newspapers will provide a valued complement to print versions, offering additional opportunities for advertising in both display and classified forms and making an important contribution to integrated campaigns across different media. By once more reinventing themselves, newspapers can hope to earn the necessary revenue to ensure the survival of their journalism; however it is delivered (Franklin, 2008).

Indian publishers have offered online news and invested in their websites since the 1990s, even though internet access initially grew slowly in India. In recent years, the explosive expansion of especially mobile web access and signs of stagnation or even decline in print readership and advertising have led to increased investment in better websites, the recruitment of digital journalists and developers, new social media and mobile strategies, the creation and launch of apps, and experimentation with new and emerging technologies (Aneez et al., 2016).

According to India Digital News Report, 2019, many Indian publishers are investing in social media teams to reach online audiences through these intermediaries, which in turn simultaneously help them increase their reach. *Facebook* is identified as a site used for news by almost three times as many respondents as *Twitter*, but despite its much smaller user base and the fact that it generates less website traffic and engagement, *Twitter* is still an important platform for breaking news. While search engines and social media are increasingly important gateways to online news across the world, the use of messaging applications like *WhatsApp* and their role in the discovery of news vary widely from country to country. In India, 82 per cent use the messaging application, and 52 per cent reported getting news on *WhatsApp*. The ease of transferring multimedia content to large private groups makes *WhatsApp* unique among other social media platforms.

3.3 MARKETING STRATEGIES OF SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

The marketing tools adopted and the integrated marketing strategy of the select newspapers viz. *Vanglaini*, *The Aizawl Post*, *The Zozam Times*, *The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander* (see *Appendix IV* for images of select newspapers) are enumerated below. A noteworthy feature of the State of Mizoram is the low population level and the high number of publications in the State. The total population of Mizoram as per 2011 census was 10,97,206 and the projected population in 2022 by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is 12, 27,000.

3.3.1 Marketing Strategies of *Vanglaini* Newspaper

The mission of *Vanglaini* is to provide credible and quality news to the public, to enable the public to enhance their knowledge and to obtain the trust of the public. *Vanglaini* was registered with RNI in 1979 with the registration number of 34227/79 and is also empaneled with the CBC.

3.3.1.1 Product

Established in 1978 as a weekly, *Vanglaini* initially positioned itself as a Mizo language newspaper for the youth, emphasizing on music, sports and entertainment. With its publication centre located in Aizawl city, it became a daily newspaper in 1984. A pioneer in using broadsheet newsprint in the Mizoram newspaper industry, the paper has witnessed exceptional growth over the decades. Created as a partnership between Mr. Tluangtea Hnamte and Mr. Vanneihluanga, *Vanglaini* began with an initial circulation of merely 1000 cyclostyle printed copies. When the partnership was converted into an individual ownership in 1984 and the newspaper handed over to the current publisher and editor, Mr Sapdanga, *Vanglaini* began using a letter press printing technique. In 2001, the newspaper size was upgraded from newsletter to a four page black and white broadsheet size. This was a critical change in the product design of the newspaper as it distinguished the paper from other newspapers in Mizoram and gave it a distinct competitive advantage. In 2005, *Vanglaini* made additional changes to its product and the number of pages was increased to eight pages with two pages in colour. A further upgrade was made in 2013, with an increase to twelve pages of which four pages were in colour. The increase in the number of pages was made with a goal to widen its market and increase circulation. *Vanglaini* gives importance to the quality of newsprint and has not sacrificed its quality amidst increase in price of newsprint over the years. Newsprint, as it is not manufactured locally, is purchased from the state of Punjab. An estimated amount of ten quintals of newsprint is used per publishing day. The general layout of the newspaper is simple, concise and informative. Considering the target audience of *Vanglaini* being Mizo speaking residents of Mizoram, the newspaper caters to the local news requirement of the readers by giving it detailed

importance. *Vanglaini* has had an online presence since 2015 with its own website that provides news updates and additional services. It also has an active social media presence. It is the only newspaper in Mizoram to have an android application or *App* downloadable from *Google Play* in which a digitised version of the newspaper can be read with a subscription fee.

Circulation is an index not only of the influence of a newspaper but of its value as a going concern. *Vanglaini* has managed to maintain a stable circulation number and retain its consumers. Claimed circulation of *Vanglaini* during 2011 to 2022 is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Circulation of *Vanglaini* during 2011-22

Year	Number of copies (approx.)
2011	35,000
2012	37,000
2013	40,000
2014	40,000
2015	45,000
2016	45,000
2017	43,000
2018	41,000
2019	40,000
2020	20,000
2021	20,000
2022	35,000

Note: Based on office records.

The circulation of *Vanglaini* increased gradually from 2011 to 2016. It began declining from 2017, which further plummeted due to the Covid-19 pandemic similar to newspapers all over the world. It has, however, been recovering well as of 2022.

The page layout of the twelve pages of *Vanglaini* is as follows as of 2022 in August:

1. Page 1: The front page is in colour with three-fourths of the page providing State and local news. A small column on the left side is devoted daily for community service especially of voluntary blood donation. This is a conscientious effort of the

newspaper to promote social involvement. The rest of the page is assigned to advertisements.

2. Page 2: The second page consists of entirely State and local news.
3. Page 3: The third page is in colour and consists of entertainment news. It also consists of crossword puzzles and Sudoku and a general knowledge section.
4. Page 4: Half of the fourth page consists of national news and the other half consists of regional news, i.e., North East news.
5. Page 5: The fifth page consists of classified ads and display ads. One-fourth of the page is in memoriam ad.
6. Page 6: The sixth page consists of editorial, featured articles and opinion articles.
7. Page 7: The seventh page consists of advertisements, one fourth of which is government notifications.
8. Page 8: Half of the eighth page consists of international news and the other half consists of column article.
9. Page 9: The ninth page consists of advertisements and government tenders.
10. Page 10- 12: The three pages from page 10 to page 12 are devoted to sports news. Page 10 and page 12 are in colour. The sports news consists of international, national, state and local sports news. To promote sports among the Mizo youth, special acknowledgements are given to Mizo sportspersons who have achieved success in their discipline.

3.3.1.2 Pricing

The price of a newspaper, like all other consumer products, is affected by various factors. Major factors are the competitor's pricing policy and the customers' perceived value of the product. *Vanlainsi* adopted a competitor based pricing where it sets its price based on competitor's prices. It set the price at Rs 150 from 2013 to 2021, at par as its main competitors *The Aizawl Post* and *The Zozam Times*. This price was set even though *Vanlainsi* is the only newspaper with a twelve page

publication and its main competitors have an eight page publication. It also considers the customers perceived value of the newspaper and the willingness of the subscribers to pay a certain amount for the newspaper. A unique element in the price charged by *Vanlaine* is a decade of identical prices. The newspaper has managed to charge a monthly subscription fee of Rs. 150 from 2013 to 2021. Prior to 2013, the price charged was Rs. 100. The price was increased to Rs 200 in April, 2022. This was a critical change to the pricing strategy. It abandoned the competitor based pricing and moved to cost based pricing. *Vanlaine* currently charges the highest price for a Mizo language daily newspaper. However, it has the highest number of pages among the local newspapers and considers the added value a sufficient compensation for the price charged. The underlying reason for the price rise is to cover, at least part of, the production cost of producing a twelve page newspaper. Its main competitors, *The Aizawl Post* and *The Zozam Times* continue to publish an eight page newspaper. The changes in the product design in 2013 necessitated an increase in price. Prior to this, the price of the newspaper had remained at Rs. 100 for many years. The increase in number of pages from eight to twelve and the subsequent change in price in 2013 did not have a detrimental effect on the circulation number of the newspaper. In fact, it brought about the increase in price of the main competitors of *Vanlaine*, even without changes in their number of pages. Subscription fees and advertising has a balanced contribution to the total revenue of the newspaper. Subscription fees are collected from the subscribers by the distribution agents and the average time required to complete collection of the fees is 15 days. The average number of advertisements published per day stands at fifty. And the cost of advertising is Rs. 130 per column centimetre.

3.3.1.3 Placing

Vanlaine is distributed to all the eleven Districts of Mizoram. The newspaper organisation delivers the newspaper to the respective distributors through four main distribution centres and the distributors take the responsibility of delivering the newspaper to the final consumer. The number of distributors in the Districts is as follows:

Table 3.2 – Number of *Vanglaini* distributors in Districts of Mizoram in 2022

Sl. No.	District	Number of distributors
1	Aizawl	150
2	Lunglei	10
3	Siaha	3
4	Champhai	4
5	Kolasib	3
6	Serchhip	2
7	Mamit	1
8	Lawngtlai	1
9	Hnahthial	1
10	Saitual	1
11	Khawzawl	1
Total		177

Note: Based on office records.

Vanglaini distributes throughout the state with 150 distributors in the capital District of Aizawl and 27 distributors for the remaining Districts. The mode of delivery of *Vanglaini* to the distributors is a blended mode of using own vehicle and hiring vehicle. Delivery to the distributors, including outside the publication centre of Aizawl city, is not delayed and delivered on the publishing day itself. The distributors receive 26 per cent of the subscription fee as their commission. As circulation is subscription based, there is no return policy of unsold copies.

3.3.1.4 Promotion

Vanglaini in addition to advertising itself in its newspaper conducts various promotional activities through television, social media, sponsorships, awards, discussion forums and so on. Its website *Vanglaini.org* provides the latest news updates, and it has social media presence in *Facebook* with more than 46,000 followers, *Instagram* with nearly 40,000 followers and *Twitter* with more than 34,000 followers. The organisation gives a tri-annual award that carries Rs. two lakhs, ‘Mizo Award’, to honour courageous Mizo individual or group in recognition of their accomplishments in their respective field. The newspaper holds an annual discussion platform, *Zoram Titi*, which brings together an array of distinguished academicians, entrepreneurs, politicians, activists, and current and former government officials. Another event that presents dialogues on selected themes by

prominent leaders, Varsity Platform, is organised by *Vanglaini* in collaboration with Mizoram University's Discussion Forum Club. *Vanglaini* has also sponsored sports events such as the football Mizoram Premier League and several other local level sports events. The newspaper, as a part of its public relations, regularly provides the State traffic policemen with uniform accessories, makes annual donation to orphanages and performs other philanthropic deeds. *Vanglaini* has a strong digital media presence through its website, mobile application and social networking sites. Its dedication to the Mizo society is evident from its allocation of two per cent of profits for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure. Consistent emphasis on editorial and credibility has also led to the successful word-of-mouth influence.

As a market leader, *Vanglaini* is considered to have a stable footing in the Mizo society and is a well-established player of the newspaper industry. It has been trying to adapt to changes in the marketing environment.

3.3.2 Marketing Strategies of *The Aizawl Post* Newspaper

The Aizawl Post has been registered with the RNI since 2003 with the registration number MIZMIZ/2003/12043 and is also empaneled with the CBC.

3.3.2.1 Product

Established in 2002 under an individual ownership of publisher Mr. C. Lalrambuatsaiha, *The Aizawl Post* is a daily Mizo language newspaper with circulation within Mizoram. The publication centre is based in the capital city, Aizawl. It began publishing with offset printing technique and is currently an eight page broadsheet size newspaper. With an initial circulation of 2000 copies, the newspaper has reached a circulation of 13,000 copies. Newsprint is purchased from Sapphire Papers Mill Private Ltd., West Bengal. *The Aizawl Post* has its own website and a strong social media presence on *Facebook*. The claimed circulation of *The Aizawl Post* during 2011 to 2022 is given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 - Circulation of *The Aizawl Post* during 2011-22

Year	Number of copies (approx.)
2011	8,000
2012	9,000
2013	9,000
2014	10,000
2015	11,000
2016	12,000
2017	13,000
2018	13,000
2019	13,000
2020	13,000
2021	12,000
2022	15,000

Note: Based on office records.

The circulation of *The Aizawl Post* increased annually from 2011 to 2017; however, it remained constant until 2020. The managers opined that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the circulation of the newspaper in 2021. It has, however, recovered in 2022.

The page layout of the eight pages of *The Aizawl Post* is as follows:

1. Page 1: The front page is in colour with four-fifths of the page providing State news. A small column on the right side is assigned for short news and information. A small column on the right side of the page is reserved for the daily weather forecast. A small column on the top left corner of the page is assigned to advertisements.
2. Page 2: Three-fourth of the second page consists of State and local news. One-fourth of the page is dedicated to crossword puzzle and Sudoku games.
3. Page 3: The third page consists of classified ads and display ads, one fourth of which is government notifications.
4. Page 4: Half of the fourth page consists of national news and the other half consists of international news.
5. Page 5: The fifth page consists of editorial and opinion articles.

6. Page 6 and 7: The sixth and seventh page consists of sports news.
7. Page 8: The eighth page is in colour and is devoted to entertainment news with youth as the target audience.

3.3.2.2 Pricing

The price of *The Aizawl Post* is Rs. 150 per month. It has remained at this price since 2013 when it was increased from Rs. 100. It follows competitor based pricing and its main competitors in terms of pricing are *Vanglaini* and *The Zozam Times*. The subscription price for the newspapers is collected by the distributors and the collection from the subscribers is completed in 15 to 20 days. Contributions to the total revenue of the newspaper are made through subscription fees (35%), advertising fees (60%) and sale of scrap paper (5%). The cost of advertising in the newspaper was Rs. 130 per column centimetre for black and white advertisements and Rs. 500 per column centimetre for coloured advertisements as in March 2022.

3.3.2.3 Placing

The Aizawl Post is circulated throughout the state of Mizoram with its main circulation the capital city, Aizawl. The newspaper is distributed to two main distribution points in the city. The numbers of distributors in the Districts are given in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 – Number of *The Aizawl Post* Distributors in Districts of Mizoram in 2022

Sl. No.	District	Number of distributors
1	Aizawl	200
2	Lunglei	1
3	Siaha	1
4	Champhai	1
5	Kolasib	1
6	Serchhip	1
7	Mamit	1
8	Lawngtlai	1
9	Hnahthial	1
10	Saitual	1
11	Khawzawl	1
Total		210

Note: Based on office records.

The Aizawl Post employs 200 distributors within Aizawl District and 10 distributors for the rest of the Districts combined. The newspaper organisation delivers to the distribution points and the distributors delivers directly to the subscribers. Distribution to the Districts outside the publication centre is made on the publishing day itself, by use of hired vehicles. Unsold copies, if any, are sold as scrap paper.

3.3.2.4 Promotion

The Aizawl Post does not conduct any direct promotional activity. It has social media presence only in *Facebook* with more than 28,000 followers. To subscribe to a newspaper, the potential customer usually has to find a distributor of the area through a friend, family or an acquaintance. This process could be made more convenient for the customers if the newspaper had a simple process for inviting subscriptions.

The Aizawl Post has been in the Mizoram newspaper industry for twenty years and although its growth rate in terms of circulation is slow, it has been stable and rising. With improved marketing strategies, the newspaper has potential for higher growth of advertising and circulation revenue.

3.3.3 Marketing Strategies of *The Zozam Times* Newspaper

The Zozam Times has been registered with the RNI since 2006 with the registration number MIZMIZ/2006/16849 and is also empaneled with the CBC.

3.3.3.1 Product

Established in 2005, *The Zozam Times* is a Mizo language newspaper with its publication centre in the capital city, Aizawl. Owned by the publisher Mr. Tuikhuahtlanga, it uses offset printing technique and is currently an eight page broadsheet size newspaper. Prior to setting up its publication centre in Aizawl, the newspaper printed at Silchar to reduce cost of production. A notable point, *The Zozam Times* was the first Mizo language newspaper to print the first and eighth page in colour. The newsprint used is obtained from Guwahati, Assam. The claimed circulation of *The Zozam Times* during 2011-22 is given in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 - Circulation of *The Zozam Times* during 2011-22

Year	Number of copies (approx.)
2011	7,000
2012	7,000
2013	10,000
2014	10,000
2015	11,000
2016	12,000
2017	12,000
2018	12,000
2019	13,000
2020	11,000
2021	12,000
2022	13,000

Note: Based on office records.

The Zozam Times had witnessed its circulation increasing from 2011-16. It remained constant till 2018 then witnessed another increase. The Covid-19 pandemic had a detrimental effect on its circulation from which it is recovering.

The page layout of the eight pages of *The Zozam Times* is as follows:

1. Page 1: The front page is in colour and consists of State and local news. A small section is allotted daily for weather forecast and exchange rate.
2. Page 2: The second page has the editorial on the left side of the page. One-third of the second page consists of regional news and the remaining space is local news.
3. Page 3: The third page consists of opinion articles.
4. Page 4: The fourth page consists of advertisements.
5. Page 5: The fifth page consists of national and international news.
6. Page 6: The sixth page consists of entertainment news for the youth.
7. Page 7: Three-fourths of the seventh page consists of sports news. The remaining one-fourth is devoted to kid's entertainment and games.
8. Page 8: The eighth page is in colour and consists of sports news.

3.3.3.2 Pricing

The price charged for *The Zozam Times* is Rs 150 per month. It follows competitor based pricing and has remained at this price since 2013 when it raised its price from Rs. 100. An exceptional occurrence between *Vanglaini*, *The Aizawl Post*, and *The Zozam Times* is that these three major Mizo language newspapers increased their price in 2013 through mutual agreement. This was orchestrated mainly to avoid public rejection of the price rise, and was made possible due to the goodwill among the newspaper organisations. The subscription fee of the newspaper is collected by the distributors and the collection from the subscribers is completed in 15 to 20 days. Contributions to the total revenue of the newspaper are made through subscription fees (30%) and advertising fees (70%). The cost of advertising in the newspaper was Rs. 130 per column centimetre for black and white advertisements and Rs. 500 per column centimetre for coloured advertisements as in March 2022.

3.3.3.3 Placing

Distribution of *The Zozam Times* is concentrated mainly in the capital city, Aizawl with a few copies distributed to other Districts of the State. Newspapers are delivered to the four main distribution points from where the distributors pick up and deliver to the subscribers. The distribution to the Districts outside the publication centre is made on the publishing day itself, through hired vehicles. Unsold copies, if any, are not returned to the organisation but disposed of by the distribution agents. Table 3.6 shows the number of *The Zozam Times* distributors in Districts of Mizoram.

Table 3.6 – Number of *The Zozam Times* Distributors in Districts of Mizoram in 2022

Sl. No.	District	Number of distributors
1	Aizawl	70
2	Lunglei	1
3	Siaha	1
4	Champhai	1
5	Kolasib	1
6	Serchhip	1
7	Mamit	1
8	Lawngtlai	1

9	Hnahthial	1
10	Saitual	1
11	Khawzawl	1
Total		81

Note: Based on office records.

The Zozam Times employs 70 distributors within Aizawl District and one each for the other ten Districts. The distributors collect the newspaper from the collection centres early in the morning and distributes to the subscribers before noon. The newspaper reaches the other Districts on the same day through hired vehicles.

3.3.3.4 Promotion

The Zozam Times does not conduct any direct promotional activities to boost circulation. Its website *thezozamtimes.in* provides latest news updates. It has social media presence, with regular updates in *Twitter* and irregular updates in *Facebook* where it has nearly 6000 followers. It has a relatively high number of followers in *Twitter* with more than 27,000 followers when compared to its print circulation of 13,000 in 2022. It relies on the distributors to obtain and retain customers. It depends, like most newspapers in the State, on word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth influence is the impact of the personal words and recommendations of trusted friends, family, associates, and other consumers on buying behaviour (Kotler et al., 2018).

3.3.4 Marketing Strategies of *The Mizoram Post* Newspaper

The Mizoram Post is an English language newspaper registered with the RNI since 2002 with the registration number MIZENG/2002/10461 and is also empaneled with the CBC.

3.3.4.1 Product

Established in 2003, *The Mizoram Post* is English language newspaper, individually owned and published by Mr. CVL Ruata. Mr. Hrangkhuaia Ralte was its first publisher and Mr. Nilotpol Choudhury its first editor. Since its inception, it has used offset printing technique. It is the only local newspaper that is printed in Silchar, a city located in the neighbouring State, Assam. Published daily, except on Sundays,

The Mizoram Post is an eight page newspaper with the front and back page coloured. It began publication with twelve pages and has reduced its number of pages to eight after the Covid-19 pandemic. Its main competitors, which are also English language daily newspapers and have local publication centres, are *Highlander* and *News Link*. The claimed circulation of *The Mizoram Post* during 2011 to 2022 is given in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 - Circulation of *The Mizoram Post* during 2011-22

Year	Number of copies (approx.)
2011	61,051
2012	65,468
2013	66,511
2014	71,333
2015	75,359
2016	78,053
2017	77,066
2018	77,170
2019	72,890
2020	33,452
2021	40,577
2022	44,259

Note: Based on office records.

The page layout of the eight pages of *The Mizoram Post* is as follows:

1. Page 1: The front page is in colour and consists of state, regional and national news.
2. Page 2: The second page is in colour and consists of the editorial and opinion articles.
3. Page 3: The third page consists of state news and advertisements
4. Page 4: The fourth page consists of national news
5. Page 5: The fifth page consists of international news.
6. Page 6: The coloured sixth page is named career post and is devoted to general knowledge

7. Page 7: The seventh page is named Employment post and is devoted to recruitment news in different areas, school news around the country and general employment news.
8. Page 8: The coloured eighth page consists of advertisements and sports news.

3.3.4.2 Pricing

The price of *The Mizoram Post* is Rs. 150 per month since 2020. Priced at Rs. 75 in 2003 when it began publication, it increased its price to Rs. 125 from 2011.

3.3.4.3 Placing

Distribution of *The Mizoram Post* is concentrated mainly in the capital city, Aizawl with a few copies distributed to other Districts of the State. The newspaper has one distribution centre in all the Districts of the State.

3.3.4.4 Promotion

The Mizoram Post does not employ any promotional activities. Its website *themizorampost.net* carries the digitised version of its print newspaper. It has a social media presence only in Facebook but with irregular updates.

3.3.5 Marketing Strategies of *Highlander* Newspaper

Highlander has been registered with the RNI in 1972 with the registration number of 24501/1972 and is also empaneled with the CBC.

3.3.5.1 Product

Highlander is one of the oldest daily newspapers and the oldest English language newspaper in Mizoram. Established in 1972 as a weekly English newspaper, it had its own printing press named Thangrum Press. The name of the Press is in honour of the benefactor of the treadle printing machine used, however, it was later renamed *Highlander* Press. It publishes daily except on Sunday. *Highlander* began with a circulation of 500 copies distributed within the state of Mizoram which soon increased to 2500 copies in a few years. The printing technology was upgraded to

offset printing in 1993. The claimed circulation of *Highlander* during 2011 to 2022 is given in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 - Circulation of *Highlander* during 2011-22

Year	Number of copies (approx.)
2011	25,000
2012	25,000
2013	25,000
2014	25,000
2015	30,000
2016	30,000
2017	30,000
2018	30,000
2019	30,000
2020	30,000
2021	30,000
2022	30,000

Note: Based on office records.

The page layout of the twelve pages of *Highlander* is as follows:

1. Page 1: The first page consists mainly of state news.
2. Page 2: The second page consists of international news.
3. Page 3: The third page consists of regional North East news.
4. Page 4 and 5: The fourth and fifth pages consist of national news.
5. Page 6: The sixth page consists of editorials, national and international news.
6. Page 7: The seventh page consists of national news and advertisements.
7. Page 8 and 9: The eighth and ninth pages details international sports news.
8. Page 10: The tenth page consists of international news and advertisements.
9. Page 11: The eleventh page consists of international entertainment news.
10. Page 12: The final page consists of regional news and advertisements.

3.3.4.2 Pricing

The price of *Highlander* is Rs. 150 per month. Its main sources of revenue are subscription and advertising fees.

3.3.4.3 Placing

Distribution of *Highlander* is confined within the city of Aizawl. In its initial years, the newspaper was distributed to various schools and institutions.

3.3.4.4 Promotion

Highlander does not employ any promotional activities for subscription. It relies on word-of-mouth influence and the general goodwill the newspaper carries for being the oldest English language newspaper in the State.

3.4 SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is the review and evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with a particular brand or company; an important part of developing marketing and promotion plans (Govoni, 2004). The strategy is historically credited to Albert Humphrey of Stanford University in the mid-1960s, but this attribution remains debatable. Some argue that Humphrey was inspired by the work of Harvard Business School economists, George Albert Smith Jr. and C. Roland Christensen based on their work from the early 1950s. There is no universally-accepted creator. Also known as the SWOT Matrix, it has achieved recognition as useful in differentiating and establishing a niche within the broader market. There are both internal and external considerations built into the tool. Strengths and weaknesses are internally-related. The former represent a facet of an organization/entity which lends it an advantage over the competition. The latter, being characteristic of that same entity, which leads to a relative disadvantage against the competition. Regarding externally-related, opportunities are realities in the greater environment that can be exploited to benefit the entity. While on the other hand, threats are realities in the greater environment, which might lead to problems for the entity (Teoli et al., 2022).

Thus, the overall evaluation of an organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is called SWOT analysis. It is a way of monitoring the external and

internal marketing environment (Kotler et al., 2013). When an organisation can recognize its core strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, it can lead to fresh perspectives and new ideas within a realistic concept. The objective of a SWOT analysis is to use the knowledge an organization has about its internal and external environments and to formulate its strategy accordingly (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015). SWOT analysis is a simple but powerful tool for sizing up an organization's resource capabilities and deficiencies, its market opportunities, and the external threats to its future (Thompson et al., 2007).

Strengths include internal capabilities, resources, and positive situational factors that may help an organisation serve its customers and achieve its objectives. Weaknesses include internal limitations and negative situational factors that may interfere with the organisation's performance. Opportunities are favourable factors or trends in the external environment that the company may be able to exploit to its advantage. And threats are unfavourable external factors or trends that may present challenges to performance (Kotler et al., 2018). Considering external and internal factors is essential in order to illuminate the environment in which the business operates, enabling better planning.

The newspaper should analyse its markets and marketing environment to find attractive opportunity and identify threats. It should analyse its strengths and weaknesses as well as current and possible marketing actions to determine which opportunities it can best pursue. The goal is to match the newspaper's strengths to attractive opportunities in the environment while simultaneously eliminating or overcoming the weaknesses and minimizing the threats. One of the key advantages of the SWOT process is that it promotes proactive thinking and planning rather than reactive decision making (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2011).

Therefore, it is attempted to apply and analyse SWOT in case of *Vanglaini* in the present study. This analysis is based on the secondary data collected, readership survey discussed in the previous chapter and also the observations of the researcher. The marketing and circulation performance of *Vanglaini* has been reflected in its market leadership among the newspapers in Mizoram. It has the highest circulation

among all the language newspapers in Mizoram. Furthermore, it is the only newspaper that extensively distributes throughout the state. The application of the SWOT analysis will enable the marketer to evolve better competitive strategies.

3.4.1 SWOT Analysis of *Vanglaini* Newspaper

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of *Vanglaini* newspaper may be identified as follows:

Strengths

- i. ***The largest circulated Mizo daily since 2000:*** The leading Mizo language newspaper – *Vanglaini* is the most widely circulated newspaper among the Mizo language newspapers in the state of Mizoram. It enjoys this position among the 92 registered daily newspapers. Majority of the newspapers in Mizoram are categorised under small newspapers by the Advertising and Visual communication Division of the CBC, MIB. This basis is also used by the RNI. Circulation of up to 25,000 copies per publishing day are categorised as small newspapers and circulation between 25,001 and 75,000 copies per publishing day are categorised as medium newspapers. *Vanglaini* is hence categorised as medium newspaper with the latest circulation of 35000 copies per publishing day in 2022 (August). In addition, it distributes to all the Districts of the State despite its publication is concentrated in Aizawl. *Vanglaini* appeals to all ages and social class. Subscribers tend to be loyal and remain as customers for a long time. In buying behaviour survey which was conducted as part of the present study (refer Chapter - 4), more than half of the readers (59%) considered *Vanglaini* to be unbiased in maintaining high journalism standards. Among the readers of *Vanglaini*, more than three-fourths of the readers (76%) were satisfied with the newspaper's role in educating and moulding the opinion of the public. More than half of the readers (60%) were satisfied with the newspaper price and newsprint quality. Nearly three-fourths of the readers (72%) were satisfied with the coverage of prompt news. It has established itself as a commodity that its customers value. This worthwhile strength must be

retained by continuously improving its news content as per the requirements of its readers to cater to their needs.

- ii. ***Leading Advertising Vehicle:*** Advertising plays an important role in the survival and commercial success of any newspaper. As a result of its market leadership in terms of circulation, *Vanglaini* receives strong advertising support from the Government as well as from the commercial organisations. *Vanglaini* is known for providing an advertiser friendly atmosphere without compromising editorial integrity. Accessible and approachable advertising opportunities must be maintained to retain this strength and ensure profitability.
- iii. ***Forerunner in product development:*** *Vanglaini* has proved itself to be a pioneer in product development in the newspaper industry of Mizoram. It was the first newspaper to publish in standard broadsheet size. It began the trend of publishing an eight page newspaper which was later upgraded to twelve pages. In spite of publishing only within the state of Mizoram, it is known for making continuous improvements in content and product design compared to its competitors within the State. It has also managed to provide good quality newsprint by importing it from other States (e.g. Punjab). This strength, tangible in nature, can be sustained by maintaining its newsprint quality for customer satisfaction.
- iv. ***Localisation of news:*** Staying true to its purpose of being a local daily newspaper, *Vanglaini* covers local news at length. Even though its news content consists of regional, national and international events, majority of its news is local news or State news. As the Mizo people are a close knit community with shared religious views, news considered as State and local are rarely differentiated. As elaborated in the buying behaviour survey (refer Chapter – 4), nearly two-third (64.4%) of the readers' most preferred news is local news. In addition, among the readers of *Vanglaini*, the vast majority of the readers (92%) considered the coverage of local news to be satisfactory.
- v. ***Efficient managerial resources:*** *Vanglaini* has managed to maintain a strong set of editors and news reporters who are well known and with high credibility. The capability for retention of staff for long periods of time

enables the newspaper to have consistent work flow and build good internal relationships. Recruitment is done through advertisements in the newspaper and selection is done through personal interview of the candidates. *Vanglaini*'s efficient recruitment and selection policy enables it to fulfil the job requirements and establishes a forthright process comprehensible to all its employees. To preserve this strength, the newspaper must be willing to make considerable investment in human capital with appropriate qualifications.

- vi. ***Adoption of New Technology:*** *Vanglaini* has been proactive in adapting to changes in new technology. With the development of its own website and the initiation of a downloadable digital app, it has made itself available online. In addition to consumers who want to access the latest headlines instantly, there is also a niche market of those living far away from where they were born, who want to keep in touch with the news from home. They become a viable market for online news. Web-based news are valuable as they can offer additional features such as multiple languages, colour photos, audio/video clips to round-out print descriptions, and interactive bulletin boards/chat rooms (Van der Beek *et al.*, 2005).
- vii. ***Good manufacturing resources:*** *Vanglaini* has efficient manufacturing resources in regard to machinery, printing press and technical support.

Weaknesses

- i. ***Limited reach:*** Regardless of it being the highest circulated newspaper, *Vanglaini* has not been able to increase neither its circulation nor its market share in other Districts of the State of Mizoram. The underlying reason may be the preference of the market for newspapers with publication centre in their own town, city or District. In addition, distribution logistics remain underdeveloped due to hilly terrain. Road blockages due to natural calamities such as landslides are common due to climatic conditions, and this leads to inconsistent supply of newspapers.
- ii. ***Difficulty in generating digital revenue:*** *Vanglaini*, though it has an online presence, has not been able to profitably monetise its online products

till date. The typical internet consumer is conditioned to receive free information, therefore generating revenue through online subscription has been difficult and online advertising revenue is generated only through *Google Ads*. The mobile application of *Vanglaini* has not been sufficiently promoted to generate substantial revenue. Despite increased readership, the internet still accounted for a small proportion of the newspapers' revenues in the last decade. Meanwhile, across India, the revenue generated by digital advertising was valued at around Rs. 246 billion as of 2021 (Basuroy, 2022).

- iii. ***High cost– low advertising product:*** The costs of physical materials, people and processes have been increasing over the years in the news print industry. The rise in production costs, especially of newsprint, cost of content production and high distribution costs have resulted in low profitability in spite of the newspaper's relatively high circulation. This is especially pertinent in the context of newspaper business in North East India in view of the existence of many small States with different languages spoken by relatively small size of populations. As many of these States are not industrially developed, the news media in general is not in a position to attract sufficient advertising revenue, and hence even the leading newspaper organisations find it almost impossible to expand their business operations in terms of setting up of new editions/publication centres in more than one place.
- iv. ***Highest price per copy among Mizo language newspapers:*** In view of the cost constraints faced by even the largest circulated languages newspaper like *Vanglaini* as discussed above, the newspaper industry is bound to suffer because of higher average cost per copy printed. For its twelve page newspaper, *Vanglaini* charges Rs 200 per month as of April, 2022. This is higher compared to the other Mizo language newspapers that charges Rs 100 to Rs 150 per month, even though the numbers of pages are less than *Vanglaini*. This increase in price to Rs 200 from its previous price of Rs. 150 was effective from April, 2022. Though the increases in price to the tune of 25% in one go, still it hardly covers the additional costs incurred by *Vanglaini*. However, from the reader's angle, such a steep rise in the price

caused dissatisfaction which is evident from the buying behaviour survey conducted as part of the present study (refer Chapter – 4). It was found that one-fourth (25%) of its readers are not satisfied with the price of the newspaper.

- v. ***Absence of marketing research:*** There is absence of focused studies to gain customer insights to specific marketing decisions. Marketing research is the systematic design, collection, analysis and reporting of data relevant to a specific marketing situation facing an organisation (Kotler et al., 2018). *Vanglaini* should consider conducting marketing research as insight from the same could lead to multiple developments in terms of product design, pricing, distribution and promotion.
- vi. ***Low investment in circulation promotion:*** Compared to other media products like TV, the promotion function is less standardised and structured in newspaper business, in general. *Vanglaini* has no definite or regular provision for circulation promotion. Consequently, circulation promotion is dependent entirely on the distributors and on word-of-mouth. This creates a gap between the newspaper organisation and the potential consumers. Till recently, social media has not been adequately utilised for promotion of both its print and digital version.

Opportunities

- i. ***Geographic expansion:*** *Vanglaini* may possibly initiate strategies to expand its geographical coverage of the state of Mizoram by opening one or two new publication centres in Lunglei in southern part and Champhai in the northern part bordering Myanmar. This would not only increase its regard but also enable it to localize news even further to towns or District news. It would also improve the distribution efficiency of the organisation.
- ii. ***Segment content to reach new niche markets:*** The newspaper should pay attention to changes in consumer behaviour and the new demands that it brings, and expand its audience base accordingly and make corresponding adjustments in its mission and operation goals. *Vanglaini* could issue

supplements or devote a page to cover topical and contemporary issues including gender issues, environmental issues, and educational issues and so on. The government departments concerned and other agencies interested in such issues could be approached as sponsors.

- iii. **Technological up-gradation:** *Vanglaini* should strive to update and adapt to new technology especially to provide news in the consumers' mobile devices and in social media. Using new technology can be beneficial for the newspaper as it can attract digital advertisers as well. Technology can threaten the existence of a business as it stands today; however, the advancement in technology offers new opportunities for business growth and change (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2011). It is required to continue to broaden dissemination channels by actively integrating with new media, enriching newspaper content, and achieving digital transformation (Zhao & Li, 2021). As online presence is essential for increasing the reputation of offline brand and distributing news on the internet forms the foundation for a future role in the online advertising market; it is believed that such an investment in the future is important to ensure a profitable independent role within the online news market (Van der Beek et al., 2005). *Vanglaini* offers daily news through its website, its android mobile application and social media handles. These online platforms provide an opportunity to intensify its activity that can result in heavier website traffic and *App* usage. An *IOS* version of the mobile *App* could also bring in more users. The increase in users can eventually attract more advertisers thus increase advertising revenue.
- iv. **Relationship marketing with the main stakeholders:** This should be executed with two main stakeholders viz. the suppliers of newsprint, machines, etc. and the distributors who deliver the newspaper to customers every day. This will build mutually satisfying long-term relationships.
- v. **Investment in newsprint:** The quality of the newsprint can affect the satisfaction level of the consumers. As detailed in Chapter – 4, only 9.5 per cent of the readers consider newsprint to be unimportant. In other words, 91.5 per cent of the readers considered newsprint quality as very important or

important. Though 60 per cent of *Vanglaini* readers were satisfied with newsprint quality, there is still room for improvement in this regard.

- vi. ***Press credibility:*** Newspaper is considered to be the most reliable news medium by 45.3 per cent of the readers of *Vanglaini* and enjoys high credibility, as detailed in Chapter - 4. The newspaper can take advantage of this value given to it and continue improvement on its news content, quality and consequent societal influence. Globally, print medium remains the most trusted source of information for most consumers and hence becomes an effective platform for brands and marketers. Likewise in India, it is considered to be the most trusted and credible medium. Print plays a key role in influencing brand perception, from quality to price to trust. *Vanglaini*, being the largest circulated Mizo daily, enjoys higher credibility among all news media in the State. Given its credibility, the newspaper can capitalize on it to attract advertisers and new subscribers.
- vii. ***Publish on Sunday:*** *Vanglaini* is published throughout the week except on Sundays. More than half of *Vanglaini* readers (57%) would prefer to read their newspaper on a Sunday, as discussed in Chapter - 4. Though the majority of Mizo people are engaged on Sunday due to various church services, *Vanglaini* could explore the possibility of printing Sunday issues with special features and news items.

Threats

- i. ***Rapid progress of New Media and Information Technology:***

With the ever rising number of communication and transactions performed online, it can pose a threat to the print newspaper industry. Information has become available at all times from all locations if one had access to the internet (Narayan & Narayanan, 2016). Although these new entrants, e.g. internet service or application providers, provide the existing media companies with multiple opportunities to adapt their business to the changing demands of the internet, they are also competitors who are themselves able to offer news over the net (Van der Beek et al., 2015). The

migration to online sources is inevitable although print media has not become obsolete. Integration of print with new media will be effective to reinforce awareness and retention (Mathai & Jaswani, 2021). The advent of the internet, along with other factors, has undermined the business model of many daily newspapers. If *Vanglaini* does not adapt its strategies to the new opportunities offered by New Media and gain digital readers and advertisers, profits may become uncertain and will pose a threat to the business. Although *Vanglaini* has an online presence through its website, social media handles in *Facebook* and *Instagram*, and mobile application, in order to survive and thrive, it needs to strengthen its presence by improving and regularly updating its news.

- ii. ***Competitions from other media:*** *Vanglaini* faces stiff inter-media competition. It competes in news dissemination and commentary with other media, namely, radio, television, magazines and the internet. Television news sources are mainly *Doordarshan* (TV channel owned by the Government of India), local cable TV channels of *LPS* and *ZONET* and regional, national and international news programmes. Radio news sources are mainly *All India Radio AIR*, *Aizawl 100.1 FM*, *All India Radio North Eastern Service 100.7 FM*, and *Red 93.5 FM*. With increase in use of internet, *Vanglaini* faces competition with the numerous digital news outlets available online. Newspapers have witnessed its readers and advertisers migrate to radio, then to television and now to the internet. Newspapers have made changes in order to maintain their appeal, offering new types of content, adjusting their formats, looking for new sources of revenue, and streamlining their operations, among other strategies.
- iii. ***Competition within the industry:*** The newspaper industry in Mizoram remains entrenched with a large number of small newspaper organisations with low circulations. Since most consumers subscribe to only one newspaper, the numerous newspapers eat away the market share of *Vanglaini*. Even though it has a competitive advantage in terms of product design and news content and has been the market leader for decades, *Vanglaini* has not been able to increase its circulation as rapidly as it should. A unique competition is

also faced by *Vanglaini* from weekly and monthly news bulletins of different non-government organisations like the YMA, different church denominations and trade, sports and entertainment associations. These weekly and monthly newspapers are mostly in tabloid forms, and contain information and news pertaining to a particular locality or area. They present an indirect competition as they divert the time, resources and attention away from the daily newspapers.

- iv. ***Decline in newspaper reading habit:*** With the easy accessibility of the internet and availability of electronic gadgets, the interest in printed products has lowered immensely. Likewise, the reading habits of all age groups have declined as well. This is one of the reasons growths in print newspaper circulations has been slow.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In an attempt to identify the marketing strategies of select newspapers in Mizoram, the five selected dailies *viz. Vanglaini, The Aizawl Post, The Zozam Times, The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander* were studied in terms of their product, pricing, placing and promotion strategies.

Vanglaini has been in the newspaper industry for 44 years and has grown from an initial circulation of 1000 copies in 1978 to 35000 copies in 2022. A daily Mizo language newspaper, its target audiences are the Mizo speaking residents of Mizoram. Over the years, the newspaper has improved its printing technique from cyclostyle printing to offset printing. It upgraded its newsletter size pages to a four page black and white broadsheet size in 2001 and to twelve pages in 2013 with four pages in colour. *Vanglaini* has had an online presence since 2015 with its own website and it has an active social media presence. The newspaper is distributed throughout the state of Mizoram. It charged a monthly subscription fee of Rs. 150 from 2013 to 2021 which increased to Rs. 200 in 2022. It depends on word-of-mouth influence for its promotion.

The Aizawl Post began publication in 2003 and has continued publication for 19 years. It is a daily Mizo language newspaper with circulation within Mizoram. It began publishing with offset printing technique and is currently an eight page broadsheet size newspaper with its first and last page in colour. With an initial circulation of 2000 copies per publishing day, the newspaper has reached a claimed circulation of 13000 copies per publishing day. Priced at Rs. 150 per month, it adopts competitor based pricing. Distribution of the newspaper is concentrated mainly within Aizawl District and a few copies distributed to the other Districts. The newspaper does not conduct any definite promotional activities. However, it has an online presence in social media platforms.

The Zozam Times, a Mizo language daily newspaper, was established in 2005 and was the first daily newspaper in Mizoram to print in colour. An eight page broadsheet size newspaper, it uses offset printing technique. The first and last page is in colour. It claims a circulation of 13000 per publishing day in 2022. Priced at Rs. 150 per month, the newspaper adopts a competitor based pricing. Its main sources of revenue are subscription fees and advertising fees in the ratio of 3:7. Distribution of *The Zozam Times* is mainly within Aizawl District with a few subscriptions in other Districts. It does not conduct any specific promotional activities to boost circulation and relies on the distributors to obtain and retain customers. Nonetheless, it has a strong online social media presence.

The Mizoram Post, an English language daily newspaper, began publication in 2003. Its initial publication centre was Silchar, Assam. It is the only newspaper to have a non-Mizo editor. It began publication with twelve pages and has reduced its number of pages to eight with four pages in colour. The current price of the newspaper is Rs. 150 per month. With distribution concentrated mainly within the capital city, Aizawl, it does not employ any specific promotional activities.

One of the oldest daily newspapers and the oldest English language daily newspaper in Mizoram, *Highlander* was established in 1972. Beginning its publication with the now obsolete treadle printing machine, it upgraded to offset printing in 1993. With an initial circulation of 500 copies per publishing day, it claims a circulation of

30000 in 2022. The twelve pages of *Highlander* are printed in black and white. Priced at Rs. 150 per month, it distributes within the capital city, Aizawl. The newspaper does not adopt any promotional activity.

A SWOT analysis was attempted for the Mizo language daily newspaper *Vanglaini*. The *strengths* of *Vanglaini* include it being the largest circulated daily newspaper in Mizoram since 2000 and a leading advertising vehicle. It is a forerunner in product development in the newspaper industry of Mizoram. It is a newspaper that covers local news extensively and employs efficient managerial and professional human resources. It is proactive in adapting to changes in technology with the development of its own website and mobile application and strong online social media presence. It also has strong manufacturing resources. The *weaknesses* of *Vanglaini* include the limited market reach, difficulty in generating digital revenue, high monthly price of product as compared to other newspapers in the market, high cost of production, higher price per copy among Mizo language newspapers, absence of marketing research and low investment in circulation promotion. The *opportunities* available to *Vanglaini* include the possibility of market expansion, segmenting content to reach new niche markets, technological up-gradation, relationship marketing with suppliers and distributors to save costs, investment in newsprint, taking advantage of the press credibility it enjoys and publishing on Sunday. The *threats* faced by *Vanglaini* are rapid progress of new media and information technology, high competition from other media, competition within the newspaper industry and the general decline in newspaper reading habit. The goal for *Vanglaini* should be to match the newspaper's strengths to the opportunities in the environment while simultaneously eliminating or overcoming the weaknesses and minimizing the threats.

CHAPTER - 4

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF NEWSPAPER READERS IN MIZORAM

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CHAPTER - 4

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF NEWSPAPER READERS IN MIZORAM

This chapter attempts to analyse the consumer behaviour of newspaper readers in Mizoram. It is intended to identify the socio economic background of the respondents and their preferential contents of newspaper, the nature of buying newspapers and the frequency with which the newspapers are read (refer Chapter-1 for details of methodology). The types of news preferred by the readers as well as the readers' perception of coverage of news items are examined. Evaluations made by readers on ratio of news to advertisements and the evaluation of value of newspapers based on 12 premises were studied. The readers' level of satisfaction in terms of types of news items covered and other features of the newspapers was analysed. Dependency on newspapers for news and other media habits were also studied.

4.1 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The main driving force of a successful marketing strategy may be the understanding of consumer behaviour. The field of consumer behaviour is rooted in the marketing concept, a marketing strategy where consumer needs and wants are the firm's primary focus. According to Shiffman & Kanuk (2007), consumer behaviour is defined as "the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs." It focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption-related items. That includes what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase, the impact of such evaluations on future purchases, and how they dispose of it. Consumer behaviour refers to the activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services (Blackwell et al., 2006). Consumer information allows marketing managers to define consumer needs, identify consumer segments that have

these needs, develop marketing strategies targeted to these segments, evaluate marketing strategies, and ensure that marketing strategies are implemented in a socially responsible manner (Assael, 1998). Consumer behaviour is never simple; yet understanding it is an essential task. It is the buying behaviour of final consumers – individuals and households that buy goods and services for personal consumption. All these final consumers combine to make up the consumer market (Kotler et al., 2018).

Marketers, in order to outperform competitors, must make the customer the core of the company's organisational culture, across all departments and functions, and ensure that each and every employee view any exchange with a customer as part of a customer relationship, not as a transaction (Shiffman & Kanuk, 2007). The three drivers of successful relationships between marketers and customers are customer value, high levels of customer satisfaction, and customer retention.

4.1.1 Customer Value

Customer value is defined as the ratio between the customers' perceived benefits (economic, functional and psychological) and the resources (monetary, time, effort, psychological) used to obtain those benefits (Shiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Customers tend to be value maximizers, within the bounds of search costs and limited knowledge, mobility and income. A customer estimates which offer will deliver the most perceived value and act on it. Whether the offer lives up to expectation affects customer satisfaction and the probability that the customer will purchase the product again (Kotler et al., 2013). Perceived value is relative and subjective. Perception is the process by which individuals select, organise, and interpret stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Perception has strategy implications for marketers because consumers make decisions based on what they perceive rather than on the basis of objective reality (Shiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Developing a value proposition is crucial, which consists of the whole cluster of benefits the company promises to deliver.

4.1.2 Customer Satisfaction

Consumers develop a set of expectations based on the degree to which a brand or product satisfies the benefits consumers desire. The brand that comes closest to satisfying the most important benefits is expected to provide the most satisfaction (Assael, 1998). Customer satisfaction is the extent to which a product's perceived performance matches a buyer's expectations. If the product's perceived performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If performance matches expectations, the customer is satisfied. If performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted. Higher levels of satisfaction lead to greater customer loyalty, which in turn results in better company performance. Ultimately, the company must try to deliver a high level of customer satisfaction subject to also delivering acceptable levels to other stakeholders, given its total resources. Hence, customer satisfaction is the key to building profitable relationships with consumers (Kotler et al., 2018).

4.1.3 Customer Retention

The overall objective of providing value to customers continuously and more effectively than the competition is to have and to retain highly satisfied customers. This strategy of customer retention makes it in the best interest of customers to stay with the company rather than switch to another firm (Shiffman and Kanuk, 2007). Satisfied customers buy a product again, talk favourably to others about the product, pay less attention to competing brands and advertising and buy other products from the company. Companies should measure customer satisfaction regularly and set up systems that encourage customers to complain. The company can assess its performance and how it can improve (Kotler et al., 2018).

Newspapers need readers; they rely on developing a core loyal readership who will continue to buy the same newspaper day after day, year after year. Newspaper readers, not editors, have the ultimate power of veto. If they do not like what the newspaper contains, or its political or ideological viewpoints, or even the language it

uses, they can choose not to buy it. Ultimately newspapers are driven by commercial forces; they have to sell to survive. So keeping their readers happy and, indeed, just keeping them as readers, is essential (Douglas, 2009).

The marketing concept gives way to a corporate philosophy that emphasises the importance of customers' value, satisfaction, and retention.

4.2 SOCIO ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

4.2.1 Respondents' Classification by Gender

Table 4.1 shows the classification of readers by gender. Out of 450 respondents, 57.6 per cent were males and 42.4 per cent were female readers.

Table 4.1: Respondents' Classification by Gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	259	57.6
Female	191	42.4
Total	450	100

The number of female readers in Mizoram is high as compared to other states. A study by Padmaja (2008) revealed that more than three-fourth of the readers (77.4%) in Andhra Pradesh are male readers. The absence of a significant gap in newspaper consumption according to gender in Mizoram may be due to several factors. As per the Census, 2011 the literacy rate of females in Mizoram is 89.27 per cent as compared to the country's female literacy rate of 65.5 per cent. The sex ratio in the State stands at 975 and the sex ratio in the electoral roll as per the Chief Electoral Office, Mizoram stands at 1053. The literacy rate of males (98.52%) and females (98.2%) in Aizawl city was almost the same. In other words, almost all the citizens of Aizawl are literate. Further, the State is also known for having better female participation in work, in organised as well as unorganised sector (Vanengliana, 2000; Mizoram Synod Social Front, 2012). As female literacy and female participation in all spheres of life is considerable, the contribution of female readership becomes

inevitable and this can create an opportunity for the newspaper to increase circulation.

In general, the newspaper consumption seems to be the preserve of mostly male audiences in ways that reinforce patriarchal family patterns (Jyoti Kumar, 2003, Padmaja, 2008, Mitchelstein et al., 2021). Newspapers are basically meant for providing political news and in general, males are more interested to know the political news compared to females. It is to be noted that the political participation of women in Mizoram is confined to casting their vote in elections rather than contesting in elections to become Members of Legislative Assembly and the Parliament. Only through the 74th Amendment of the Indian Constitution, do women nowadays have reserved seats in the Aizawl Municipal Council (AMC).

4.2.2 Respondents' Classification by Age

Table 4.2 classifies the respondents by age group. Thirty per cent of the readers fall in the 20-29 age groups, the highest among age segments. Over 22 per cent of the readers were below 20 years of age. In contrast, only 3.8 per cent of the readers were 60 years and above.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Classification by Age

Age group (years)	Total	%
Below 20	100	22.2
20-29	135	30.0
30-39	88	19.5
40-49	57	12.7
50-59	53	11.8
60 & Above	17	3.8
Total	450	100

It appears that even among the younger generation, who are increasingly familiar with digital and electronic technology and have better access to the Internet, newspaper reading remains a habit. The higher the proportion of readers representing the lower age group, the greater will be the prospects for newspaper business. Young

readers are important to newspaper organisations as they are vital for sustaining business and the industry in the forthcoming years.

4.2.3 Respondents' Classification by Educational Level

Table 4.3 indicates that the non-graduates (57.3%) outnumbered the graduates and postgraduates (42.7%) combined. Majority of the readers (34 %) were Class 12 level.

Table 4.3: Respondents' Classification by Educational Level

Qualification	Total	%
Below Class 10	53	11.8
Class 10	52	11.5
Class 12	153	34.0
Graduate	111	24.7
Post Graduate	81	18.0
Total	450	100

Newspaper seems to be in great demand among the graduates and postgraduates put together in the present study. Researchers have confirmed the power of education as a predictor of media behaviour (Anderson, 2018) and education is positively associated with general news exposure (Poindexter & McCombs, 2001). Although readership is higher among the higher level of education, there is a sizeable amount of news consumption across all educational backgrounds. Thus, newspapers should recognise all levels for the opportunities they can provide.

Table 4.4 shows the preference of newspaper in relation to readers' educational level. The table reveals that majority (59%) of *Vanglaini* readers were graduates and postgraduates combined. A vast majority of *The Aizawl Post* readers (62%) and *The Zozam Times* readers (62%) were Class 12 and below. Readers of the local English newspapers *The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander* were mainly Class 12 and graduate levels.

Table 4.4: Respondents' Classification by Educational Level: Newspaper-wise

Educational Level	Newspaper										Total
	<i>Vanglaini</i>		<i>The Aizawl Post</i>		<i>The Zozam Times</i>		<i>The Mizoram Post</i>		<i>Highlander</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
Below Class 10	11	11 (20.8)	18	18 (34.0)	10	10 (18.9)	8	8 (15.1)	6	12 (11.3)	53
Class 10	3	3 (5.8)	13	13 (25.0)	13	13 (25.0)	15	15 (28.8)	8	16 (15.4)	52
Class 12	27	27 (17.6)	31	31 (20.3)	39	39 (25.5)	38	38 (24.8)	18	36 (11.8)	153
Graduate	20	20 (18.0)	24	24 (21.6)	23	23 (20.7)	31	31 (27.9)	13	26 (11.7)	111
Post Graduate	39	39 (48.1)	14	14 (17.3)	15	15 (18.5)	8	8 (9.9)	5	10 (6.2)	81
Total	100		100		100		100		50		450

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicates percentages of row totals

Of the total 81 postgraduates, 48.1 per cent read *Vanglaini* and only 16.1 per cent read the regional English newspapers. This may imply an appreciation of local language among the higher educational level readers and preference to obtain local news from local language newspapers. Among the graduates, more than one-fourth read *The Mizoram Post*. Most of the readers from Class 12 level preferred *The Aizawl Post* and *The Mizoram Post*. Only 5.8 per cent of readers from Class 10 level read *Vanglaini*. *The Aizawl Post* is favoured by one-third of the readers who were below Class 10 level. Two-thirds of the readers of *Vanglaini* were either graduates or postgraduates. As noted, *Vanglaini* is the largest circulated newspaper in the State. Higher educational level of the readers implies better standard of living enjoyed by such readers due to improved career opportunities and incomes. In other words, such readers normally belong to middle and upper income sections, and they often play the role of opinion leaders in the community. In the newspaper business, advertisers are interested in reaching out to such readers as they tend to have more disposable income to spend on a variety of products and services.

As per the *Indian Readership Survey*, 2019, English read and understood by the population of Mizoram stands at 47 per cent, while the national number stands at 30 per cent. Neighbouring states of Assam, Manipur, and Tripura are 34, 54, and 34 per

cent respectively. Thus, there is good market potential for the local English newspapers in Mizoram.

4.2.4 Respondents' Classification by Occupation

Table 4.5 shows that 43.6 per cent of the respondents were students and 31.8 per cent were employees. Only 1.8 per cent was involved in agriculture.

Table 4.5: Respondents' Classification by their Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	%
Agriculture	8	1.8
Traders	35	7.8
Employees	143	31.8
Self-Employed	34	7.6
Students	196	43.6
Others	34	7.6
Total	450	100.0

Note: Others include unemployed and homemakers

According to the Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, 2020, over 55 per cent of the working population are dependent on agriculture and allied activities. However, the area under study, Aizawl, being the capital city has less number of its population depending solely on agriculture. This might have resulted in the low number of readers involved in agriculture. In addition, Aizawl is the hub for education in the State and has the highest number of higher educational institutions, including a central university, a private university, a national institute of technology, a medical college and a veterinary college. The students developing reading habits at younger age, despite the onslaught of electronic and social media has positive implications for the survival and growth perspectives of newspaper market.

4.2.5 Respondents' Classification by Income

Table 4.6 shows distribution of readers by income. Over 27 per cent of the respondents have an annual income exceeding Rs. 2,50,000. Over 22 per cent readers were having below Rs. 1,00,000 of income. Although the higher income level groups

have high readership, many in the lower income levels still read newspapers. Newspaper, being a universal household product and low priced, can be afforded by most of the households regardless of their level of income.

Table 4.6: Respondents' Classification by Income

Annual Income (Rs.)	Frequency	%
Below 1,00,000	100	22.2
1,00,000 - 1,50,000	68	15.1
1,50,000 – 2,00,000	73	16.2
2,00,000 – 2,50,000	84	18.7
Above 2,50,000	125	27.8
Total	450	100.0

Table 4.7 reveals that 37 per cent of *Vanglaini* readers were in the Rs. 150,000-200,000 income group and 30.4 per cent of the readers were having above Rs. 2,50,000 income. In other words, about 41 per cent of *Vanglaini* readers were in higher income bracket. Readers of *The Aizawl Post* were distributed almost evenly among all income groups. *The Zozam Times* have readers primarily from the Rs. 200,000-250,000 income group. *The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander* have the highest number of readers from the Rs. 1,00,000-1,50,000 income group.

Table 4.7: Readers' Classification by Income: Newspaper-wise

Total Annual Income of the Family (Rs.)	Newspapers									
	<i>Vanglaini</i>		<i>The Aizawl Post</i>		<i>The Zozam Times</i>		<i>The Mizoram Post</i>		<i>Highlander</i>	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Below 1,00,000	16	16	21	21	26	26	22	22	15	15
1,00,000-1,50,000	10	14.7	14	20.6	10	14.7	22	32.4	12	17.6
1,50,000-2,00,000	27	37	16	21.9	13	17.8	13	17.8	4	5.5
2,00,000-2,50,000	9	10.7	18	21.4	26	31	21	25	10	11.9
Above 2,50,000	38	30.4	31	24.8	25	20	22	17.6	9	7.2
Total	100		100		100		100		50	

4.3 READERSHIP PREFERENCES AND HABITS

4.3.1 Regularity of Reading Newspaper

Table 4.8 shows the regularity of reading the newspaper by the respondents. Over 73 per cent of the readers read a newspaper daily and 26.9 per cent of respondents read it frequently, which is at least three times a week. It may be inferred that newspaper is a daily product for most of the readers.

Table 4.8: Regularity of Reading Newspaper

Frequency of Reading	Frequency	%
Daily	329	73.1
Frequent	121	26.9
Total	450	100

Table 4.9 shows the time spent for reading newspaper by the respondents. Majority of the respondents (85.56 %) read newspapers for one hour or less in a day. More than half (58.67 %) spent less than thirty minutes a day. One-fourth of the readers spent 30 minutes to one hour a day for reading. Only 14.46 per cent read for more than one hour a day. The newspapers under study vary in the size and number of pages. One copy of *Vanglaini* is 12 pages, *The Aizawl Post* is 8 pages, *The Zozam Times* is 8 pages, *The Mizoram Post* is 8 pages and *Highlander* is 12 pages.

Table 4.9: Time Spent On Reading Newspapers by Respondents

Time spent (minutes)	Frequency	%
< 30	264	58.67
30 – 60	121	26.89
60 – 90	53	11.79
90 – 120	9	2.00
> 120	3	0.67
Total	450	100

In general, the newspapers published in Mizoram have very limited circulation and readership, and most of the circulation is confined to the State capital of Aizawl. The advertising industry in the State seems to be still in infant stage and the newspapers find it difficult to attract more advertising as reflected in the advertising space devoted to in the newspapers. There is a scope to increase the number of pages by

giving coverage of different types of news such as sports, business, entertainment, and so on. It is further suggested that the newspapers need to focus on news analysis by giving more number of articles and editorials. Such type of comprehensive newspapers could attract more circulation and readership thereby enhance advertising.

4.3.2 Preferential Contents in Newspaper

Table 4.10 shows the distribution of readers based on their preferential contents in their newspaper. Over 48 per cent of the readers prefer to read the whole paper. Thirty per cent of the readers glanced at the headlines only. Eighteen per cent read the first page only. And only 3.6 per cent read selected columns.

Table 4.10: Preferential Contents in Newspaper

Newspaper Content	Frequency	%
Whole paper	218	48.4
Headlines	135	30.0
First page	81	18.0
Selected columns	16	3.6
Total	450	100

The high number of respondents reading the whole paper indicates a high appreciation of newspaper and the information it carries. In other words, almost half of the readers were intense readers. Thus, the newspaper organisations must continue to retain these readers with better contents and presentation. At the same time, more than half of the readers were not reading the entire paper. This presents a marketing challenge to the newspapers in terms of creating more interest in the reader about the contents of the newspaper. As noted, the newspapers under the study have a tremendous scope to enrich the newspaper in terms of content development by following appropriate Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP) strategy. For example, the newspapers could think to introduce special features meant for the youth (career counselling, sports), the women (health, home management, cooking), investors (stock market news), aged people (religion, health) and so on.

4.3.2.1 Preferential Contents in Newspaper Based on Age

Tables 4.11 shows distribution of the respondents based on their preferential contents in newspaper, age-wise. More than half (54.6%) of the readers who prefer to read the whole paper were below 29 years of age. Nearly one-third of the readers who prefer to read only the headlines were from the age group of 20 to 29. One-third of the readers who read only the first page were again from the age group of 20 to 29. Nearly one-third of the readers who prefer to read only selected columns were below 20 years.

Table 4.11: Preferential Contents in Newspaper: Age-wise

Age Group	Readers' Preferential Contents Of Newspaper							
	Whole Paper		Headlines		First Page		Selected Columns	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Below 20 (100)	58	26.6	23	17.0	14	17.3	5	31.3
20-29 (135)	61	28.0	42	31.1	29	35.8	3	18.8
30-39 (88)	44	20.2	27	20.0	15	18.5	2	12.5
40-49 (57)	29	13.2	16	11.9	10	12.3	2	12.5
50-59 (53)	13	6.0	24	17.8	13	16.0	3	18.8
60 & above (17)	13	6.0	3	2.2	0	0.0	1	6.3
TOTAL	218	100	135	100	81	100	16	100

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate row totals.

4.3.2.2 Preferential Contents in Newspaper Based on Income

Table 4.12 shows distribution of respondents based on their preferential contents in newspaper, annual income-wise.

Table 4.12: Preferential Contents in Newspapers: Income-wise

Annual Income	Readers' Preferential Contents Of Newspaper							
	Whole Paper		Headlines		First Page		Selected Columns	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Below 100,000	49	22.5	29	21.5	18	22.2	4	25.0
100,000-150,000	30	13.8	22	16.3	15	18.5	1	6.3
150,000-200,000	32	14.7	19	14.1	22	27.2	0	0.0
200,000-250,000	45	20.6	23	17.0	13	16.0	3	18.8
Above 250,000	62	28.4	42	31.1	13	16.0	8	50.0
Total	218		135		81		16	

The whole paper is mostly preferred by respondents belonging to the above Rs. 2,00,000 income group (49%). Over 30 per cent of respondents reading only the headlines belong to the above Rs. 2,50,000 income group. The first page is preferred mainly by the respondents belonging to Rs. 1,50,000 to Rs. 2,00,000 income group. Of all the respondents reading only selected columns, 50 per cent belong to the above Rs. 2,50,000 income group.

4.3.2.3 Preferential Contents in Newspaper Based on Educational Qualification

Table 4.13 shows distribution of respondents based on their preferential contents in newspaper, education-wise.

Table 4.13: Preferential Contents in Newspapers: Education-wise

Educational Level Of Readers	Readers' Preferential Contents Of Newspaper							
	Whole Paper		Headlines		First Page		Selected Columns	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Below Class 10	22	10.1	22	16.3	8	9.9	1	6.3
Class 10	15	6.9	18	13.3	16	19.8	3	18.8
Class 12	80	36.7	34	25.2	33	40.7	6	37.5
Graduate	66	30.3	26	19.3	14	17.3	5	31.3
Post Graduate	35	16.1	35	25.9	10	12.3	1	6.3

Respondents reading the whole paper are mainly from Class 12 level and graduates put together (67 %). One-fourth of Class 12 qualified readers and one-fourth of the readers with postgraduate qualification prefer to read only the headlines. Almost 20 per cent of the readers who are graduates also read only headlines. Over 40 per cent of the Class 12 qualified readers prefer to read only the first page. Over 37 per cent of the readers preferring selected columns were Class 12 qualified readers.

4.3.3 Nature of Buying Newspapers

Table 4.14 shows the distribution of readers based on the nature of buying newspaper. Over 91 per cent of the respondents were buying the newspaper by subscription. Nearly 7 per cent of the readers were reading from common places. Only 1.6 per cent purchased their newspaper from a shop. Buying newspapers

through subscription is a common habit across the nations as evidenced from many studies (Jyoti Kumar, 2003, Ambika & Sami, 2018, Khanduri & Sharma, 2018).

Table 4.14: Nature of Buying Newspaper

Nature	Frequency	%
Subscription	412	91.6
Buying from shop	7	1.6
Reading from common places	31	6.9
Total	450	100

An attempt is made to know the number of single newspaper readers and also multiple newspaper readers among the respondents as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Respondents' Classification into Single and Multiple Readers

Newspaper	Number of		Total
	Multiple Readers %	Single Reader %	
<i>Vanglaini</i>	90	10	100
<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	94	6	100
<i>The Zozam Times</i>	96	4	100
<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	96	4	100
<i>Highlander</i>	47	3	50
Total	423	27	450

Notes: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages.

A newspaper reader may read more than one newspaper and at the same time have one particular newspaper that is read intensely. The table reveals that majority of the readers read more than one newspaper, may be buying or without buying those papers. Thus, there is an element of overlapping newspaper interests among the readers.

4.3.4 Time of Reading Newspaper

Table 4.16 shows the distribution of readers according to the time of reading a newspaper. Half of the respondents (50.7%) read newspaper in the morning from 6 to 8 a.m. Nearly one-fifth of the readers (19.1%) read in the evening after 2 p.m. Only 5.6 per cent of the readers read before 6 a.m.

Table 4.16: Time of Reading Newspaper

Time	Frequency	%
Before 6 a.m.	25	5.6
6 to 8 a.m.	228	50.7
8 to 10 a.m.	55	12.2
10 to 12 a.m.	38	8.4
12 to 2 p.m.	18	4.0
After 2 p.m.	86	19.1
Total	450	100.0

4.3.5 Impact of Parents

Table 4.17 shows the newspaper interest of parents during the readers' childhood.

Table 4.17: Parents' Newspaper Interest during the Reader's childhood

Parent's Interest	Number of Readers	%
Yes	376	83.6
No	41	9.1
Cannot say	33	7.3
Total	450	100

Over 83 per cent of the readers reveal that their parents exhibited interest in newspaper reading during their childhood. Only 9.1 per cent of the readers had parents with no interest in reading newspapers. Thus, a strong correlation exists between parent's news interest and that of their children. A continual demonstration of habitual reading by the parents can form a long-lasting impression for the children to imitate as they progress in their lives (Merga & Roni, 2018). Studies (Klauda, 2009) also indicate that parents' support for their children's reading continues to relate positively to children's motivation to read in adolescence.

Table 4.18 shows the readers' source of newspaper reading habit. Over 82 per cent admitted that their habit of reading a newspaper was self-instilled. Over 13 per cent were encouraged by their parents.

Table 4.18: Source of Newspaper Reading Habit

Source	Number of Readers	%
Encouraged by parents	59	13.1
Inspired by others	19	4.2
Self-instilled	372	82.7
Total	450	100.0

Purchasing a newspaper through subscription denotes that it is basically a family product as many members of a family tend to read the paper over a period of time. In this regard, parents play an important role in cultivating the reading habits among the children.

4.3.6 Preference for Type of News

Table 4.19 shows the type of news preferred by the respondents. Local news is the most preferred type of news with over 64 per cent of the readers preferring it, followed by 18 per cent of the readers preferring international news. Both the national news and sports news were preferred by 6.7 per cent of the readers. North East India news (regional) was preferred by only 1.8 per cent of the readers.

Table 4.19: Most Preferred News by the Readers

Type of news	Number of readers	%
Local news	290	64.4
North East India News	8	1.8
National news	30	6.7
International news	81	18.0
Sports news	30	6.7
Business news	11	2.4
Total	450	100

For a land-locked and relatively remote state like Mizoram, relevance is the paramount driver of local news consumption. Readers prefer local news as it is concerned with their home State which has profound impact on their lives. It has been observed that publics around the globe consume all types of news, but they are most interested in news that is close to home (Mitchell et al., 2018). Local news also

influences the place where they work or study, their leisure activities, and their local community and politics. Obviously, there is a natural interest in local news regardless of the topic. Local newspapers are a particularly important source of information about local affairs; hence their circulation provides a good measure of citizens' intake of local information (George & Waldfogel, 2006).

The North East region of India comprising of eight States has over 220 ethnic groups and an equal number of dialects. Though all these States constitute a region known as the North East Region, each of these States is geographically isolated mainly due to hilly terrain nature of the area and a severe transportation bottlenecks due to inadequate all weather roads and railway connectivity. Such a situation naturally results in an attitude of apathy towards the people of other States in the region.

Maybe for the same reasons only 6.7 per cent of the respondents were showing preference for national news. People in Mizoram are interested in knowing sports news especially football, basketball, and so on. Interestingly, more number of the respondents (18%) preferred international news. As noted, Mizoram is sharing international boundaries with Myanmar and Bangladesh. It is further observed that Mizo people have an inclination to read and to watch content relating to Koreans, Japanese and Turkish in terms of literature and entertainment. In addition, due to the influence of British missionaries and their efforts at education and conversion in Mizoram, it has been relatively easier to identify with, and embrace aspects of western culture since, by the turn of the century a majority of Mizos were already converted in Christianity, and many people could speak the English language (Chhangte, 2014). Many international brands such as Nike, Louis Philippe, Sketchers, Crocs, Apple products, and so on are in great demand in Mizoram. There are exclusive shops for Korean beauty products and Myanmar food products.

Table 4.20 shows the type of news preferred by the readers, newspaper-wise. A similarity was seen in the readers of all the newspapers in regards to preference of local news. Over 61 per cent of the readers of each individual newspapers preferred local news.

Table 4.20: Most Preferred News by the Readers: Newspaper-Wise

Type Of News	Newspaper									
	<i>Vanglaini</i>		<i>The Aizawl Post</i>		<i>The Zozam Times</i>		<i>The Mizoram Post</i>		<i>Highlander</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Local News (290)	67	67	65	65	61	61	65	65	32	64
Northeast India News (8)	4	4	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0
National News (30)	5	5	3	3	6	6	13	13	3	6
International News (81)	15	15	23	23	18	18	14	14	11	22
Sports News (30)	6	6	7	7	12	12	3	3	2	4
Business News (11)	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	2	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	50	100

International news has much more preference than national news in any type of newspaper. There are no readers of Northeast India news in *The Aizawl Post* and *Highlander* newspaper. Sport news is most preferred by *The Zozam Times* readers with 12 per cent and least preferred by *The Mizoram Post* reader with 3 per cent. International news has gained much popularity and crossing a double figure percentage with *The Aizawl Post* being the highest at 23 per cent. The readers of *The Mizoram Post* have almost same preference for National news and international news with 13 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Business news does not have much reader in any type of newspaper. The highest preference of business news comes from *Highlander* newspaper reader with just 4 per cent.

4.3.7 Perception of Coverage of News Items

An attempt is made to know the respondents' opinion about the adequacy of different news items covered, as shown in Table 4.21, in their newspaper. More than two-third of the readers (68%) felt the local news coverage to be adequate. However, 12.4 per cent of the respondents felt the need to improve local news.

Regarding regional news, only 4.7 per cent felt that it was adequately covered in the newspaper. More than 40 per cent wanted the regional news to be improved.

Table 4.21: Perception of Coverage of News Items

Coverage	Adequate		Need to improve		Need to reduce	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Local News	306	68.0	56	12.4	88	19.6
Regional News	21	4.7	182	40.4	247	54.9
National News	41	9.1	93	20.7	316	70.2
International News	343	76.2	79	17.6	28	6.2
Editorials	255	56.7	125	27.8	70	15.6
Editorial page articles	297	66.0	100	22.2	53	11.8
Sports	275	61.1	129	28.7	46	10.2
Financial news	308	68.4	83	18.4	59	13.1
Entertainment news	265	58.9	98	21.8	87	19.3
Advertisements	308	68.4	58	12.9	84	18.7

In case of national news, only 9.1 per cent of the readers felt it was covered adequately in the newspaper. One-fifth of the readers felt the need for improvement.

International news was considered to be adequately covered by over 76 per cent of the readers and nearly one-fourth of the readers wanted the international news to be improved.

More than half of the readers felt the editorials and entertainment news to be adequate; however, more than one-fourth of the readers wanted the editorials to be improved and more than one-fifth of the readers wanted the entertainment news to be improved. Over 60 per cent of the readers felt that the Editorial page articles, sports news, financial news and advertisements were adequately covered by the newspapers. More than one-fourth of the readers wanted the editorial page articles and sports news to be improved. The financial news and advertisements were considered to be in need of improvement by 18.4 per cent and 12.9 per cent of the readers respectively.

Table 4.22 shows the respondents' opinion about the adequacy of different news items covered in their newspaper, newspaper-wise.

Table 4.22: Perception of Coverage of News Items: Newspaper-Wise

Coverage		Total	Vanglaini (100)		The Aizawl Post (100)		The Zozam Times (100)		The Mizoram Post (100)		Highlander (50)	
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Local News	A	306	82	82	71	71	69	69	57	57	27	54
	NI	56	6	6	13	13	7	7	23	23	7	14
	NR	88	12	12	16	16	24	24	20	20	16	32
Regional News	A	21	18	18	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0
	NI	182	19	19	39	39	57	57	47	47	20	40
	NR	247	63	63	61	61	43	43	50	50	30	60
National News	A	41	29	29	4	4	2	2	5	5	1	2
	NI	93	19	19	26	26	12	12	23	23	13	26
	NR	316	52	52	70	70	86	86	72	72	36	72
International News	A	343	65	65	70	70	85	85	83	83	40	80
	NI	79	25	25	23	23	8	8	17	17	6	12
	NR	28	10	10	7	7	7	7	0	0	4	8
Editorials	A	255	56	56	45	45	65	65	60	60	29	58
	NI	125	29	29	33	33	19	19	31	31	13	26
	NR	70	15	15	22	22	16	16	9	9	8	16
Editorial page articles	A	287	57	57	54	54	71	71	78	78	37	74
	NI	100	29	29	31	31	17	17	15	15	8	16
	NR	53	14	14	15	15	12	12	7	7	5	10
Sports	A	275	47	47	55	55	63	63	78	78	32	64
	NI	129	37	37	34	34	26	26	20	20	12	24
	NR	46	16	16	11	11	11	11	2	2	6	12
Financial news	A	308	54	54	62	62	75	75	84	84	33	66
	NI	83	30	30	20	20	12	12	12	12	9	18
	NR	59	16	16	18	18	13	13	4	4	8	16
Entertainment news	A	265	50	50	56	56	67	67	63	63	29	58
	NI	98	27	27	18	18	19	19	23	23	11	22
	NR	87	23	23	26	26	14	14	14	14	10	20
Advertisements	A	308	54	54	65	65	73	73	87	87	29	58
	NI	58	11	11	16	16	11	11	9	9	11	22
	NR	84	35	35	19	19	16	16	4	4	10	20

A – Adequate; NI – Need to Improve; NR – Need to Reduce

Among the readers of *Vanglaini*, 82 per cent felt the coverage of local news to be adequate and only 6 per cent felt the need for improvement. Only 18 per cent of

Vanglaini readers considered the regional news to be adequately covered while 19 per cent wanted it to be improved. More than one-fourth of *Vanglaini* readers felt that national news was adequately covered and nearly one-fifth of the readers wanted improvement. Nearly two-third of *Vanglaini* readers considered the international news to be adequately covered and one-fourth felt the need for improvement. More than half of *Vanglaini* readers considered the editorials and editorials page articles to be adequate, but 29 per cent of the readers wanted improvement. Sports news was considered to be adequate by 47 per cent of *Vanglaini* readers and 37 per cent of the readers felt the need for improvement. More than half of *Vanglaini* readers felt the financial news to be adequate and 30 per cent wanted improvement. Entertainment news was considered to be adequate by half of *Vanglaini* readers and 27 per cent considered to be in need of improvement. Advertisements were felt to be adequate by 54 per cent of *Vanglaini* readers and only 11 per cent wanted improvement.

Among the readers of *The Aizawl Post*, 71 per cent felt the coverage of local news to be adequate and 13 per cent felt it needed to be improved. Interestingly, none of the readers considered regional news coverage to be adequate and 39 per cent of the readers wanted improvement. Only 4 per cent of the readers felt the national news to be adequate and 26 per cent felt the need for improvement. International news was considered to be adequate by 70 per cent of the readers and 23 per cent of the readers wanted it to be improved. Editorials was considered to be adequate by 45 per cent of the readers and 33 per cent of readers felt the need to improve. Editorial page articles were considered to be adequate by 54 per cent of the readers and 31 per cent wanted it to be improved. More than half of the readers felt the sports news to be adequate and 34 per cent wanted improvement. In case of financial news, 62 per cent felt it to be adequate and 20 per cent wanted it to improve. More than half of the readers considered entertainment news to be adequate and less than one-fifth wanted improvement. Nearly two-third of the readers felt that the advertisements were adequate and less than one-fifth wanted it improve.

Among the readers of *The Zozam Times*, 69 per cent considered the coverage of local news to be adequate. However, only 7 per cent felt it needed to be improved. Not a single respondent felt the coverage of regional news to be adequate and 57 per cent

wanted improvement. National news was considered to be adequately covered by only 2 per cent of the readers and 12 per cent felt the need for improvement. International news was felt to be adequately covered by 85 per cent of the readers and only 8 per cent wanted improvement. Editorials were considered adequate by 65 per cent of the readers and nearly one-fifth of the readers felt it needed to be improved. Editorial page articles were considered to be adequate by 71 per cent of the readers and 17 per cent felt it needed to be improved. Sports news was thought to be adequately covered by 63 per cent of the readers and more than one-fourth of the readers wanted improvement. Financial news coverage was considered to be adequate by three-fourth of the readers and 12 per cent of the readers wanted improvement. Entertainment news coverage was felt to be adequate by 67 per cent of the readers and 19 per cent of the readers felt the need for improvement. Almost three-fourth of the readers considered advertisements to be adequate and only 11 per cent of the readers wanted improvement.

Among the readers of *The Mizoram Post*, 57 per cent of the readers felt the coverage of local news to be adequate and nearly one-fourth of the readers wanted improvement. Only 3 per cent of the readers considered regional news coverage to be adequate and 47 per cent considered it to be in need of improvement. National news coverage was considered to be adequately covered by only 5 per cent of the readers and nearly one-fourth of the readers wanted improvement. International news was felt to be adequately covered by 83 per cent of the readers and 17 per cent of the readers felt the need for improvement. Editorials were considered to be adequate by 60 per cent of the readers and 31% of the readers wanted improvement. Editorial page articles were considered to be adequate by more than three-fourth of the readers and 15 per cent of the readers felt it needed to be improved. More than three-fourth of the readers felt the sports news to be adequately covered and one-fifth of the readers wanted improvement. Financial news was felt to be adequately covered by 84 per cent of the readers and 12 per cent felt it needed to be improved. Entertainment news was considered to be adequately covered by nearly two-third of the readers and nearly one-fourth of the readers wanted improvement. Advertisements were

considered to be adequate by 87 per cent of the readers and only 9 per cent of the readers considered the need for improvement.

Among the readers of *Highlander*, 54 per cent of the readers felt the local news to be adequately covered and 14 per cent felt it needed improvement. None of the respondents felt the regional news to be adequately covered and 40 per cent of the readers wanted it to improve. National news was considered to be adequately covered by only 2 per cent of the readers and more than one-fourth of the readers wanted improvement. International news was felt to be adequately covered by 80 per cent of the readers and 12 per cent of the readers felt the need for improvement. Editorials were considered to be adequate by 58 per cent of the readers and more than one-fourth of the readers want it to improve. Nearly three-fourth of the readers considered the editorial page articles to be adequate while 16 per cent wanted improvement. Sports news was felt to be covered adequately by 64 per cent of the readers and nearly one-fourth of the readers want it to improve. Financial news was considered to be adequately covered by two-third of the readers and nearly one-fifth of the readers wanted improvement. Entertainment news and advertisements were felt to be covered adequately by 58 per cent of the readers and more than one-fifth of the readers want them to improve.

4.3.8 Price of Newspaper

Table 4.23 shows the reader's satisfaction with the price of the newspapers. Over 76 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the price of the newspaper. Only 5.3 per cent were not satisfied with the price and 18.4 per cent of the respondents were neutral in their response. The newspapers under study are priced at Rs. 150 per month and Rs. 200 per month.

Table 4.23: Satisfaction with Price of Newspaper

Reader's response	Frequency	%
Yes	343	76.2
No	24	5.3
Cannot say	83	18.4
Total	450	100

Table 4.24 shows the satisfaction with price of newspaper: newspaper wise.

Table 4.24: Satisfaction with Price of Newspaper: Newspaper-Wise

Response	<i>Vanglaini</i>		<i>The Aizawl Post</i>		<i>The Zozam Times</i>		<i>The Mizoram Post</i>		<i>Highlander</i>	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Yes	75	75	71	71	75	75	79	79	43	86
No	15	15	4	4	3	3	2	2	0	0.0
Cannot say	10	10	25	25	22	22	19	19	7	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	50	100

The table shows that there is highest satisfaction with price of *Highlander* newspaper with over 85 per cent of the readers being satisfied. *The Aizawl Post* newspaper has the least amount of satisfied readers with 71 per cent and 4 per cent that are not satisfied. *Vanglaini* has 75 per cent readers who are satisfied with the price however, 15 per cent of the readers are not satisfied. *The Zozam Times* also has 75 per cent of its readers who are satisfied with the price.

Table 4.25 highlights the effect an increase in price can have on subscribing a newspaper.

Table 4.25: Effect of Price Increase on Subscribing Newspaper

Reader's response	Frequency	%
Continue to purchase	219	48.7
Stop buying newspaper	87	19.3
Cannot decide	144	32.0
Total	450	100

The pricing of the newspaper is seen to be irrelevant for nearly half of the readers (48%) as they would continue to purchase or subscribe to the newspaper even if the price increased. However, 19 per cent of the readers would stop buying or subscribing the newspaper if the price increased.

4.3.9 Ratio of News to Advertisements: Evaluation by Readers

Table 4.26 shows the ratio of news to advertisements as reflected in the newspapers under the study, according to the opinions of the respondents. Over 34 per cent of the readers considered their newspaper to have a balanced proportion between news and advertisements. In other words, nearly two-third of the readers felt that their newspaper does not have a balanced proportion. Nearly 20 per cent of the readers felt that their newspaper contains more news and almost 27 per cent of the readers felt that the newspaper has less news.

Table 4.26: Ratio of News to Advertisements: Evaluation by Readers

Evaluation	<i>Vanglaini</i>		<i>The Aizawl Post</i>		<i>The Zoram Times</i>		<i>The Mizoram Post</i>		<i>Highlander</i>		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Balanced proportion	30	30	32	32	35	35	39	39	21	42	157	34.9
More news	24	24	21	21	19	19	12	12	10	20	88	19.5
Less news	29	29	31	31	25	25	22	22	14	28	121	26.9
No idea	17	17	16	16	21	21	27	27	5	10	84	18.7
Total	100		100		100		100		50		450	100

The quantity of news is equally important to the reader as the quality of news. Newspaper organisations must provide adequate news and the details of news items must be as required by the readers. Additionally, newspapers need to provide more news in a comprehensive way in less space in order to retain reader's interest. At the same time, the survival of a newspaper depends largely on its advertising revenue and thus need to allot certain space for advertisements. Readers also look for advertising in a newspaper. Therefore, a balance must be maintained between news and advertisements in order to retain readers as well as attract advertisers. Advertisers give high importance to the circulation number of newspapers as higher circulation reaches more consumers. However, if the newspapers are providing more advertisements at the cost of news, they may lose their readers to their competitors.

4.3.10 Newsprint

Table 4.27 shows the importance of quality of newsprint to the readers. Though a newspaper's life is hardly a day, if it is printed in good quality newsprint, readers are more likely to prefer it. However, it is observed that the newspapers that are printed in Mizoram have been using a low quality of newsprint compared to their counterparts in other regions in the country. Therefore, it is attempted to know the importance of the quality of newsprint from the readers' perspective.

Table 4.27: Importance of Quality of Newsprint to the Readers

Degree of Importance	<i>Vanglaini</i>		<i>The Aizawl Post</i>		<i>The Zozam Times</i>		<i>The Mizoram Post</i>		<i>Highlander</i>		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Very important	35	35	40	40	27	27	27	27	15	30	144	32.0
Important	51	51	35	35	61	61	57	57	30	60	234	52.0
Not so important	7	7	17	17	3	3	8	8	3	6	38	8.5
Unimportant	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	8	1.8
No idea	4	4	5	5	8	8	7	7	2	4	26	5.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	50	100	450	

Thirty two per cent of the readers considered the quality of newsprint to be very important. More than half of the readers (52%) considered newsprint to be important. Only 9.5 per cent of the readers consider newsprint to be unimportant. This implies that 84 per cent of the readers considered newsprint quality as very important or important. As observed in Table 4. , only 58.5 per cent of the readers are satisfied with the quality of newsprint. Thus, it becomes imperative for the newspapers to make an effort to improve their newsprint quality.

4.3.11 Preference to Receive Newspapers on a Sunday

All the newspapers under the study are published throughout the week except on Sundays. All the Mizo in the State are Christians and for most of them, Sunday is observed as a day of worship and rest. It has been a practise that all kinds of businesses are closed on Sundays, including the newspaper business. Normally, many of the people in Mizoram do not expect the newspapers to publish on a Sunday

and may even draw criticisms from the churches if they were to publish. The newspaper organisations may not find employees and distributors willing to work on a Sunday morning. In this context, it is attempted to know whether the readers under the study would prefer to receive their newspaper on Sunday. Table 4.28 shows the preference of readers to receive newspaper on a Sunday. Over 34 per cent of the readers would like to receive newspapers on a Sunday. On the other hand, over 45 per cent of the readers do not want to receive newspapers on a Sunday. One-fifth of the readers were undecided.

Table 4.28: Preference of Readers to Receive Newspapers on a Sunday

Response	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	156	34.7
No	203	45.1
Cannot say	91	20.2
Total	450	100

Additionally, one factor that may play a major part in this regard is that there are many small-scale, either church-specific or locality-specific or community-specific *Chanchinbu* (meaning newspaper) that are distributed on a Sunday. These newspapers are typically printed on the previous Saturday. These newspapers give a variety of information regarding either the church or the locality or the community.

This finding implies the existence of a vast potential market for Sunday newspapers as one-third of the respondents would prefer to read their newspaper on a Sunday. Though the Mizo people are pre-occupied on Sunday due to the church services, the newspapers organisations under the study could explore the possibility of printing Sunday issues with special features and news items. They may follow the strategies implemented by their counterparts in other regions like providing a Sunday supplement with several features like cartoons, human interest features, fashion trends, health issues and so on.

Table 4.29 shows the preference of readers to receive newspaper on a Sunday, newspaper-wise.

**Table 4.29: Preference of Readers to Receive Newspapers on a Sunday:
Newspaper-Wise**

Response	Newspaper									
	<i>Vanglaini</i>		<i>The Aizawl Post</i>		<i>The Zozam Times</i>		<i>The Mizoram Post</i>		<i>Highlander</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	57	57	47	47	16	16	15	15	21	42
No	20	20	37	37	54	54	67	67	25	50
Cannot say	23	23	16	16	30	30	18	18	4	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	50	100

The most widely circulated newspaper, *Vanglaini*, had more than half of the readers (57%) who would prefer to receive their newspaper on a Sunday. *The Aizawl Post* had 47 per cent of its readers who want the newspaper to publish on a Sunday. In contrast, *The Zozam Times* had only 16 per cent of its readers who want their newspaper on a Sunday and 54 per cent of the readers who do not want their newspaper on a Sunday. Similarly, *The Mizoram Post* has 67 per cent of its readers who do not want their newspaper on a Sunday and only 15 per cent who would prefer to receive their newspaper on a Sunday. Half of the readers of *Highlander* do not want their newspaper on a Sunday. However, 42 per cent of the readers would prefer to receive their newspaper on a Sunday. Therefore, *Vanglaini* and *The Aizawl Post* may consider delivering newspapers on Sunday in view of the existence of vast potential market.

4.3.12 Newspaper and Its Value

Newspapers have the ability to influence their readers and make an impact on society. It is one form of media that present issues to the public and may help garner, as well as reflect, community support for an issue. Newspapers, especially local newspapers, are close to the local context of a community and can serve as a forum for imparting awareness and a sense of importance about an issue. An attempt is made to derive the perception of the readers and evaluate the newspapers around certain value premises. The readers were asked to evaluate their newspapers on 12

value premises as shown in Table 4.30. This evaluation is based on a similar study conducted by Jyoti Kumar (2003) concerning Telugu newspapers.

Table 4.30: Perception of the Value of Newspapers

Response	Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Not Satisfied		Highly Dissatisfied	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
In educating and moulding opinion	48	10.7	288	64.0	96	21.3	13	2.9	5	1.1
In upholding democratic values	29	6.4	249	55.3	133	29.6	35	7.8	4	.9
In promoting national integration and universal brotherhood	37	8.	240	53.3	141	31.3	28	6.2	4	.9
In highlighting developmental issues	35	7.8	251	55.8	134	29.8	25	5.6	5	1.1
In promoting scientific temper	26	5.8	199	44.2	172	38.2	38	8.4	15	3.3
In highlighting the problems of the poor	28	6.2	197	43.8	127	28.2	89	19.8	9	2.0
In highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement	17	3.8	189	42.0	161	35.8	74	16.4	9	2.0
In fighting against corruption	30	6.7	209	46.4	132	29.3	67	14.9	12	2.7
In promoting cultural and literary values	41	9.1	249	55.3	109	24.2	49	10.9	2	.4
In providing entertainment	36	8.0	260	57.8	139	30.9	9	2.0	6	1.3
In maintaining high standards in journalism without bias	27	6.0	237	52.7	142	31.6	37	8.2	7	1.6
In upholding human rights	45	10.0	237	52.7	117	26.0	47	10.4	4	.9

n=450

Overall, nearly three-fourth of the respondents were satisfied with their newspaper in educating and moulding public opinion. Over 21 per cent of the readers do not have a definite opinion.

More than 61 per cent of the readers were satisfied with the newspaper's role in upholding democratic values. However, more than one-third of the readers did not give a positive response in this regard.

Over 61 per cent of the readers were satisfied with the role played by their newspaper in promoting national integration and universal brotherhood. However, 31.3 per cent of the readers were found to be indifferent in their response.

More than 63 per cent of the readers were satisfied with their newspaper in highlighting developmental issues and more than one-third of the readers did not give a positive response.

Exactly half of the readers were satisfied with the newspapers in their promotion of scientific temper. In other words, half of the readers were either indifferent or not satisfied with the newspapers in promoting scientific temper.

Half of the readers (50%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the problems of the poor. However, half of the readers (50%) felt that the newspapers did not do enough in highlighting the problems of the poor.

Less than half of the readers (45.8%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement. Put differently, more than half of the readers were either dissatisfied or neutral in this regard.

More than 53 per cent of the readers were satisfied with their newspaper in fighting against corruption. Over 17 per cent of the readers were not satisfied with the newspapers regarding their fight against corruption. Nearly 30% of the readers were neutral.

Over 64 per cent of the readers were satisfied with their newspaper's role in promoting cultural and literary values. Nearly one-fourth of the readers did not express their opinion of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Nearly two-third of the readers were satisfied with the entertainment provided by their newspaper. Conversely, nearly one-third did not give a positive response.

In regards to maintaining high standards in journalism without bias, over 58 per cent of the readers were satisfied with their newspapers. However, nearly one-third of the readers were indifferent in their response and 9.8 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

Two-third of the readers felt that their newspaper is upholding human rights. However, one-third of the readers gave either a negative response or neutral.

In general, there is a positive response among the readers and the readers felt that their newspaper's overall performance regarding the above mentioned value premises were good. However, with nearly half or one-third of the readers giving unfavourable response, it is clear that the newspapers have to give better efforts in serving their various purposes of upholding democratic values, promoting scientific temper, highlighting the problems of the poor and consumer problems, fighting against corruption and maintaining high standards in journalism without bias.

Table 4.31 shows that among the readers of *Vanglaini*, more than three-fourth of the readers (76%) were satisfied with the newspaper's role in educating and moulding the opinion of the public. However, nearly one-fourth of the readers (24%) did not give a positive response.

Table 4.31: Perception of the Value of Newspapers: *Vanglaini*

Response	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
In educating and moulding opinion	16	60	16	5	3
In upholding democratic values	8	47	31	11	3
In promoting national integration and universal brotherhood	10	46	32	11	1
In highlighting developmental issues	14	51	23	8	4
In promoting scientific temper	11	33	31	19	6
In highlighting the problems of the poor	11	38	22	26	3
In highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement	7	39	25	25	4
In fighting against corruption	8	35	31	23	3
In promoting cultural and literary values	10	48	24	16	2
In providing entertainment	12	58	28	1	1
In maintaining high standards in journalism without bias	13	46	27	12	2
In upholding human rights	11	45	27	14	3

n=100

More than half of the readers (55%) were satisfied in the newspaper's ability to uphold democratic values. Conversely, 45 per cent of the readers did not have a definite opinion.

More than half of the readers (56%) felt that their newspaper is promoting national integration and universal brotherhood. However, 44 per cent did not give a positive response in this regard.

Nearly two-third of the readers was satisfied with their newspaper in highlighting developmental issues. And almost one-third were indifferent in their response.

Less than half of the readers (44%) felt that their newspaper is promoting scientific temper. However, 56 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

Nearly half of the readers (49%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the problems of the poor. Conversely, 51 per cent of the readers gave a negative response.

Less than half of the readers (46%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the consumer problems and consumer movement. However, more than half (54%) were not satisfied or neutral in their response.

Less than half of the readers (43%) were satisfied with their newspaper's role in fighting against corruption. More than half of the readers (57%) gave a unfavourable response, with 31 per cent giving neutral response.

More than half of the readers (58%) were satisfied in the newspaper's ability to promote cultural and literary values. Conversely, 42 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

More than two-third of the readers (70%) were satisfied with the newspaper's entertainment performance. Only 2 per cent of the readers were not satisfied and more than one-fourth (28%) were undecided in their response.

More than half of the readers (59%) considered their newspaper to be unbiased in maintaining high journalism standards. However, more than one-fourth of the readers (27%) gave a neutral response and 14 per cent of the readers felt that the newspapers are biased.

More than half of the readers (56%) felt that their newspaper works to uphold human rights. However, 44 per cent of the readers gave either a negative response or a neutral response.

In general, the readers of *Vanglaini* are satisfied and have given positive response regarding the newspaper's ability to educate and mould opinion, uphold democratic values, promote national integration and universal brotherhood, highlight developmental issues, promote cultural and literary values, provide entertainment, maintain high standards in journalism without bias and uphold human rights. The newspaper must maintain and strive to increase the level of satisfaction in the mentioned matters. Although satisfaction levels are good in numerous value premises given, there are certain issues that have received negative or neutral responses from the readers. The newspaper may give better attention to the issues of promoting scientific temper, highlighting problems of the poor, highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement and fighting against corruption. Priority to these issues may add value to the newspaper and raise the overall satisfaction level of the readers.

Table 4.32 shows that among the readers of *The Aizawl Post*, more than two-third of the readers (68%) were satisfied with the newspaper's performance in educating and moulding opinion. However, nearly one-third of the readers did not give a positive response.

More than half of the readers (56%) were satisfied in the newspaper's part in upholding democratic values. Conversely, 44 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

More than half of the readers (52%) felt that their newspaper is promoting national integration and universal brotherhood. However, nearly half of the readers (48%) did not give a positive response.

More than half of the readers (56%) were satisfied with the newspaper in highlighting developmental issues. However, 44 per cent of the readers were indifferent in their response.

Table 4.32: Perception of the Value of Newspapers: *The Aizawl Post*

Response	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
In educating and moulding opinion	9	59	28	3	1
In upholding democratic values	9	47	32	11	1
In promoting national integration and universal brotherhood	6	46	39	6	3
In highlighting developmental issues	9	47	39	4	1
In promoting scientific temper	5	38	49	7	1
In highlighting the problems of the poor	9	39	32	18	2
In highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement	7	31	42	19	1
In fighting against corruption	11	35	33	18	3
In promoting cultural and literary values	10	46	32	12	0
In providing entertainment	10	51	37	1	1
In maintaining high standards in journalism without bias	6	43	45	6	0
In upholding human rights	14	39	32	15	0

n=100

Less than half of the readers (43%) felt that their newspaper is promoting scientific temper. Conversely, more than half of the readers (57%) did not have a definite opinion.

Nearly half of the readers (48%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the problems of the poor. Conversely, 52 per cent of the readers gave a negative response.

More than one-third of the readers (38%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the consumer problems and consumer movement. However, nearly two-third of the readers (62%) were not satisfied or neutral in their response.

Less than half of the readers (46%) were satisfied with their newspaper's role in fighting against corruption. More than half of the readers (54%) gave an unfavourable response, with 31 per cent giving neutral response.

More than half of the readers (56%) were satisfied in the newspaper's ability to promote cultural and literary values. Conversely, 44 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

Nearly two-third of the readers (61%) was satisfied with the newspaper's entertainment performance. Only 2 per cent of the readers were not satisfied and more than one-third (37%) were undecided in their response.

Nearly half of the readers (49%) considered their newspaper to be unbiased in maintaining high journalism standards. However, more than half of the readers (51%) did not have a definite opinion.

More than half of the readers (53%) felt that their newspaper works to uphold human rights. However, 47 per cent of the readers gave either a negative response or a neutral response.

Overall, among the 12 value premises evaluated, the readers of *The Aizawl Post* were satisfied with seven of the value premises. Positive responses were received regarding the newspaper's capability to educate and mould opinion, uphold democratic values, promote national integration and universal brotherhood, highlight developmental issues, promote cultural and literary values, provide entertainment, and uphold human rights. However, the newspaper needs to improve its performance in promoting scientific temper, highlighting problems of the poor, highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement, maintaining high standards and unbiased journalism and fighting against corruption. The newspaper may need to give better attention to all the issues mentioned in order to have better expansive effects.

Table 4.33 shows that among the readers of *The Zozam Times*, more than two-third of the readers (68%) were satisfied with the newspaper's role in educating and moulding the opinion of the public. However, nearly one-third of the readers did not give a positive response.

Table 4.33: Perception of the Value of Newspapers: *The Zozam Times*

Response	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
In educating and moulding opinion	7	61	29	2	1
In upholding democratic values	6	55	32	7	0
In promoting national integration and universal brotherhood	5	57	31	7	0
In highlighting developmental issues	7	55	29	9	0
In promoting scientific temper	5	42	43	8	2
In highlighting the problems of the poor	4	42	36	14	4
In highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement	2	45	36	13	4
In fighting against corruption	8	48	32	8	4
In promoting cultural and literary values	6	62	22	10	0
In providing entertainment	4	53	35	4	4
In maintaining high standards in journalism without bias	3	56	23	13	5
In upholding human rights	5	67	25	2	1

n=100

Nearly two-third of the readers (61%) were satisfied in the newspaper's ability to uphold democratic values. Conversely, 39% of the readers did not have a definite opinion.

Nearly two-third of the readers (62%) felt that their newspaper is promoting national integration and universal brotherhood. However, 38 per cent did not give a positive response in this regard.

Nearly two-third of the readers (62%) was satisfied with their newspaper in highlighting developmental issues. And more than one-third (38%) were indifferent in their response.

Less than half of the readers (47%) felt that their newspaper is promoting scientific temper. However, 54 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

Nearly half of the readers (46%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the problems of the poor. Conversely, 54 per cent of the readers gave a negative response.

Less than half of the readers (47%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the consumer problems and consumer movement. However, more than half (53%) were not satisfied or neutral in their response.

More than half of the readers (56%) were satisfied with their newspaper's role in fighting against corruption. Less than half of the readers (44%) gave an unfavourable response, with 32 per cent giving neutral response.

More than two-third of the readers (68%) were satisfied in the newspaper's ability to promote cultural and literary values. Conversely, 32 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

More than half of the readers (57%) were satisfied with the newspaper's entertainment performance. Only 8 per cent of the readers were not satisfied and more than one-third of the readers (35%) were undecided in their response.

More than half of the readers (59%) considered their newspaper to be unbiased in maintaining high journalism standards. However, nearly one-fourth of the readers (23%) gave a neutral response and 18 per cent of the readers felt that the newspapers are biased.

Nearly three-fourth of the readers (72%) felt that their newspaper works to uphold human rights. However, 28 per cent of the readers gave either a negative response or a neutral response.

In general, the readers of *The Zozam Times* are satisfied and have given positive response regarding the newspaper's ability to educate and mould opinion, uphold democratic values, promote national integration and universal brotherhood, highlight developmental issues, fight corruption, promote cultural and literary values, provide entertainment, maintain high standards in journalism without bias and uphold human rights. The newspaper may make improvement in promoting scientific temper, highlighting problems of the poor, and highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement. If efforts are made to improve coverage of all the value premises mentioned, it may raise the overall satisfaction level of the readers.

Table 4.34 shows that among the readers of *The Mizoram Post*, more than four-fifth of the readers (85%) were satisfied with the newspaper's role in educating and moulding the opinion of the public. However, 15 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

Table 4.34: Perception of the Value of Newspapers: *The Mizoram Post*

Response	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
In educating and moulding opinion	5	80	13	2	0
In upholding democratic values	3	71	22	4	0
In promoting national integration and universal brotherhood	10	62	26	2	0
In highlighting developmental issues	3	67	26	4	0
In promoting scientific temper	2	65	27	3	3
In highlighting the problems of the poor	0	58	20	22	0
In highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement	0	55	36	9	0
In fighting against corruption	2	71	14	13	0
In promoting cultural and literary values	8	69	15	8	0
In providing entertainment	7	75	16	2	0
In maintaining high standards in journalism without bias	2	69	25	4	0
In upholding human rights	10	64	18	8	0

n=100

Nearly three-fourth of the readers (74%) were satisfied in the newspaper's ability to uphold democratic values. Conversely, 26 per cent of the readers did not have a definite opinion.

Nearly three-fourth of the readers (72%) felt that their newspaper is promoting national integration and universal brotherhood. However, 28 per cent did not give a positive response in this regard.

Nearly three-fourth of the readers (70%) was satisfied with their newspaper in highlighting developmental issues. And nearly one-third (30%) were indifferent in their response.

More than two-third of the readers (67%) felt that their newspaper is promoting scientific temper. However, 33 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

More than half of the readers (58%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the problems of the poor. Conversely, 42 per cent of the readers gave a negative response.

More than half of the readers (55%) felt that their newspaper is highlighting the consumer problems and consumer movement. However, nearly half of the readers (45%) were not satisfied or neutral in their response.

Nearly three-fourth of the readers (73%) were satisfied with their newspaper's role in fighting against corruption. More than one-fourth of the readers (27%) gave an unfavourable response.

More than two-third of the readers (77%) were satisfied in the newspaper's ability to promote cultural and literary values. Conversely, 23 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

More than four-fifth of the readers (82%) were satisfied with the newspaper's entertainment performance. Only 2 per cent of the readers were not satisfied and 16 per cent were undecided in their response.

More than two-third of the readers (71%) considered their newspaper to be unbiased in maintaining high journalism standards. However, more than one-fourth of the readers (27%) gave a neutral response.

Nearly three-fourth of the readers (74%) felt that their newspaper succeeds in upholding human rights. However, 26 per cent of the readers gave either a negative response or a neutral response.

In general, the readers of *The Mizoram Post* are satisfied and have given a favourable response regarding the value of the newspaper. The newspaper must maintain the good reception of the readers and keep the readers satisfied. It can identify ways in

which it can improve its coverage of news that highlights the problems of the poor, consumer problems and consumer movement.

Table 4.35 shows that among the readers of *Highlander*, more than three-fourth of the readers (78%) were satisfied with the newspapers' contribution in educating and moulding opinion. However, nearly one-fourth (22%) were not definite in their response.

Table 4.35: Perception of the Value of Newspapers: *Highlander*

Response	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
In educating and moulding opinion	22	56	20	2	0
In upholding democratic values	6	58	32	4	0
In promoting national integration and universal brotherhood	12	58	26	4	0
In highlighting developmental issues	4	62	34	0	0
In promoting scientific temper	6	42	44	2	6
In highlighting the problems of the poor	8	40	34	18	0
In highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement	2	38	44	16	0
In fighting against corruption	2	40	44	10	4
In promoting cultural and literary values	14	48	32	6	0
In providing entertainment	6	46	46	2	0
In maintaining high standards in journalism without bias	6	47	43	4	0
In upholding human rights	10	44	30	16	0

n=100

Nearly two-third of the readers (64%) considered the newspaper to uphold democratic values. However, more than one-third of the readers (36%) did not give a favourable response.

More than one-third of the readers (70%) felt that their newspaper promotes national integration and universal brotherhood. However, 30 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

Two-third of the readers (66%) were satisfied with the newspaper's ability to highlight developmental issues. However, one-third of the readers (34%) did not have a definite opinion.

Less than half of the readers (48%) felt that the newspaper promotes scientific temper while more than half of the readers (52%) did not give a favourable response.

Less than half of the readers (48%) felt that the newspaper is highlighting the problems of the poor. However, 34 per cent of the readers gave a neutral response and 18 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

More than one-third of the readers (40%) were satisfied that the newspaper highlights consumer problems and consumer movement. However, more than half of the readers (60%) did not give a favourable response.

Less than half of the readers (42%) considered that the newspaper fights against corruption. However, more than half of the readers (58%) did not give a positive response.

Nearly two-third of the readers (62%) were satisfied in the newspaper's capability in promoting cultural and literary values. However, 38 per cent of the readers did not give a definite response.

More than half of the readers (52%) were satisfied with the newspaper in providing entertainment. However, 48 per cent of the readers did not give a favourable response.

More than half of the readers (53%) believed the newspaper maintains high standards in journalism without bias. However, 47 per cent of the readers were not satisfied or neutral in their response.

More than half of the readers (54%) felt that the newspaper upholds human rights. However, 16 per cent were not satisfied with the newspaper's ability in upholding human rights and 30 per cent were indecisive.

Overall, the readers of *Highlander* and their perception of the value of the newspaper are satisfactory and favourable responses are given for most of the values enumerated. The newspaper must retain and preserve the readers' satisfaction by continuing to educate and mould opinion, uphold democratic values, promote national integration and universal brotherhood and highlight developmental issues. The newspaper must recognize the needs of the readers in terms of promoting scientific temper, highlighting problems of the poor, consumer problems and consumer movement, fighting against corruption and maintaining unbiased journalism.

4.3.13 Level of Satisfaction

Table 4.36 shows the respondent's level of satisfaction in terms of types of news covered by the newspapers and other features of the newspaper.

More than four-fifth of the readers (81.5%) were satisfied with the coverage of local news while 24.4 per cent of the readers did not give a positive response.

North East India news coverage was considered to be satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers (62.9%). However, one-third of the readers did not give a definite response.

National news coverage was considered satisfactory by nearly three-fourth of the readers (72.3%) while 8.2 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

More than two-third of the readers (68.2%) found the international news coverage to be satisfactory. However, nearly one-third of the readers (31.8%) of the readers did not give a favourable response.

Sports news coverage was held satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers (63.4%) and 36.6 per cent of the readers did not give a favourable response.

Half of the readers (49.8%) found the business news coverage to be satisfactory. However, more than one-third of the readers (39.3%) gave a neutral response and 10.9 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

Table 4.36: Level of Satisfaction

News Item		Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Not Satisfied		Highly Dissatisfied	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1	Local news coverage	95	21.1	272	60.4	65	14.4	18	4.0	0	0.0
2	North East India news coverage	33	7.3	250	55.6	152	33.8	15	3.3	0	0.0
3	National news coverage	75	16.7	250	55.6	88	19.6	36	8.0	1	.2
4	International news coverage	59	13.1	248	55.1	99	22.0	39	8.7	5	1.1
5	Sports news coverage	61	13.6	224	49.8	147	32.7	16	3.6	2	.4
6	Business news coverage	28	6.2	196	43.6	177	39.3	41	9.1	8	1.8
7	Editorial quality	47	10.4	240	53.3	144	32.0	18	4.0	1	.2
8	Editorial page articles	41	9.1	240	53.3	151	33.6	17	3.8	1	.2
9	Features meant for Children, Women, Students, etc.	62	13.8	179	39.8	147	32.7	50	11.1	12	2.7
10	Advertisements	49	10.9	200	44.4	158	35.1	34	7.6	9	2.0
11	Price of the newspaper	47	10.4	223	49.6	166	36.9	8	1.8	6	1.3
12	Newsprint quality	44	9.8	219	48.7	144	32.0	39	8.7	4	.9
13	Quality of printing and getup	49	10.9	219	48.7	140	31.1	38	8.4	4	.9
14	Presentation & Language used	57	12.7	224	49.8	111	24.7	51	11.3	7	1.6
15	Prompt news	97	21.6	205	45.6	100	22.2	44	9.8	4	.9

n=450

Editorial quality and Editorial page articles were considered to be satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers while more than one-third of the readers did not give a positive response.

More than half of the readers (53.6%) found the features meant for children, women, students, etc. to be satisfactory. However, nearly one-third of the readers (32.7%) gave a neutral response and 13.8 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

More than half of the readers (55.3%) were satisfied with advertisements given in the newspapers while more than one-third of the readers (35.1%) did not give a definite response.

Price of the newspaper was found to be satisfactory by 60 per cent of the readers and only 3.1 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

Newsprint quality is considered to be satisfactory by more than half of the readers (58.5%) while 9.6 per cent of the readers considered it to be unsatisfactory.

More than half of the readers (59.6%) were satisfied with the quality of printing and get up. However, 31.1 per cent of the readers gave neutral response and 9.3 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

Presentation and language used was considered to be satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers (62.5%) while 12.9 per cent of the readers found it to be unsatisfactory.

More than two-third of the readers (67.2%) were satisfied with the promptness of news. However, 10.7 per cent of the readers were not satisfied.

In general, more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the coverage of different type of news and other features of the newspapers. However, a closer look at the neutral responses indicates that there is room for improvement for the newspapers. More than one-third of the readers gave neutral responses in North East India news coverage, business news coverage, editorial page articles, advertisements, and price of newspapers. Satisfaction of the readers may be acquired by improving these features. North East India news may be improved by identifying news items that may affect the people of Mizoram and the developments in the sister States that can be emulated. Business news coverage can be improved by focusing on the type of news that can benefit the major industries in the State. In addition, local business news may be added to increase utility of the news. Editorial page articles may be structured to represent the different interests of the people without bias. Advertisements given in the newspapers may be localised to better suit the needs of the readers.

It can be observed that more than ten per cent of the readers were not satisfied with the business news coverage, features meant for children, women, students, etc., presentation and language used and promptness of news. Newspapers may identify what the readers need and focus on content relevant to children, youth and women. Special columns can be created to appeal to their interests and this can increase

readership among the specific demographics. Presentation of news can be enhanced to allow easy navigation through the news items and language used can be enriched through proper editing and reporting. Prompt news can be delivered through smooth interaction with all the news reporters and better integration with the different sources of news.

Table 4.37 shows the respondent's level of satisfaction in terms of types of news covered and other features of *Vanglaini*.

Table 4.37: Level of Satisfaction: *Vanglaini*

News Item	<i>Vanglaini</i>				
	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
Coverage of Local News	36	56	5	3	0
Coverage of North East India News	12	56	30	2	0
Coverage of National News	23	43	19	14	1
Coverage of International News	14	46	26	11	3
Coverage of Sports News	20	36	39	5	0
Coverage of Business News	7	36	41	13	3
Editorial Quality	16	44	31	8	1
Editorial Page Articles	10	47	35	7	1
Features For Women, Children & Students etc.	26	27	24	17	6
Advertisements	21	41	29	7	2
Newspaper Pricing	9	51	32	5	3
Newsprint Quality	10	50	28	12	0
Quality of Printing & Get-up	9	44	31	16	0
Presentation & Language Used	14	51	25	9	1
Coverage of Prompt News	22	50	26	2	0

Among the readers of *Vanglaini*, majority of the readers (92%) considered the coverage of local news to be satisfactory. Coverage of North East India news received neutral response from nearly one-third of the readers (30%). National news coverage was considered to be unsatisfactory by 15 per cent of the readers. More than one-third of the readers (40%) did not give a positive response in terms of coverage of international news. More than half of the readers (56%) were satisfied with the coverage of sports news and 39 per cent gave a neutral response. Nearly

one-fifth of the readers (16%) found the coverage of business news to be unsatisfactory. Editorial quality was considered to be satisfactory by more than half of the readers (60%) and 31 per cent gave a neutral response. More than half of the readers (57%) considered the editorial page articles to be satisfactory and more than one-third of the readers (35%) gave a neutral response. Nearly one-fourth of the readers (23%) considered the features meant for women, children and students to be unsatisfactory. Advertisements were found to be satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers (62%). More than half of the readers (60%) were satisfied with the newspaper price and newsprint quality. Nearly one-fifth of the readers (16%) were not satisfied with the quality of printing and get-up. Nearly two-third of the readers (65%) considered the presentation and language used to be satisfactory. Nearly three-fourth of the readers (72%) were satisfied with the coverage of prompt news.

Overall, the readers of *Vanglaini* were mostly satisfied with the coverage of news items and other features of the newspaper. However, improvements can be made in terms of coverage of national news, international news, business news, features meant for women, children and students, newsprint quality, quality of printing and presentation and language used.

Table 4.38 shows the respondent's level of satisfaction in terms of types of news covered and other features of *The Aizawl Post*.

Among the readers of *The Aizawl Post*, more than three-fourth of the readers (79%) considered the coverage of local news items to be satisfactory. Only 5 per cent of the readers were not satisfied. In terms of coverage of North East India news, nearly two-third of the readers (62%) found it satisfactory. However, one-third of the readers (34%) gave neutral response. More than three-fourth of the readers (76%) considered coverage of national news to be satisfactory. Coverage of international news was considered unsatisfactory by 11 per cent of the readers. Nearly three-fourth of the readers (71%) found sports news coverage to be satisfactory but one-fourth of the readers (25%) gave neutral response. Over half of the readers (53%) were satisfied with business news coverage however, 13 per cent of the readers were not satisfied. Editorial quality and editorial page articles were found to be satisfactory by more than two-third of the readers. Scarcely half of the readers (51%) were satisfied

with features meant for children, students and women and 11 per cent of the readers were not satisfied. More than one-third of the readers (36%) gave a neutral response regarding advertisements and 11 per cent were not satisfied. Newspaper pricing was found to be satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers (61%) whereas more than one-third of the readers (37%) gave neutral response. More than half of the readers (55%) were satisfied with the quality of newsprint whereas more than one-third of the readers (37%) gave neutral responses. More than half of the readers (59%) found the quality of printing to be satisfactory. Nearly one-fifth of the readers (18%) were not satisfied with the presentation and language used and 13 per cent of the readers were not satisfied with the coverage of prompt news.

Table 4.38: Level of Satisfaction: *The Aizawl Post*

News Item	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>				
	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
Coverage of Local News	24	55	16	5	0
Coverage of North East India News	9	53	34	4	0
Coverage of National News	21	55	16	8	0
Coverage of International News	19	55	15	10	1
Coverage of Sports News	23	48	25	4	0
Coverage of Business News	9	44	34	9	4
Editorial Quality	13	55	27	5	0
Editorial Page Articles	16	53	29	2	0
Features For Women, Children & Students etc.	11	40	38	10	1
Advertisements	11	42	36	10	1
Newspaper Pricing	8	53	37	2	0
Newsprint Quality	7	48	37	8	0
Quality of Printing & Get-up	11	48	30	11	0
Presentation & Language Used	14	44	24	16	2
Coverage of Prompt News	24	34	29	11	2

Overall, the readers of *The Aizawl Post* are satisfied with the coverage of news items. However, coverage of business news needs to be enhanced. Features for children, women and students need to be strengthened. Presentation and language used and coverage of prompt news can be refined.

Table 4.39 shows the respondent's level of satisfaction in terms of types of news covered and other features of *The Zozam Times*

Table 4.39: Level of Satisfaction: *The Zozam Times*

News Item	<i>The Zozam Times</i>				
	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
Coverage of Local News	14	71	9	6	0
Coverage of North East India News	10	53	28	9	0
Coverage of National News	13	68	13	6	0
Coverage of International News	11	61	20	7	1
Coverage of Sports News	8	57	29	4	2
Coverage of Business News	7	45	38	9	1
Editorial Quality	9	56	32	3	0
Editorial Page Articles	7	59	31	3	0
Features For Women, Children & Students etc.	7	44	35	12	2
Advertisements	5	50	29	13	3
Newspaper Pricing	16	50	34	0	0
Newsprint Quality	13	51	24	8	4
Quality of Printing & Get-up	13	65	15	5	2
Presentation & Language Used	15	60	20	3	2
Coverage of Prompt News	15	61	16	8	0

Among the readers of *The Zozam Times*, more than four-fifth of the readers (85%) were satisfied with the coverage of local news. Coverage of North East India news was considered to be satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers (63%) and more than one-fourth of the readers (28%) gave neutral response. National news coverage was found to be satisfactory by more than four-fifth of the readers (81%). International news coverage was considered to be satisfactory by nearly three-fourth of the readers (72%). Nearly two-third of the readers (65%) was satisfied with the coverage of sports news however, 29 per cent gave neutral response. Business news was found to be satisfactory by 52 per cent of the readers and 10 per cent of the readers were not satisfied. Editorial quality and editorial page articles were considered to be satisfactory by two-third of the readers and nearly one-third of the readers gave neutral response. Features for women, children and students were

considered to be unsatisfactory by 14 per cent of the readers and more than one-third of the readers (35%) gave neutral response. Nearly one-fourth of the readers (16%) were not satisfied with the advertisements. Two-third of the readers (66%) were satisfied with pricing of the newspaper and one-third of the respondents (34%) gave neutral response. Newsprint quality was considered to be satisfactory by nearly two-third of the readers (64%) however, 12 per cent of the readers were not satisfied. The quality of printing, presentation and language used and coverage of prompt news was found to be satisfactory by more than three-fourth of the readers.

In general, the readers of *The Zozam Times* are satisfied with the coverage of news items and other features. However, there are some areas of improvement that the newspaper can look into to enhance its product. Coverage of business news must be enriched; features for women, children and students can be created, advertisements can be made to better suit the needs of the readers, and the quality of newsprint can be developed.

Table 4.40 shows the respondent's level of satisfaction in terms of types of news covered and other features of *The Mizoram Post*

Among the readers of *The Mizoram Post*, more than two-third of the readers (67%) were satisfied with the coverage of local news while 31 per cent gave neutral response. Nearly half of the readers (43%) gave neutral response for coverage of North East India news. Coverage of national news, international news and sports news were considered to be satisfactory by three-fifth of the readers. Less than half of the readers (45%) found the coverage of business news to be satisfactory while nearly half of the readers (49%) gave neutral response. Editorial quality and editorial page articles were considered to be satisfactory by more than half of the readers. Features for women, children and students were considered to be unsatisfactory by 10 per cent of the readers. Advertisements were found to be satisfactory by half of the readers (50%) and 44 per cent gave neutral response. Newspaper pricing and newsprint quality were considered to be satisfactory by more than half of the readers, however nearly half of the readers gave neutral response. Quality of printing was found to be unsatisfactory by 7 per cent of the readers and 46 per cent of the readers

gave neutral response. Nearly one-fifth of the readers (17%) were not satisfied with the presentation and language used. More than one-fifth of the readers (21%) were not satisfied with the coverage of prompt news.

Table 4.40: Level of Satisfaction: *The Mizoram Post*

News Item	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>				
	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
Coverage of Local News	11	56	31	2	0
Coverage of North East India News	0	57	43	0	0
Coverage of National News	8	53	31	8	0
Coverage of International News	9	51	31	9	0
Coverage of Sports News	6	55	37	2	0
Coverage of Business News	2	43	49	6	0
Editorial Quality	3	51	44	2	0
Editorial Page Articles	4	51	42	3	0
Features For Women, Children & Students etc.	9	44	37	9	1
Advertisements	7	43	44	3	3
Newspaper Pricing	7	44	46	0	3
Newsprint Quality	3	49	43	5	0
Quality of Printing & Get-up	5	42	46	5	2
Presentation & Language Used	2	48	33	15	2
Coverage of Prompt News	21	37	21	19	2

Overall, considerable number of readers of *The Mizoram Post* gave neutral responses which show that the unfavourable responses need to be rectified swiftly. The presentation and language used and coverage of prompt news need to improve. Coverage of business news needs to be adequate and better suit the needs of the readers. The features meant for women, children and students can be created to attract more readers. Quality of printing can be enhanced to satisfy the readers.

Table 4.41 shows the respondent's level of satisfaction in terms of types of news covered and other features of *Highlander*. Among the readers of *Highlander*, more than four-fifth of the readers (88%) were satisfied with the coverage of local news and only 4 per cent were not satisfied.

Table 4.41: Level of Satisfaction: Highlander

News Item	<i>Highlander</i>				
	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%
Coverage of Local News	20	68	8	4	0
Coverage of North East India News	4	62	34	0	0
Coverage of National News	20	62	18	0	0
Coverage of International News	12	70	14	4	0
Coverage of Sports News	8	56	34	2	0
Coverage of Business News	6	56	30	8	0
Editorial Quality	12	68	20	0	0
Editorial Page Articles	8	60	28	4	0
Features For Women, Children & Students etc.	18	48	26	4	4
Advertisements	10	48	40	2	0
Newspaper Pricing	14	50	34	2	0
Newsprint Quality	22	42	24	12	0
Quality of Printing & Get-up	22	40	36	2	0
Presentation & Language Used	24	42	18	16	0
Coverage of Prompt News	30	46	16	8	0

Coverage of North East India news was considered to be satisfactory by two-third of the readers and one-third of the readers gave neutral response. More than four-fifth of the readers (82%) were satisfied with the coverage of national and international news. Sports news coverage was found to be satisfactory by 64 per cent of the readers. Business news coverage was considered to be satisfactory by 62 per cent of the readers while 8 per cent of the readers were not satisfied. Editorial quality was found satisfactory by 80 per cent of the readers. More than two-third of the readers (68%) consider the editorial page articles to be satisfactory. Features for women, children and students were found to be unsatisfactory by 8 per cent of the readers. Neutral responses were given for advertisements by 40 per cent of the readers. Newspaper pricing and quality of newsprint was found to be satisfactory by 64 per cent of the readers. Quality of printing was found satisfactory by 62 per cent of the readers. Nearly one-fifth of the readers (16%) were not satisfied with the presentation and language used. Coverage of prompt news was considered satisfactory by more than three-fourth (76%) of the readers.

Overall, the readers of *Highlander* are satisfied by the coverage of news items especially local news, national and international news. However, improvements need to be made in terms of features for women, children and students, newsprint quality and presentation and language used.

4.3.14 Dependency on the Newspaper

4.3.14.1 First Source of News

An attempt is made to know the dependency of the respondents on newspapers as a medium compared to other media of mass communication such as television, radio and internet, for news. As observed in Table 4.42, newspaper was the first source of news for 24 per cent of the respondents.

Table 4.42: First Source of News

Source	Number of readers	%
Newspaper	108	24.0
Television	86	19.1
Radio	20	4.4
Internet	236	52.4
Total	450	100

Nearly one-fifth of the readers watch television for their news. Only 4.4 per cent of the readers acknowledged radio as their first source of news. Interestingly, for more than half (52.4%) of the readers the internet was the first source of news. With the ability of the internet to provide instant news, its popularity as a medium for acquiring the latest news is rising, especially due to increased use of smart phones and social media. However, the number of hoax news is also rising and there is a need on the part of the reader for discernment.

The first source of news need not be the intensively used medium. Although 75 per cent of the readers admitted that newspaper was not their first source of news, more than 45 per cent of the readers (as observed in Table 4.24) preferred newspaper for adequate news. Many studies (Dhande, 2016, Mishra & Koundal, 2020, Audit

Bureau of Circulations, 2017) indicate that though the newspapers cannot compete with the electronic media in reaching out the readers faster, the readers look for a detailed analysis of news events in the newspapers. There is a big scope for the newspapers under study to meet this challenge by improving the contents of the newspaper in terms of offering a variety of news in a comprehensive manner and also in terms of analytical news.

4.3.14.2 Most Reliable News Medium

Table 4.43 shows the preference of the respondents among the different medium of newspaper, television, radio and internet for adequate news in terms of reliability.

Table 4.43: Most Reliable News Medium

Source	Number of readers	%
Newspaper	204	45.3
Television	145	32.2
Radio	20	4.4
Internet	81	18.0
Total	450	100

Readers are more likely to trust newspapers than other sources (Myers 2006). It is considered to be the most reliable news medium by 45.3 per cent of the readers. Although more than half of the readers (52.4%), as per Table 4.42, use the internet as their first source of news, only 18 per cent of the readers consider it to be the most reliable medium. An India wide study of media consumption behaviour also revealed that newspapers remain the most trusted source of information among consumers of India (Mathur, 2022). It is evident that newspapers still enjoy high credibility over other news medium. The high standing of the newspapers is one of its major strength and it can be retained and strengthened further by maintaining high journalism standards and news without bias.

4.4 ONLINE MEDIA HABITS

The internet and social media have revolutionized communication and networking the world over and Mizoram is no exception. Social media has deepened globalization in a way unparalleled. Internet-related jobs have increased including small and medium enterprises that connect and perform transactions online (Narayan & Narayanan, 2016). As discussed extensively in the previous chapters, the internet and social media have become a major platform for connectivity and consumption of news. While media and communication technologies have expanded their scale and scope, the role of newspapers also has to be re-examined in this context.

4.4.1 Internet Access

Table 4.44 shows the readers' habit of using the internet. Over 77 per cent of the readers claimed that they are in a habit of using the internet and only 14.9 per cent did not use the internet.

Table 4.44: Habit of Using the Internet

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	350	77.8
No	67	14.9
No response	33	7.3
Total	450	450

With advancements in technology and ease of internet access, the number of people using the internet throughout the world is rapidly increasing. Internet penetration rate in India went up to nearly 47 per cent of the total population in 2021, from just about four per cent in 2007. The digital population in India amounted to approximately 658 million active users as of February, 2022 (Basuroy, 2022). In line with this national development, the State of Mizoram has also seen rapid rise in internet usage. With better internet connections and availability of smart phones, people of all ages can now access the internet. It is observed that the Mizo people in general are known for adapting to new technology in terms of use of the ICT tools, purchase of high-tech products, and so on.

4.4.2 Newspaper through Internet

Table 4.45 shows the distribution of readers who are reading their newspaper through the internet.

Table 4.45: Reading Newspaper through Internet

Response	Frequency	%
Reading newspaper through internet	126	28.0
Not reading newspaper through internet	312	69.3
No response	12	2.7
Total	450	100

It is observed from the table that only 28 per cent of the respondents are reading their newspaper through the internet. Over 69 per cent of the respondents did not prefer to read it through internet. It suggests that despite having access to internet the readers enjoy reading the newspaper in a conventional, offline mode. Though it sounds well, for a newspaper industry, due to rapid access to internet through smart phones, many newspapers and news magazines have started offering their news in the internet, keeping an eye in the New Media. This may be high time for the newspapers under the study to emulate the same practice in order to serve the audience better. *Vanglaini*, *The Aizawl Post* and *The Mizoram Post* have published their online version. Readers use the internet strategically to consume news by filtering their interests. However, print news and online news are not simply competing or substituting for one another, but involved in the ecology of media that is enabling the two to be mutually complementary and reinforcing (Newman et al., 2014). The growing popularity of online access of news has contributed for shifting newspaper consumption habits (Kaur et al., 2019) and newspapers need to seize the opportunities presented by digital transformations.

4.4.3 Social Media

Table 4.46 shows the readers' use of social media. Over 75 per cent of the readers use social media. Only 16.9 per cent of the readers are not using social media.

Table 4.46: Use of Social Media

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	341	75.8
No	76	16.9
No response	33	7.3
Total	450	100

Social media in the present time has a power to influence. It serves as a useful medium not only for connecting with friends and family but also for advertising products and services. It allows the users to network with other individuals and enhances their communicative power.

It can be observed from Table 4.47 that the readers are active in using different social media and they spend considerable amount of time on social media.

Table 4.47: Use of Social Media and Time Spent

Media	Less than 1 hour		1-2 Hours		2-3 Hours		3-4 Hours		More than 5 hours	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<i>Facebook</i> ¹	129	28.7	92	20.4	31	6.9	12	2.7	16	3.6
<i>WhatsApp</i> ²	97	21.6	86	19.1	57	12.7	25	5.6	49	10.9
<i>Twitter</i> ³	57	12.7	15	3.3	3	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>LinkedIn</i> ⁴	38	8.4	5	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
<i>YouTube</i> ⁵	89	19.8	72	16.0	75	16.7	10	2.2	8	1.8
<i>Flickr</i> ⁶	39	8.7	7	1.6	1	0.2	2	0.4	3	0.7
<i>Instagram</i> ⁷	111	24.7	26	5.8	18	4.0	4	0.9	9	2.0
Any other media	8	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

n=450

Prospects for the newspapers may be to have presence on all the social networking sites as this will ensure high visibility and popularity. Social media provide opportunities to create and expand audiences, increase geographical reach, respond more quickly than ever before to news events and issues, and interact with news consumers in more immediate and direct ways (Bowd, 2016). Social media sites, accessible across platforms such as smart phone, tablet and laptop provides opportunities for newspaper organisations owing to their ease of access and ease of

use, as well as the sheer habit among users (Tandoc & Johnson, 2016). Through optimal use of social media, the newspapers can reach out to its readers and in addition attract new consumers. The number of social media users in India has rapidly increased over the years with a staggering 467 million active social media users in 2021 (Dixon, 2022). News and social media have become inextricably linked. Social media is now among the most used news sources worldwide, outpacing radio, print news publications, blogs, and word-of-mouth. Thus, with social media platforms becoming the source of news for many of the internet users, this offers great opportunity to the newspapers.

4.5. TESTING OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In the current study, the following hypotheses have been framed:

1. H₀₁: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels.
2. H₀₂: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualifications.
3. H₀₃: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the local news.
4. H₀₄: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the national news.
5. H₀₅: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.
6. H₀₆: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news.

The statistical analysis for hypotheses testing was conducted on SPSS 25. To accommodate the responses of the participants for data analysis, Microsoft Excel 2016 was used to code the variables of interest for testing of the first to the fourth hypotheses, i.e. for income level, educational qualification, preference for local news, and preference for international news. This study recoded total annual household income into five group *viz.* *Below 100,000, Between 100,000-150,000, Between 150,000-200,000, Between 200,000-250,000, and Above 250,000.* However,

the readers' income variable was limiting in that it capped responses at Above 250,000. Education qualifications were recoded into the following five categories: below class 10, class 10, class 12, graduate, and post graduate and above. Furthermore, the preferences for local news and preferences for national news were measured on dichotomous scales (i.e. "Preferred" or "Not Preferred"). To test for the hypotheses, Chi -squared tests of independence were used to test for the significant association.

Hypothesis Testing 1

The hypothesis, "*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels*" has been tested using chi-square test to test whether there exists any association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels. Table 4.48 shows the selected daily readers and their income level.

Table 4.48: Selected Daily Readers and their Income Level

		Income Level					Total
		Below 100,000	100,000-150,000	150,000-200,000	200,000-250,000	Above 250,000	
Selected Daily	<i>Vanglaini</i>	22	10	27	8	33	100
	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	22	14	16	18	30	100
	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	26	10	13	26	25	100
	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	23	22	12	21	22	100
	<i>Highlander</i>	15	12	4	10	9	50
Total		108	68	72	83	119	450

Table 4.49 presents the output of the chi-squared tests for selected daily readers and their income level. The resulting statistic was found to be significant, Pearson Chi-Square $\chi^2 = 35.482$, and p value of 0.003; which is smaller than 0.05. *This implies that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income level.*

Table 4.49 - Chi-Squared Tests for Selected Daily Readers and their Income Level

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.428 ^a	16	.003
Likelihood Ratio	35.663	16	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.746	1	.053
N of Valid Cases	450		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.56.

Hypothesis Testing 2

The hypothesis, “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualifications*” has been tested using chi-square test to test whether there exists any association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualifications. Table 4.50 shows the selected daily readers and their educational level.

Table 4.50: Selected Daily Readers and their Educational Level

		Education					Total
		Below Class 10	Class 10	Class 12	Graduate	Post Graduate	
Selected Daily	<i>Vanglaini</i>	11	3	27	20	39	100
	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	18	13	31	24	14	100
	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	10	13	39	23	15	100
	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	8	15	38	31	8	100
	<i>Highlander</i>	6	8	18	13	5	50
Total		53	52	153	111	81	450

Table 4.51 shows the output of the chi-squared tests for selected daily readers and their educational level. The resulting statistic was found to be significant, Pearson Chi-Square $\chi^2 = 52.266$, and p value of 0.00001; which is smaller than 0.05. This implies that *there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualification.*

Table 4.51: Chi-Squared Tests for Selected Daily Readers and their Educational Level

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	52.266 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	50.199	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.872	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	450		
<i>a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.78.</i>			

Hypothesis Testing 3

The hypothesis, “*There is no significant association among the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the local news*” has been tested using chi-square test to test whether there exists any association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the local news. Table 4.52 shows the selected daily readers and their preference for local news.

Table 4.52: Selected Daily Readers and their Preference for Local News

		Preference for Local News		Total
		Not Preferred	Preferred	
Selected Daily	<i>Vanglaini</i>	32	68	100
	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	28	72	100
	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	18	82	100
	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	50	50	100
	<i>Highlander</i>	15	35	50
Total		143	307	450

Table 4.53 presents the chi-squared test for selected daily readers and their preference for local news. The resulting statistic was found to be significant, Pearson Chi-Square $\chi^2=24.806$, and p value of 0.000055. This implies that *there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preferences of local news.*

Table 4.53: Chi-Squared Tests for Selected Daily Readers and their Preference for Local News

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.806 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	24.706	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.315	1	.128
N of Valid Cases	450		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.89.

Hypothesis Testing 4

The hypothesis, “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the national news*” has been tested using chi-square test to test whether there exists any association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the national news. Table 4.54 shows the selected daily readers and their preference for national news.

Table 4.54: Selected Daily Readers and their Preference for National News

		Preference for National News		Total
		Not Preferred	Preferred	
Selected Daily	<i>Vanglaini</i>	80	20	100
	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	85	15	100
	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	93	7	100
	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	80	20	100
	<i>Highlander</i>	45	5	50
Total		383	67	450

Table 4.55 presents chi-squared tests for selected daily readers and their preference for national news. The resulting statistic was found to be significant, Pearson Chi-Square $\chi^2 = 9.978$, and p value of 0.041; which is smaller than 0.05. This implies that *there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for national news.*

Table 4.55: Chi-Squared Tests for Selected Daily Readers and their Preference for National News

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.978 ^a	4	.041
Likelihood Ratio	10.760	4	.029
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.035	1	.309
N of Valid Cases	450		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.44.

Hypothesis Testing 5

The hypothesis, “*There is no significant association among the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers*” has been tested using chi-square test to test whether there exists any association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers. Table 4.56 shows the selected daily readers and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.

Table 4.56: Selected Daily Readers and their Satisfaction about Price of the Newspapers

		Satisfaction with Price of Newspaper					Total
		Highly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	
Selected Daily	<i>Vanglaini</i>	3	5	32	51	9	100
	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	0	2	37	53	8	100
	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	0	0	34	50	16	100
	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	3	0	46	44	7	100
	<i>Highlander</i>	0	1	17	25	7	50
	Total		6	8	166	223	47

Table 4.57 presents chi-squared tests for selected daily readers and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers. The resulting statistic was found to be significant, Likelihood Ratio $\chi^2 = 26.554$, and p value of 0.047. This implies that *there is a*

significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.

Table 4.57: Chi-Squared Tests for Selected Daily Readers and Their Satisfaction about Price of the Newspapers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.554 ^a	16	.047
Likelihood Ratio	30.023	16	.018
Linear-by-Linear Association	.283	1	.595
N of Valid Cases	450		

a. 10 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .67.

Hypothesis Testing 6

The hypothesis, “There is no significant difference among the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news” has been tested using chi-square test to test whether there exists any association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news. Table 4.58 shows the selected daily readers and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.

Table 4.58: Selected Daily Readers and their Satisfaction about Price of the Newspapers

		Satisfaction With Coverage of Latest News					Total
		Highly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	
Selected Daily	<i>Vanglaini</i>	0	2	26	50	22	100
	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	2	11	29	34	24	100
	<i>The Zoram Times</i>	0	8	16	61	15	100
	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	2	19	21	37	21	100
	<i>Highlander</i>	0	4	8	23	15	50
Total		4	44	100	205	97	450

Table 4.59 presents the chi-squared tests for selected daily readers and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers. The resulting statistic was found to be significant, Likelihood Ratio $\chi^2 = 42.700$, and p value of 0.000310. *This implies that*

there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news.

Table 4.59: Chi-Squared Tests for Selected Daily Readers and their Satisfaction about Price of the Newspapers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.071 ^a	16	.001
Likelihood Ratio	42.700	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.592	1	.441
N of Valid Cases	450		
<i>a. 6 cells (24.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .44.</i>			

4.6 CONCLUSION

Consumer behaviour and every nuance of it are central to marketing. Consumer behaviour consists of how the consumer's emotions, attitudes, and preferences affect buying behaviour. To have a profitable relationship with the customer, marketers must focus on achieving customer value, high levels of satisfaction and customer retention.

In the attempt to analyse the consumer behaviour of newspaper readers in Mizoram for the select dailies, there was a total of 450 respondents out of which 57.6 per cent were males and 42.4 per cent were female readers. The absence of a significant gap in newspaper consumption according to gender in Mizoram may be due to high female literacy and female participation in all spheres of life. Nearly one-third of the respondents were in the 20-29 age groups. This is significant as young readers are vital for sustaining the newspaper business in the forthcoming years. Over 42 per cent of the readers were graduates and post graduates and over 31 per cent of the respondents were employees. Although readership is higher among the higher level of education, there is a sizeable amount of news consumption across all educational backgrounds. Thus, newspapers should recognise all levels for the opportunities they can provide. Newspaper, being a universal household product and low priced, can be

afforded by most of the households regardless of their level of income. This is evident as over 22 per cent of the respondents were having below Rs. 1,00,000 of income.

Newspaper is a daily product for most of the readers as more than three-fourth of the respondents read a newspaper daily. Majority of the respondents (85.56%) read newspapers for one hour or less in a day. In terms of readers' preferential contents in their newspaper, over 48 per cent of the readers prefer to read the whole paper. This indicates a high appreciation of newspaper and the information it carries. However, more than half of the readers were not reading the entire paper. This presents a marketing challenge to the newspapers in terms of creating more interest in the reader about the contents of the newspaper. Over 91 per cent of the respondents bought their newspaper through subscription. Majority of the respondents read more than one newspaper, which may indicate an element of overlapping newspaper interests among readers. Half of the respondents read their newspaper in the morning from 6 to 8 a.m. Over 83 per cent of the readers reveal that their parents exhibited interest in newspaper reading during their childhood. Parents who consistently model habitual reading for their children might leave a lasting effect on them that they can later emulate as they move through life. Over 82 per cent of the readers admitted that their habit of reading a newspaper was self-instilled. Purchasing a newspaper through subscription denotes that it is basically a family product as many members of a family tend to read the paper over a period of time. In this regard, parents play an important role in cultivating the reading habits among the children.

The type of news preferred by the respondents was mostly local news with over 64 per cent of the readers preferring it, followed by 18 per cent of the readers preferring international news. For a land-locked and relatively remote state like Mizoram, relevance is the paramount driver of local news consumption. Readers prefer local news as it is concerned with their home State which has profound impact on their lives. It has been observed that publics around the globe consume all types of news, but they are most interested in news that is close to home. Interestingly, more number of the respondents (18%) preferred international news. As noted, Mizoram is sharing international boundaries with Myanmar and Bangladesh. It is further

observed that Mizo people have an inclination to read and to watch content relating to Koreans, Japanese and Turkish in terms of literature and entertainment. In addition, due to the influence of British missionaries and their efforts at education and conversion in Mizoram, it has been relatively easier to identify with, and embrace aspects of western culture since, by the turn of the century a majority of Mizos were already converted in Christianity, and many people could speak the English language.

As regards the readers' perception of coverage of news items to be adequate or whether it needs to improve or reduce, majority of the readers consider the local news, international news, editorials, editorial articles, sports news, financial news, entertainments news and advertisement news to be adequate. However, more than half of the respondents consider the regional news and national news in need of reduction.

Over 76 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the price of the newspaper and only 5.3 per cent were not satisfied with the price. The pricing of the newspaper is seen to be irrelevant for nearly half of the readers (48%) as they would continue to purchase or subscribe to the newspaper even if the price increased. However, 19 per cent of the readers would stop buying or subscribing the newspaper if the price increased. Over 84 per cent of the readers considered the quality of newsprint as important. It is observed that the newspapers that are printed in Mizoram have been using a low quality of newsprint compared to their counterparts in other regions in the country. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the newspapers to make an effort to improve their newsprint quality. All the newspapers under the study are published throughout the week except on Sundays. Over 34 per cent of the readers would like to receive newspapers on a Sunday. On the other hand, over 45 per cent of the readers do not want to receive newspapers on a Sunday. This finding implies the existence of a vast potential market for Sunday newspapers as one-third of the respondents would prefer to read their newspaper on a Sunday. Though the Mizo people are pre-occupied on Sunday due to the church services, the newspapers organisations under the study could explore the possibility of printing Sunday issues with special features and news items.

Nearly two-third of the readers felt that their newspaper does not have a balanced proportion. The quantity of news is equally important to the reader as the quality of news. Newspaper organisations must provide adequate news and the details of news items must be as required by the readers. Additionally, newspapers need to provide more news in a comprehensive way in less space in order to retain reader's interest. At the same time, the survival of a newspaper depends largely on its advertising revenue and thus need to allot certain space for advertisements. Readers also look for advertising in a newspaper. Therefore, a balance must be maintained between news and advertisements in order to retain readers as well as attract advertisers. Advertisers give high importance to the circulation number of newspapers as higher circulation reaches more consumers. However, if the newspapers are providing more advertisements at the cost of news, they may lose their readers to their competitors.

Newspapers have the ability to influence their readers and make an impact on society. It is one form of media that present issues to the public and may help garner, as well as reflect, community support for an issue. Newspapers, especially local newspapers, are close to the local context of a community and can serve as a forum for imparting awareness and a sense of importance about an issue. An attempt is made to derive the perception of the readers and evaluate the newspapers around certain value premises. The readers were asked to evaluate their newspapers on 12 value premises. In general, there is a positive response among the readers and the readers felt that their newspaper's overall performance regarding the above mentioned value premises were good. However, with nearly half or one-third of the readers giving unfavourable response, it is clear that the newspapers have to give better efforts in serving their various purposes of upholding democratic values, promoting scientific temper, highlighting the problems of the poor and consumer problems, fighting against corruption and maintaining high standards in journalism without bias.

In general, more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the coverage of different type of news and other features of the newspapers. However, a closer look at the neutral responses indicates that there is room for improvement for the newspapers. More than one-third of the readers gave neutral responses in North East

India news coverage, business news coverage, editorial page articles, advertisements, and price of newspapers. Satisfaction of the readers may be acquired by improving these features. Newspaper was the first source of news for 24 per cent of the respondents and is considered to be the most reliable news medium by 45.3 per cent of the readers. Interestingly, for more than half (52.4%) of the readers the internet was the first source of news. With the ability of the internet to provide instant news, its popularity as a medium for acquiring the latest news is rising, especially due to increased use of smart phones and social media. Though the newspapers cannot compete with the electronic media in reaching out the readers faster, the readers look for a detailed analysis of news events in the newspapers. There is a big scope for the newspapers under study to meet this challenge by improving the contents of the newspaper in terms of offering a variety of news in a comprehensive manner and also in terms of analytical news.

Over 77 per cent of the readers claimed that they are in a habit of using the internet and only 14.9 per cent did not use the internet. With advancements in technology and ease of internet access, the number of people using the internet throughout the world is rapidly increasing. Only 28 per cent of the respondents read their newspaper through the internet and over 69 per cent of the respondents did not prefer to read it through internet. Print news and online news are not simply competing or substituting for one another, but involved in the ecology of media that is enabling the two to be mutually complementary and reinforcing. The growing popularity of online access of news has contributed for shifting newspaper consumption habits and newspapers need to seize the opportunities presented by digital transformations. Over 75 per cent of the readers use social media. Only 16.9 per cent of the readers are not using social media. Social media in the present time has a power to influence. It serves as a useful medium not only for connecting with friends and family but also for advertising products and services. It allows the users to network with other individuals and enhances their communicative power. News and social media have become inextricably linked. Social media is now among the most used news sources worldwide, outpacing radio, print news publications, blogs, and word-of-mouth.

Thus, with social media platforms becoming the source of news for many of the internet users, this offers great opportunity to the newspapers.

Significant associations have been seen between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income level as well as educational qualification. Newspapers must therefore consider all demographic groups that are likely to be interested in reading them. Despite the fact that the newspapers are read by more people in high income categories, there are still numerous readers among the lower income category. It would be prudent for the newspapers to take into account the needs of the lower income group as they make up a large majority of the population. Local news is preferred by majority of the readers and there is significant association between the readers and the preference for local news as well as their preference for national news. Since local newspapers are a major source of knowledge on local issues, their readership offers a reliable indicator of how much local information is consumed by the public. Technological advances have allowed the easy transmission of information over large distances and national news can also be consumed through other media such as television, radio and the Internet. A significant association is found between the readers of the select dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers. A significant association is also found between the readers and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news. When newspapers identify and focus on content readers need, it results in higher satisfaction.

CHAPTER - 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

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CHAPTER-5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter enumerates the important findings of the present study and attempts to provide suggestions for newspaper organisations and the Government of Mizoram based on the findings of the study. Further, this chapter highlights the scope of future research for prospective researchers in the field of newspaper marketing.

5.1 MAJOR FINDINGS

5.1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the main concepts of newspapers in terms of its nature, importance, components and classifications. It lays emphasis on the marketing of newspapers and the importance of consumer oriented marketing practices for newspaper organisations. The chapter presents the current scenario of the newspaper industry from a global perspective and narrates the Indian experience as it gradually shifts from an industry with missionary motives to a profit driven and capitalistic industry. It describes the situation of the newspaper industry in Mizoram and the multitude of print newspapers and periodicals. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic has been outlined to understand its effect on the newspaper industry.

A broad review of literature of over 95 research studies was made following a thematic approach to highlight their main findings and covering the areas of newspaper industry, consumer behaviour of newspaper readers and impact of information technology and new media on newspaper industry. The literature incorporates the state of the newspaper industry from a global and national perspective. The consumer behaviour of newspaper readers and the impact of digital transformation on newspapers were also taken into account.

The research design of the study is specified and describes the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the hypotheses formulated, methodology and limitations of the study. The study was conducted on five newspapers viz. *Vanglaini*, *The Aizawl Post*, *The Zozam Times*, *The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander*, selected on the ground that they are the only newspapers in Mizoram that have both RNI registration as well as DAVP empanelment. Readership survey was conducted on the readers of the select newspapers. The primary data were collected using two sets of structured questionnaires for the selected newspaper organisations and the readers and an interview with the publishers of the selected newspapers. The secondary data was collected from documents of the newspaper organisations, journals, websites, books, Government records and relevant reports. The data collected were analysed and inferred using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. For testing of the hypotheses, Chi-squared tests of independence were used to test for the significant association.

5.1.2 The Newspaper Market in India with reference to Mizoram: Characteristics, Circulation and Competition

The main objective of Chapter 2 is “*to study the characteristics of the newspaper market in India with reference to Mizoram in respect of the number of players (local and national), marketing performance in terms of circulation and intra and inter-media competition*”. In compliance with the objective, the main findings of the chapter have been presented with reference to the newspaper market in India, the newspaper market in Mizoram and its evolution, the characteristics of newspapers in Mizoram with respect to language, ownership, journalist, technology, advertising, pricing, distribution and registration with the government. The marketing performance of the newspapers in terms of circulation has been highlighted for each of the administrative Districts in Mizoram. Competition faced by the newspapers within the industry and growth of other media and their implications have been described.

The Newspaper Market in India

- The newspaper industry in 2021 had a total of 1,44,520 publications (newspapers and other periodicals) with more than 386 million copies published in 189 different languages and dialects and a readership of 400 million.
- The largest circulated daily in 2021 was a Hindi language newspaper *Dainik Bhaskar*, with a circulation of more than 3.8 million copies. The largest circulated English Daily, the *Times of India*, had a daily circulation of more than 2.1 million copies.
- In 2021, Hindi dailies were among the highest number of all the languages (4349), followed by Urdu (1107), Telugu (1083), English (820), Marathi (617), Kannada (560), Gujarati (369), Tamil (180), Odia (132) and Malayalam (119).
- The ownership pattern, in 2021, showed that 8218 newspapers were owned by individuals (84.28%) followed by 652 newspapers owned by private limited companies (6.68%), 326 newspapers owned by public limited companies (3.34%) and the government owning only two newspapers (0.02%).
- Of the ten top dailies that had the highest readership in 2019, each had different ownership and controlled by a different family.
- About Rs. 900 million was estimated to be generated by the print industry through digital media in 2021. As of 2019, digital news reached approximately 80 per cent of internet users across India.
- The newspaper industry although it follows self-regulation, is monitored by the RNI and regulated by the PCI in terms of ethics and standards. Regulators such as SEBI and CCI actively regulate competition in the market.
- Newsprint is regulated with an import duty of five per cent since 2020.
- The revenue from print advertising across India in 2021 was about Rs. 151 billion. In 2022, the Indian government spent over Rs. 1.7 billion on advertisements in newspapers distributed among more than six thousand newspapers.

The Newspaper Market in Mizoram: Characteristics

- The first newspaper published in Mizoram was *Mizo Chanchin Laisuih*, in 1898 making the newspaper one of the first industries in Mizoram.
- The newspaper industry has 95 dailies, nine weeklies and two monthly newspapers as on 2021.
- The daily newspapers published in the State are in Mizo language (91), English language (3) and Mara language (1).
- All the daily newspapers are owned by individuals and residents of Mizoram.
- Periodicals are owned by individuals, non-government organisations, societies and churches. The highest circulated monthly newspaper, *Synod*, is owned by the Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram Synod.
- The newspaper industry in Mizoram has not experienced a non-Mizo owner apart from the missionaries and British officials who established the pioneer newspapers.
- A single journalist association, the Mizoram Journalists' Association (MJA) exists in the State and claimed 192 members as on 2020. The MJA enjoys a journalist welfare fund of Rs. Twenty lakhs annually from the Government of Mizoram, through the Directorate of I&PR, which is used for medical reimbursement for the member journalists.
- The printing technology used by the industry has developed from cyclostyle printing to offset printing and laser printing.
- The newspapers rely heavily on advertisement revenue and it is the main source of revenue.
- The price of newspapers in Mizoram varies with the size and number of pages of the newspaper. *Vanglaini* has the highest price in the market with Rs. 8 per copy as on October, 2022. Newspapers namely *The Aizawl Post*, *The Zozam Times* and *The Mizoram Post* charge Rs. 6 per copy. Prices of other newspapers range from Rs. 2.80 to Rs. 5 per copy.
- The daily newspapers of each District of the State typically confine their circulation within their District if not their town or city. Only few of the daily newspapers circulate beyond the District in which it is published.

- Out of the 95 daily newspapers in Mizoram, 51 (57%) dailies have registered with the RNI as on 2022.

The Newspaper Market in Mizoram: Circulation

- The District of Aizawl, the State capital, has 33 daily newspapers, three weekly newspapers and two monthly newspapers. Daily circulations of the newspapers range from 200 copies to 20,000 copies as on 2021.
- Champhai District has five daily newspapers with daily circulation ranging from 900 to 1200 copies as on 2021. All the five dailies are two page newspapers of the same size.
- Kolasib District has nine daily newspapers and one weekly newspaper. Daily circulation of the newspapers range from 500 to 1000 copies.
- Lawngtlai District has seven daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 500 to 1200 copies per day.
- Lunglei District has 15 daily newspapers and five weekly newspapers with circulation ranging from 300 to 2400 copies per day.
- Mamit District has a total of four daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 150 to 700 copies per day.
- Serchhip District has a total of ten daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 120 to 1500 copies per day.
- Siaha District has a total of nine daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 150 to 550 copies per day.

The Newspaper Market in Mizoram: Competition

- Within the newspaper industry in Mizoram, 95 daily newspapers, 9 weekly newspapers and 2 monthly newspapers compete with each other.
- The competition between the newspapers is mostly confined within the administrative Districts as circulations are limited within the Districts except for a few newspapers that distribute throughout the State.

- A unique competition is also present from weekly and monthly news bulletins of different non-government organisations like the YMA, different church denominations and trade, sports and entertainment associations. These weekly and monthly newspapers are mostly in tabloid forms, and contain information and news pertaining to a particular locality or area.
- The newspapers compete with other media, namely, radio, television, magazines and the internet. Television news sources are mainly *Doordarshan* (TV channel owned by the Government of India), local cable TV channels of *LPS* and *ZONET* and regional, national and international news programmes. Radio news sources are mainly *All India Radio AIR*, *Aizawl 100.1 FM*, *All India Radio North Eastern Service 100.7 FM*, and *Red 93.5 FM*.
- Newspapers are progressively encountering competition from the internet through newspaper websites and social media. Online media platforms such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *WhatsApp*, *Pinterest*, *LinkedIn*, *YouTube*, and so on have increasingly become the source of news for internet users.
- The online and social media presence of newspapers in Mizoram is still in its infant stage with only five newspapers having their own website, seven newspapers having Facebook accounts, two newspapers having Instagram accounts, three newspapers having twitter handles and one newspaper having a mobile application.

5.1.3 Marketing Strategies of Select Newspapers in Mizoram

The main objective of Chapter 3 is “*to identify the marketing mix viz. product, pricing, distribution, promotion, and space selling of the select dailies in Mizoram*”. The chapter examined the importance of marketing strategies in the newspaper industry and attempted to identify the marketing strategies of the five select newspapers in Mizoram in terms of their product, pricing, placing and promotion decisions.

Vanglaini

- A Mizo language newspaper, *Vanglaini* has been in the newspaper industry for 44 years and has grown from an initial circulation of 1000 copies in 1978 to 35000 copies in 2022.
- It upgraded its newsletter size pages to a four page black and white broadsheet size in 2001 and to twelve pages since 2013 with four pages in colour.
- Newsprint is purchased from State of Punjab.
- *Vanglaini* launched its website in 2015 and continued its online presence with an active social media presence on *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Twitter* and a mobile phone application.
- *Vanglaini* is the most widely circulated newspaper among the daily Mizo language newspapers in the state of Mizoram with a circulation of 35,000 as of 2022.
- The page layout of the twelve pages of *Vanglaini* consists of the first page, in colour, providing State and local news, the second page consisting entirely of State and local news, the third page, in colour, carrying entertainment, the fourth page consisting of North East news and national news, the fifth page displaying classified ads, display ads and memoriam, the sixth page providing advertisements and government notifications, the eighth page consisting of international news and column articles, the ninth page providing advertisements and government tenders, and the tenth to twelfth page carrying sports news with pages ten and twelve in colour.
- After a decade of its price remaining at Rs. 150 per month, *Vanglaini* increased its price to Rs. 200 per month since April, 2022.
- The mode of collection of subscription fees from the subscribers is through the distributors and the average time required to complete collection of fees is 15 days.
- The cost of advertising in *Vanglaini* is Rs. 130 per column centimetre in 2022.

- *Vanglaini* is distributed throughout the State of Mizoram with 150 distributors within the capital District of Aizawl and 27 distributors for the remaining Districts.
- The mode of delivery of *Vanglaini* to the distributors is a blended mode of using own vehicles and hiring vehicles.
- The distributors receive 26 per cent of the subscription fee as their commission.
- *Vanglaini* conducts various promotional activities through television, social media, sponsorships, awards, discussion forums and so on.
- *Vanglaini* allocated two per cent of profits per annum for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure.

The Aizawl Post

- *The Aizawl Post*, a Mizo language daily newspaper, began publication in 2003 and has continued publication for 19 years.
- It began publishing with an offset printing technique and is currently an eight page broadsheet size newspaper with its first and last page in colour.
- With an initial circulation of 2000 copies, the newspaper has reached a circulation of 13,000 copies in 2022.
- Newsprint is purchased from Sapphire Papers Mill Pvt. Ltd., West Bengal.
- The page layout of the eight pages of *The Aizawl Post* consist of the first page, in colour, providing State news, the second page consisting of State, local news and entertainment, the third page consisting of classified ads, display ads and government notifications, the fourth page providing national and international news, the fifth page consisting of editorial and opinion articles, the sixth and seventh pages consisting of sports news and the eight page, in colour, providing entertainment news.
- *The Aizawl Post* has its own website and a strong social media presence on *Facebook*.

- Priced at Rs. 150 per month, it has remained at this price since 2013 when it was increased from Rs. 100.
- Contributions to the total revenue of the newspaper are made through subscription fees (35%), advertising fees (60%) and sale of scrap paper (5%).
- The cost of advertising in the newspaper was Rs. 130 per column centimetre for black and white advertisements and Rs. 500 per column centimetre for coloured advertisements as in March 2022.
- Distribution of the newspaper is concentrated mainly within Aizawl District and a few copies distributed to the other Districts with 200 distributors with the Aizawl District and ten distributors, one each, for the rest of the Districts.
- Distribution to the Districts outside the publication centre is made on the publishing day itself, by use of hired vehicles.
- The subscription price for the newspapers is collected by the distributors and the collection from the subscribers is completed in 15 to 20 days.
- The newspaper does not conduct any definite promotional activities. However, it has an online presence in social media platforms.

The Zozam Times

- A Mizo language daily newspaper, *The Zozam Times*, was established in 2005 and was the first daily newspaper in Mizoram to print in colour.
- An eight page broadsheet size newspaper, it uses offset printing technique. The first and last page is in colour.
- It claimed a circulation of 13000 per publishing day in 2022.
- The newsprint used is obtained from Guwahati, Assam.
- *The Zozam Times* has its own website and a strong social media presence in *Twitter*.
- The page layout of the eight pages of *The Zozam Times* consist of the first page, in colour, providing State and local news, the second page consisting of editorial, regional and local news, the third page presenting opinion articles, the fourth page consisting entirely of advertisements, the fifth page providing

national and international news, the sixth page consisting of entertainment news, the seventh page consisting of sports news and entertainment for children, and the eight page, in colour, consisting of sports news.

- Priced at Rs. 150 per month and has remained at this price since 2013 when it raised its price from Rs. 100.
- The subscription fee of the newspaper is collected by the distributors and the collection from the subscribers is completed in 15 to 20 days.
- Its main sources of revenue are subscription fees and advertising fees in the ratio of 3:7.
- The cost of advertising in the newspaper was Rs. 130 per column centimetre for black and white advertisements and Rs. 500 per column centimetre for coloured advertisements as on March 2022.
- Distribution of *The Zozam Times* is mainly within Aizawl District with a few subscriptions in other Districts with 70 distributors within Aizawl District and 11 distributors in the remaining Districts.
- Newspapers are delivered to four main distribution points in Aizawl city from where the distributors pick up and deliver to the subscribers.
- The distribution to the Districts outside the publication centre is made on the publishing day itself, through hired vehicles.
- It does not conduct any specific promotional activities to boost circulation and relies on the distributors to obtain and retain customers. It depends, like most newspapers in the State, on word-of-mouth marketing. Nonetheless, it has a strong online social media presence.

The Mizoram Post

- An English language daily newspaper, *The Mizoram Post*, began publication in 2003.
- Its initial publication centre was Silchar, Assam which was later shifted to Aizawl.
- It is the only newspaper in the State to have a non-Mizo editor.

- It began publication with twelve pages and has reduced its number of pages to eight with four pages in colour.
- The claimed circulation of *The Mizoram Post* in 2022 was approximately 44,000 copies.
- The page layout of the eight pages of *The Mizoram Post* consist of the first page, in colour, consisting of state, regional and national news, the second page, in colour, consisting of editorial and opinion articles, the third page providing state news and advertisements, the fourth page consisting of national news, the fifth page providing international news, the coloured sixth page providing general knowledge items, the seventh page providing employment related issues, and the coloured eighth page consisting of advertisements and sports news.
- The price of *The Mizoram Post* is Rs. 150 per month since 2020. Priced at Rs. 75 in 2003 when it began publication, it increased its price to Rs. 125 from 2011.
- Contributions to the total revenue of the newspaper are made through subscription fees (30%) and advertising fees (70%).
- With distribution concentrated mainly within the capital city, Aizawl with one distribution centre in the city.
- *The Mizoram Post* does not employ any direct promotional activities. It has social media presence in *Facebook*.

Highlander

- The oldest English language daily newspaper in Mizoram, *Highlander* was established in 1972.
- Beginning its publication with the now obsolete treadle printing machine, it upgraded to offset printing in 1993.
- With an initial circulation of 500 copies per publishing day, it claimed a circulation of 30000 in 2022.

- The page layout of the twelve pages of *Highlander* consist of the first page providing state news, the second page consisting of international news, the third page consisting of regional North East news, the fourth and fifth pages consisting of national news, the sixth page consisting of editorials, national and international news, the seventh page providing national news and advertisements, the eighth and ninth pages consisting of national news and advertisements, the ninth page detailing international sports news, the tenth page consisting of international news and advertisements, the eleventh page providing international entertainment news, and the final page consisting of regional news and advertisements.
- Priced at Rs. 150 per month, it distributes within the capital city, Aizawl.
- The newspaper does not adopt any promotional activity and relies on word-of-mouth influence.

SWOT Analysis of Vanglaini Newspaper

The marketing and circulation performance of *Vanglaini* has been reflected in its market leadership among the newspapers in Mizoram. It has the highest circulation among all the language newspapers in Mizoram. Furthermore, it is the only newspaper that extensively distributes throughout the state. The application of the SWOT analysis will enable the marketer to evolve better competitive strategies.

- The *strengths* of *Vanglaini* include it being the largest circulated daily newspaper in Mizoram since 2000 and a leading advertising vehicle. It is a forerunner in product development in the newspaper industry of Mizoram. It is a newspaper that covers local news extensively and employs efficient managerial and professional human resources. It is proactive in adapting to changes in technology with the development of its own website and mobile application and strong online social media presence. It also has strong manufacturing resources.
- The *weaknesses* of *Vanglaini* include the limited market reach, difficulty in generating digital revenue, high monthly price of product as compared to

other newspapers in the market, high cost of production, higher price per copy among Mizo language newspapers, absence of marketing research and low investment in circulation promotion.

- The *opportunities* available to *Vanglaini* include the possibility of market expansion, segmenting content to reach new niche markets, technological up-gradation, relationship marketing with suppliers and distributors to save costs, investment in newsprint, taking advantage of the press credibility it enjoys and publishing on Sunday.
- The *threats* faced by *Vanglaini* are rapid progress of new media and information technology, high competition from other media, competition within the newspaper industry and the general decline in newspaper reading habit.
- The goal for *Vanglaini* should be to match the newspaper's strengths to the opportunities in the environment while simultaneously eliminating or overcoming the weaknesses and minimizing the threats.

5.1.4 Consumer Behaviour of Newspaper Readers in Mizoram

The main objective of Chapter 4 is “*to enquire into consumption behaviour of newspaper readers in the State*”. It is intended to identify the socio economic background of the respondents, their preferential contents of newspaper, the nature of buying newspapers and the frequency with which the newspapers are read. The types of news preferred by the readers as well as the readers' perception of coverage of news items are examined. Evaluations made by readers on ratio of news to advertisements and the evaluation of value of newspapers based on 12 premises were studied. The readers' level of satisfaction in terms of types of news items covered and other features of the newspapers were analysed. Dependency on newspapers for news and other media habits were also studied.

Socio Economic Background of Readers

- Gender-wise, 57.6 per cent of the readers were males and 42.4 per cent were female readers.

- Nearly one-third of the respondents were in the 20-29 age groups. Over 22 per cent of the readers were below 20 years of age. In contrast, only 3.8 per cent of the readers were 60 years and above.
- Education-wise, the non-graduates (57.3%) outnumbered the graduates and postgraduates (42.7%) combined. Majority of the readers (34 %) were Class 12 level.
- Classification by occupation shows that 43.6 per cent of the respondents were students and 31.8 per cent were employees. Only 1.8 per cent was involved in agriculture.
- Distribution of readers by income show that over 27 per cent of the respondents have an annual income exceeding Rs. 2,50,000. Over 22 per cent readers were having below Rs. 1,00,000 of income.

Readership Preferences and Habits

- Over 73 per cent of the readers read a newspaper daily and 26.9 per cent of respondents read it frequently, which is at least three times a week.
- Majority of the respondents (85.56 %) read newspapers for one hour or less in a day. Only 14.46 per cent read for more than one hour a day.
- Over 48 per cent of the readers prefer to read the whole paper. Thirty per cent of the readers glanced at the headlines only. Eighteen per cent read the first page only. And only 3.6 per cent read selected columns.
- With over 91 per cent of the respondents buying their newspaper through subscription, majority of the respondents read more than one newspaper.
- Half of the respondents read their newspaper in the morning from 6 to 8 a.m.
- Over 83 per cent of the readers reveal that their parents exhibited interest in newspaper reading during their childhood. Over 82 per cent of the readers admitted that their habit of reading a newspaper was self-instilled.
- The type of news preferred by the respondents was mostly local news with over 64 per cent of the readers preferring it, followed by 18 per cent of the readers preferring international news.

- As regards the readers' perception of coverage of news items to be adequate or whether it needs to improve or reduce, majority of the readers consider the local news, international news, editorials, editorial articles, sports news, financial news, entertainments news and advertisement news to be adequate. However, more than half of the respondents consider the regional news and national news in need of reduction.
- Over 76 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the price of the newspaper and nearly half of the readers (48%) would continue to purchase or subscribe to the newspaper even if the price increased.
- Over 84 per cent of the readers considered the quality of newsprint as very important or important.
- All the newspapers under the study are published throughout the week except on Sundays. Over 34 per cent of the readers would like to receive newspapers on a Sunday. On the other hand, over 45 per cent of the readers do not want to receive newspapers on a Sunday.
- In terms of newspaper and its value, there is an overall positive response among the readers and the readers felt that their newspaper's performance were good regarding the newspapers' role in educating and moulding opinion, in promoting national integration and universal brotherhood, in highlighting developmental issues, in promoting cultural and literary values, in providing entertainment and in upholding human rights. At the same time, the newspapers have to give better efforts in serving their various purposes of upholding democratic values, promoting scientific temper, highlighting the problems of the poor and consumer problems, fighting against corruption and maintaining high standards in journalism without bias.
- In general, more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the coverage of different type of news and other features of the newspapers. However, a closer look at the neutral responses indicates that there is room for improvement for the newspapers. More than one-third of the readers gave neutral responses in North East India news coverage, business news coverage, editorial page articles, advertisements, and price of newspapers.

- Newspaper was the first source of news for 24 per cent of the respondents and is considered to be the most reliable news medium by 45.3 per cent of the readers.
- Over 77 per cent of the readers claimed that they are in a habit of using the internet and only 14.9 per cent did not use the internet.
- Only 28 per cent of the respondents read their newspaper through the internet and over 69 per cent of the respondents did not prefer to read it through internet.
- Over 75 per cent of the readers use social media. Only 16.9 per cent of the readers are not using social media.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

- The hypothesis (H₀₁) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels*” was tested (p value of $0.003 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels.
- The hypothesis (H₀₂) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualifications*” was tested (p value of $0.00001 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualification.
- The hypothesis (H₀₃) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the local news*” was tested (p value of $0.000055 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected and implies that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preferences of local news.
- The hypothesis (H₀₄) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the national news*” was tested (p value of $0.041 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected and

that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for national news.

- The hypothesis (H_{05}) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers*” was tested (p value of $0.047 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.
- The hypothesis (H_{06}) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news*” was tested (p value of $0.000310 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions to the newspaper organisations and the Government of Mizoram based on the findings have been made and presented as under:

5.5.1 Suggestions to Newspapers

Based on the findings, suggestions for the newspaper organisations conducive to serving the customers better and facing market challenges are given herewith:

i. Adopt Changes in Business Model:

Traditional business model of the newspaper industry may not be sustainable in the long term. Newspapers will have to develop their online operations and smartphone as well as tablet editions, i.e. mastering the cross-media or multi-platform operations. Use of mobile phone for news consumption is continuously growing. Thus, newspapers must embrace digital media in an encompassing way to yield revenues.

ii. Explore Niche Marketing:

Niche marketing, the channelling of all marketing efforts towards one well-defined segment of the population could be a viable option for many newspapers to thrive. A newspaper can cater not to those in the general public, but to specialty audiences whose interests tend to be both narrow and deep. Niche newspapers can delve in specific matters ranging from politics, governments, financial, energy, climate, environment, sports, food, celebrities, travel, pets and other entertainments, farming and so on. The niche newspaper may be issued daily or weekly based on the need of the market.

iii. Apply Bundling Strategy:

Bundling is a promotional device wherein different types of supplements are packaged with the newspaper in different days of the week. Weekly supplements may consist of language courses, encyclopaedias released over a number of issues, guides to business and investments, games with prizes, specialized information on travel, music, business, sports, finance, farming and so on. It is a way in which publishers can try to extend the group of readers for the newspaper by providing an almost unrelated product capable of attracting new customers that would not purchase the newspaper otherwise.

iv. Subscribe to News Agencies:

The newspapers to raise their credibility should subscribe to national news agencies such as Press Trust of India (PTI) or United News Agency (UNI). This will eliminate the newspapers' dependence on the government's Information and Public Relations Department and more importantly avoid fake news.

v. Intensify Promotional Activities:

Adequate promotion is crucial and a well-organized and efficient promotion of the newspaper can lead to favourable publicity and increased business. Retailers and manufacturers always have something to sell. So have newspapers and it should sell its product (the newspaper as a whole) Institutional promotion may be applied which deals with the values of the publication as a whole, its professional attainments, its general claims to excellence, or its special facilities.

To strengthen relations with the distributors, distributor promotion may be undertaken where the attainment of a definite objective, such as a given number of new subscribers, or the building up of circulation in a new sector or in a weak area, may be offered tangible prizes such as cash, merchandise, or trips. Various bonus schemes can also be implemented. It may be highly profitable in bolstering relations with the distributors to promote special events for the entire group once a year in the form of a picnic or some other outing.

To attract new customers and retain subscribers, newspapers can take up reader promotion. Its form may be varied and dependent on the target audience. It may range from creating interaction capabilities in social media platforms to offering suggestion columns in the newspaper, from contests to performing investigative reporting and from creating content series to special reader discounts.

vi. Establish Cross Media Collaboration:

Cross-media partnerships with television or radio can produce enterprising outcome for the newspapers. Newspapers can provide local news to other media and have cooperative newsgathering or coverage agreements with a television station or radio station. Print and television reporters can investigate stories and collaborate on in-depth reporting projects. There may

be a working agreement with a radio station for an exchange of radio time for newspaper space.

vii. Conduct Market Research:

Market research techniques such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and customer observation may be used by the newspapers to identify the needs and wants of the customers and detect gaps in the provision of those needs.

viii. Improve News Content:

In the search for news, the journalist should never depend too much on news releases and public relations departments. There should also be a definite divide in the journalist's mind between news and advertising. All newspapers should have a clear idea of their audience (Sissons, 2006). Publishing more news content, particularly in shorter article length and more diverse topic areas, boosts the newspapers' circulation and ad revenue over time (Li & Thorson, 2015). Improving news content and quality news reporting is essential for the newspapers to gain the trust of their readers.

ix. Refine Local News:

Concern about the consequences of national media expanding into local markets is low in the State of Mizoram. Hence, local newspapers may focus on satisfying the needs of the consumers, i.e., their need for local news and promote local content. Local newspapers are a particularly important source of information about local affairs; hence their circulation provides a good measure of citizens' intake of local information.

x. Publish Local Business News:

The newspapers offer limited national business news and the coverage of local business news is close to nil. Hence, the newspapers may consider reporting local business news which in turn will improve and promote the local businesses.

xi. Construct Efficient Distribution System:

Newspapers are inherently dependent on distributors. As such, the distribution system and its efficient management must be given priority. Timely delivery of newspaper bundles to distribution points, error-free counting of newspapers for each bundle, consistent commission rates, provision of raincoats during monsoon are some of the efforts that can be taken to improve the distribution system.

xii. Introduce Sunday Edition:

Most of the subscribers in the readership survey would prefer a Sunday edition of their newspapers. Although the reading tradition among Mizo people on Sundays is of local church and locality newsletters, the newspaper organisation can publish a Sunday edition that incorporates special themes and issues.

xiii. Target Youth:

Media consumption habit of young people is very important as they could shape future trends in the newspaper industry. There has been an increase in consumption of digital content; therefore, it is essential for the paper to have a strong digital presence via the website and social media channels. In addition, readership rates are linked with ease of acquiring and using a newspaper (Zerba, 2011). It is beneficial to strategically distribute the print

version of the paper in populous sites (educational institutions, restaurants, parks, and so on) and promote the website more aggressively to readers via direct promotion such as emails or organise events at Colleges, Schools and places where the youth hang out frequently.

xiv. Enhance Newsprint:

The customers consider the newsprint quality to be important. Hence, efforts may be taken to enhance newsprint quality. Economies of scale through collaboration of several newspaper organisations and ordering in bulk may be a viable option.

xv. Invest In Printing Press:

Most of the newspapers published in Mizoram do not own their own printing press. This increases cost and causes loss of time. The small newspapers with low circulations may pool their resources together and invest in a shared printing press which may be beneficial to all the newspapers in terms of cost, time and human resources.

xvi. Address Economic and Social Issues:

It is suggested that newspapers should favour stories of business organisations that highlight local angles and focus on economic growth. They should give greater attention to the economic and social dimensions of the environment. If environmental and social movement organizations capture the majority of media attention they will gain an important source of potential influence as they seek to bring about social change.

5.5.2 Suggestions to Government

Suggestions to the Government for supporting and boosting the newspaper industry are given below:

i. Categorisation of Local Newspapers for Distribution of Advertisements:

At present, there is no categorisation of local newspapers by the State Government. All registered newspapers are viewed equally for the purpose of distributing Classified Advertisements by the Government irrespective of the number of circulation, print quality, and number of pages, existence of colour print and the number of pages thereof. It can be suggested that the State Government may formulate criteria for categorisation of the local newspapers into three or four categories. Each category may have their rate for classified advertisements according to their position in the category. This will cater healthy competition among the local newspapers and subsequent improvement of the newspaper industry.

ii. Avail Central Government Schemes:

There are several Centrally Sponsored Schemes implemented by the respective nodal Departments under the State Government. One of the most important components of such Schemes is the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) which is devised for creating awareness and publicity of the scheme to the general public. Under IEC, posters, flyers, leaflets, brochures, booklets, messages for health education sessions, radio broadcast or TV spots, etc. are printed / produced and circulated / broadcasted as a means of promoting desired & positive behaviours in the community. It can be suggested that more of the IEC component may be utilized for awareness campaign via newspapers which may facilitate the newspapers financially and for spreading greater awareness of the respective schemes to the readers.

iii. Procure Actual Data on Circulation Figures of Local Newspapers:

As of now, it is very difficult to obtain actual number of circulation of local News Papers. Claims of circulation are prone to be inflated. To have the official number of actual circulation of the local newspapers, the Government may organise a comprehensive readership survey annually or biennially. The survey may be done either by outsourcing to third party organisation or by utilising Local Self Governing bodies such as the Local Council and Village Council where involvement of the newspaper organisations in the survey may be kept to the minimum.

5.6 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further studies on the marketing of newspapers and consumer behaviour of the readers would certainly fill the research gaps in the field. In light of this relevant need, the prospective researchers may conduct research in the following areas:

- Newspapers and e-business models.
- Impact of digital media on newspapers.
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on newspapers and strategies for recovery.
- Comparative studies of newspaper marketing in the state, in the Northeast India and in the country.
- Cross media studies between newspapers, television, radio and the internet.
- Gender participation in media business.
- Multiplatform news consumption in the digital age.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Marketing is indispensable for any industry. It helps an industry to plan and develop consumer oriented products, pricing, placing and promotion strategies. The newspaper industry, similar to other industries, would stand to gain from planning and executing marketing strategies applicable to the industry. The newspaper market being a two-pronged market ought to comprehend the needs of both its readers and

advertisers. Newspapers depend on readers for higher circulation and readership; at the same time they strive to sell this audience to advertisers for higher revenue to cover up the ever-growing costs and to satisfy the investors' profit motive. Hence, it is imperative for the survival and success of newspapers to recognize the specific needs of the readers and advertisers, and provide satisfactions and create brand loyalty.

The newspaper market in Mizoram, primarily dominated by Mizo language newspapers shares the experience of newspaper markets elsewhere in terms of innovation in technology, increase in number of players, and changes in consumption habits of the readers. The newspaper industry faces challenges imposed by digital transformation and socio-economic changes that occur in the society. The select newspapers under the study adopted and adapted to the improved printing technology such as offset printing and laser printing. However, with internet usage on the rise and smartphones becoming widespread, the newspapers are competing with the New media for seizing the limited time available with the people. News consumption habits are evolving and the methods of finding news are changing. Meanwhile, the newspaper industry is swamped with small newspaper organisations with low circulations and digital transformation is restricted by lack of capabilities and financial constraints. The market leader and only a handful of other newspapers have been able to manage their newspaper as a multi-platform media organisation and exploit social media. In the small state of India's North-East, which is characterised by the predominance of Christianity in different denominations, a unique competition is posed by the multitude of religious and community weekly and monthly newspapers which are mostly in tabloid form and contain information and news pertaining to a particular locality, area or issue. Although they seem unthreatening for the daily newspapers, they pose an indirect competition as they divert the time, resources and attention of the readers away from the daily newspapers.

The performance of any newspaper is often measured by its circulation. The relatively low population of only around twelve lakhs may be a hindering factor for the growth of circulations in case of the newspapers that are published in Mizoram. Rapid growth of other media may also be a factor thwarting the growth of print

media. Television, digital media, and FM radio present a mighty competition for newspapers. The sluggish state of advertising revenues may be another factor deterring new investments in the print news media. Newspapers mainly sustain on advertising revenue and the dependence on advertising revenue is evident from the intrinsic nature of newspaper pricing. The price of newspapers in Mizoram is minimal, necessitating reliance on advertising revenue. However, the advertising market is not yet fully developed and sufficient enough to sustain profitability and growth of the newspaper organisations.

For newspaper organisations, the product is the newspaper itself. Innovation in product design and layout is crucial to the continuing success of a newspaper. Most of the newspapers in Mizoram are printed in tabloid size papers ranging from two to four pages. Just a few newspapers are printed in broadsheet size papers ranging from six to twelve pages. Changes in layout of the newspapers have been scarce for a number of years. The newspapers have been lagging behind the market leader in product innovation. This is also true in the case of promotional activities. Most of the newspapers in Mizoram have not taken up any intense promotional activity except for their dependence on word-of-mouth influence and its distributors. Some of the newspapers have digital presence and provide their content through websites and various social media platforms. However, it does not seem to be planned in a professional manner as an intentional promotional activity, but as a by-product of transferring content online. Distribution of newspapers is typically confined within the city of publication or the administrative Districts at the most. Only very few newspaper organisations manage to distribute throughout the state, although hindered frequently by natural road obstructions in the hilly terrains of Mizoram.

Readership of the newspapers spans all levels of education and income as well as age and gender in the present study. Local news is preferred by majority of the readers and the engagement of the readers in local community is evident from their preference of local news. This is in tune with the international phenomenon. Despite the lack of diffusion by national newspapers and other languages newspapers, the newspapers, in particular the Mizo language newspaper organisations still require comprehensive knowledge about the audience and should cater to the changing needs

of the readers. Local newspapers might not have the resources to compete with national publications' strategies, but they are valued by the readers. The newspapers must, therefore, focus on their core competence as enunciated by C. K. Prahalad i.e., emphasising the local news and views in order to stand out.

One can hardly state that the growth of newspaper industry in Mizoram is exemplary and reaping rewards. Drastic changes in information and communication technology, news consumption habits of people, and penetration of the internet and the New media have posed serious challenges to the news print media. Nevertheless, the future of newspapers in Mizoram yet has good prospects considering the credibility the conventional newspapers enjoy compared to the news and views spread by the social media. The publishers and editors with customer orientation can increase their capacity to fight against the odds in search of healthy profit. Given the quest for earnings, newspapers cannot survive without marketing. The newspapers need to develop market oriented strategies in order to withstand the ever increasing competition within the industry and with other media, especially the digital media. In addition, safeguarding trust in quality journalism is an essential requirement to keep up with the digital news media and social media. Newspapers that realize the importance of holistic marketing can thrive and sustain profitability, in addition to performing their role in safeguarding the spirit of democracy across the country.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX – I

Questionnaire for Newspaper Organisation Marketing of Select Newspapers in Mizoram

I. General Information of the Publisher:

1. Name: _____
2. Gender: M / F
3. Age: _____
4. Address: _____
5. Associations in which membership is held: _____
6. Experience in the Newspaper Industry (in years): _____

II. Historical Background of the Newspaper:

1. Date of Establishment: _____
2. Location: Aizawl / _____
3. Type of Business Organisation: Sole proprietorship / Partnership / Corporation
4. First Publisher and qualification: _____
5. First Editor: _____
6. Initial Capital (approx.): _____
7. First Printing Technology Used:
 - i. Cyclostyle
 - ii. Offset Printing
 - iii. Digital Printing
 - iv. Other (please specify) _____
8. Initial Number of Employees: _____
9. Circulation in first month: _____
10. Competitors when starting the newspaper: _____

III. Growth, Development and Present Status of the Newspaper:

1. Important milestones (Achievements):

2. Main difficulties:

3. Present status:
 - a) Type of organisation: Sole proprietorship / Partnership / Corporation
 - b) Publisher: _____

- c) Editor: _____
 - d) Capital employed (approx.): _____
 - e) Printing Technology (since which year):
 - i. Cyclostyle _____
 - ii. Offset Printing _____
 - iii. Digital
Printing _____
 - iv. Other (please specify) _____
 - f) Number of Employees:
 - i. Regular - _____
 - ii. Others - _____
 - g) Circulation (Monthly): _____
 - h) Main Competitors: _____
 - i) Own building or on rental basis: _____
4. Number of pages : _____
 5. Number of pages in colour: _____
 6. Sources of Newsprint paper: _____
 7. Number of Publication centre: _____
 8. Availability of Online version of newspaper (Date/year):

IV. Price of the Newspaper:

1. Price of the newspaper per month:
 - i. 2020 - _____
 - ii. 2019 - _____
 - iii. 2018 - _____
 - iv. 2017 - _____
 - v. 2016 - _____
 - vi. 2015 - _____
 - vii. 2014 - _____
 - viii. 2013 - _____
 - ix. 2012 - _____
 - x. 2011 - _____
 - xi. 2010 - _____
 - xii. Year of Establishment - _____
2. Number of copies printed (daily): _____
3. Number of copies sold (monthly): _____
4. Breakeven point (in terms of number of copies): _____
5. Is the business profit making? (Trends in the last five years): Y / N
 - i. If Yes, indicate the annual amount/return on investment:

6. Mode of collection: _____

- i. Who collects the price for the newspaper from the subscribers/distributors (terms and conditions with the distributors)? _____
 - ii. Time required to complete collection from the distributors/customers: _____
7. Number of advertisements published per day: _____
8. Cost of advertising in the Newspaper: _____
10. Contribution of different sources to the total revenue (in terms of per cent):
- i. Subscription - _____
 - ii. Advertising - _____
 - iii. Providing news to other agencies: _____
 - iv. Sale of Scrap paper - _____
 - v. Others (Please specify) - _____

V. Distribution of the Newspaper:

1. Circulation during last ten years (approx.):
- i. 2020 - _____
 - ii. 2019 - _____
 - iii. 2018 - _____
 - iv. 2017 - _____
 - v. 2016 - _____
 - vi. 2015 - _____
 - vii. 2014 - _____
 - viii. 2013 - _____
 - ix. 2012 - _____
 - x. 2011 - _____
2. Is the Newspaper distributed to other Districts other than Aizawl?
Yes/No
- i. Number of Distributors/Distribution points in the Districts:
 - a) Aizawl - _____
 - b) Lunglei - _____
 - c) Siahla - _____
 - d) Champhai - _____
 - e) Kolasib - _____
 - f) Serchhip - _____
 - g) Lawngtlai - _____
 - h) Hnahthial - _____
 - i) Saitual - _____
 - j) Khawzawl - _____
 - ii. Mode of delivery to other Districts: Own vehicle/Hired Vehicle

- iii. Is the delivery on time (same day) or delayed?: _____
 - a) If delayed, specify the reason: _____
- iv. Circulation in other Districts other than Aizawl (approx.):
 - a) 2020 - _____
 - b) 2015 - _____
 - c) 2010 - _____
- 3. Terms and Conditions with the Distributors, if any: _____
- 4. Any special incentives offered to Distributors if more copies are sold? If Yes, How much? _____
- 5. Return policy (unsold copies): _____
If there is no return policy, how are old newspapers disposed?

VI. Promotion of the Newspaper

- 1. Have you conducted any promotion for your newspaper? Yes/No
- 2. Type of promotional tools used:
 - i. Advertising:
 - Type of media used:
 - a) Television
 - b) Radio
 - c) Magazine
 - d) Social Network
 - e) Outdoor display
 - f) Others (Please specify) – _____
 - ii. Sales Promotion schemes, if any (Discounts, incentives, free copies for distributors/customers): _____
 - iii. Public Relations: _____
 - iv. Sponsorship: _____
- 3. Amount spent for promotion (Annual):
 - i. Television - _____
 - ii. Radio - _____
 - iii. Magazine - _____
 - iv. Social Network - _____
 - v. Outdoor display - _____
 - vi. Others (Please specify) – _____

VII. Publisher's Perceptions about the Industry:

- 1. About Inter-media competition (Newspapers vs. TV vs. Magazines vs. Social Media in the context of Mizoram):

2. About Intra-media competitions (Your newspaper versus other local newspapers versus National newspapers):

3. Impact of the Inter and Intra media competition on your newspaper and your marketing response:

4. About the feedback mechanism on customer satisfaction (conducting surveys, sales/circulation reports, feedback from the distributors, public opinion etc.): _____
5. About English language newspapers versus Mizo language newspapers:_____
6. About Online newspapers:

7. About future of newspaper business in Mizoram:

VIII. Support System and Relationship Management with:

1. State Government advertisement (through I&PR): Strong / Weak
2. Central Government advertisement: Strong / Weak
3. Local Administration: Strong / Weak
4. Banks and Financial Institution: Strong / Weak
5. Trade Associations: Strong / Weak
6. Employees : Strong / Weak
7. Journalist Associations: Strong / Weak
8. Competitors: Strong / Weak
9. Suppliers: Strong / Weak
10. Political Parties: Strong / Weak
11. NGOs : Strong / Weak
12. Family: Strong / Weak

IX. Please give specific suggestions for strengthening of Newspaper industry in Mizoram:

APPENDIX – II
Questionnaire for Readers
Marketing of Select Newspapers in Mizoram

I. Socio-economic background:

1. Gender: a) Male b) Female
2. Age: a) Below 20 b) 20-29 c) 30-39 d) 40-49 e) 50-59 f) 60 & Above
3. Religion: a) Christian b) Hindu c) Muslim d) Any other (Please specify): _____
4. Home state (Please specify): _____
5. Educational Qualification: a) Below Class 10 b) Class 10 c) Class 12 d) Graduate e) Post Graduate
6. Occupation: a) Agriculture b) Trader c) Employee d) Self-employed e) Student f) Any other (Please specify): _____
7. Total Annual Income of the family: a) Below 1,00,000 b) 1,00,000 - 1,50,000 c) 1,50,000 – 2,00,000 d) 2,00,000 – 2,50,000 e) Above 2,50,000
8. Number of family member: a) 1-2 b) 3-4 c) 5-6 d) 7-8 e) 9 & Above

II. Readership Preferences and Habits:

1. How often do you read newspapers? (tick mark the appropriate box):

Newspaper	Everyday	Frequently (at least three times a week)
<i>a) Vanglaini</i>		
<i>b) The Aizawl Post</i>		
<i>c) The Zozam Times</i>		
<i>d) The Mizoram Post</i>		
<i>e) Highlander</i>		

2. How much time do you spend on reading **this newspaper**?
 - a) Less than 30 minutes
 - b) 30 – 60 minutes
 - c) 60 – 90 minutes
 - d) 90 – 120 minutes
 - e) More than 120 minutes
3. How much time do you spend on reading **other newspapers**?
 - a) Less than 30 minutes
 - b) 30 – 60 minutes
 - c) 60 – 90 minutes
 - d) 90 – 120 minutes

- e) More than 120 minutes
- 4. Normally what is your preference for reading the newspapers?
 - a) Whole paper
 - b) Headlines
 - c) First page
 - d) Selected columns (Please specify _____)
- 5. Do you buy the newspaper from a shop or do you subscribe?
 - a) Subscribing
 - b) Buying from shop
 - c) Reading from common places (e.g., Libraries, Friend's shop, etc.)
- 6. Prime time preference to complete your newspaper reading:
 - a) Before 6 a.m.
 - b) 6 to 8 a.m.
 - c) 8 to 10 a.m.
 - d) 10 to 12 a.m.
 - e) 12 to 2 p.m.
 - f) After 2 p.m.
- 7. Time of arrival of Newspaper(s)
 - a) Before 6 a.m.
 - b) 6 a.m. to 7 a.m.
 - c) 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.
 - d) After 8 a.m.
- 8. Number of family members reading the same newspaper(s):

- 9. Does any outsider read your newspaper(s)?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Can't say
- 10. If yes, how many? (Please specify) _____
- 11. Did your parents read newspapers regularly in your childhood?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Cannot say
- 12. How did you acquire the habit of reading newspapers?
 - a) Encouraged by parents
 - b) Self-instilled
 - c) Inspired by others
- 13. Which of the following news do you like most? **Rank any two (1&2)**
in order of importance:
 - a) Local news

- b) Regional news
- c) National news
- d) International news

14. Coverage of the following items in your newspaper: (tick mark the appropriate box):

Items	Adequate	Need to improve	Need to reduce
a) Local News			
b) Regional News			
c) National News			
d) International News			
e) Editorials			
f) Editorial page articles			
g) Sports			
h) Financial news			
i) Entertainment news			
j) Advertisements			

15. Considering your present newspaper _____, please indicate the level of **importance** on 5 point rating scale in respect of the following parameters (tick mark the appropriate box):

	Items	Extremely important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat important	Not at all important
a	Local news coverage					
b	North East India news coverage					
c	National news coverage					
d	International news coverage					
e	Sports news coverage					
f	Business news coverage					
g	Editorial quality					
h	Editorial page articles					
i	Features meant for Children, Women, Students, etc.					
j	Advertisements					
k	Price of the newspaper					
l	Newsprint quality					
m	Quality of printing and getup					
n	Presentation & Language used					
o	Prompt news					

16. Considering your present newspaper _____, please indicate your level of **satisfaction** on 5 point rating scale in respect of the following parameters (tick mark the appropriate box):

	Items	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
a	Local news coverage					
b	North East India news coverage					
c	National news coverage					
d	International news coverage					
e	Sports news coverage					
f	Business news coverage					
g	Editorial quality					
h	Editorial page articles					
i	Features meant for Children, Women, Students, etc.					
j	Advertisements					
k	Price of the newspaper					
l	Newsprint quality					
m	Quality of printing and getup					
n	Presentation & Language used					
o	Prompt news					

17. Your evaluation of the ratio of news to advertisements in your newspaper:

- a) More news
- b) Balanced proportion
- c) Less news
- d) No idea

18. Importance of coloured print:

- a) Very important
- b) Important
- c) Not so important
- d) Unimportant
- e) No idea

19. Importance of printing paper/newsprint:

- a) Very important
- b) Important
- c) Not so important

- d) Unimportant
e) No idea
20. Do you think the price of the newspaper is worth it? a) Yes b) No c) Can't say
21. If price is hiked will you still continue to subscribe?
a) Yes b) No c) Can't say
22. Do you read other newspapers on the Internet?
a) Yes
b) No
c) Can't say
23. If yes, please specify the newspapers:
a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
24. Of the following premises given, indicate your level of satisfaction on 5 point rating scale (tick mark the appropriate box):

	Premises	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
a.	In educating and moulding opinion					
b.	In upholding democratic values					
c.	In promoting national integration and universal brotherhood					
d.	In highlighting developmental issues					
e.	In promoting scientific temper					
f.	In highlighting the problems of the poor					
g.	In highlighting consumer problems and consumer movement					
h.	In fighting against corruption					
i.	In promoting cultural and literary values					
j.	In providing entertainment					
k.	In maintaining high standards in journalism without bias					
l.	In upholding human rights					

25. Would you like to receive your newspaper on Sunday also?
a) Yes
b) No
c) Can't say

III. Media Habits:

1. Are you in the habit of using the Internet? a) Yes b) No c) Can't say

2. If yes, how do you access and how much time in a day? (tick mark the appropriate box):

	Accessed through	Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 5 hours
a	Personal Computer/Laptop					
b	Smart Phone					
c	Internet Cafe					
d	Educational Institution					
e	Workplace					
f	Tablet					

3. Are you in the habit of using Social media? a) Yes b) No

4. If yes, which of the following social media do you use and how much time in a day? (tick mark the appropriate box):

	Media	Less than 1 hour	1-2 Hours	2-3 Hours	3-4 Hours	More than 5 hours
a	Facebook					
b	Whatsapp					
c	Twitter					
d	LinkedIn					
e	YouTube					
f	Flickr					
g	Instagram					
h	Any other media (pl specify)					

5. Normally, what is your **first source** of news?

- a) Newspaper
- b) Television
- c) Radio
- d) Internet

6. Which media do you find most reliable for **adequate news**?

- a) Newspaper
- b) Television
- c) Radio
- d) Internet

7. What type of the following news do you like most? Please **rank up to 3** in order of preference.

- a) Local news
- b) North East India News
- c) National news
- d) International news
- e) Sports news
- f) Business news

8. Which of the following magazines do you normally read? Please tick

- a) *Lengzem*
- b) *Diktawn*
- c) *Zoram Today*
- d) *Lelte*
- e) *Zalen*
- f) India Today
- g) Outlook
- h) The Week
- i) Frontline
- j) Business India
- k) Business Today
- l) Femina
- m) Cosmopolitan
- n) Chip
- o) Digit
- p) National Geographic
- q) Any other (pl specify): _____

Appendix - III
List of Periodicals in Mizoram

I. List of Religious Periodicals:

Sl. No.	Name of Newspaper	Estd.	Perodicity	Church Denomination	In Print
1	Kristian Tlangau*	1911	Monthly	PCI	Yes
2	Thado-Kuki Kristian Chanchinbu* (later changed to Kristian)	1920	Monthly		No
3	Sipai Tlangau*	1931	Monthly	SA	Yes
4	Robawm * (earlier Tlawmngaihna)	1934	Monthly	BCM	No
5	Hriatrenghna Bu*	1938	Monthly	Individual	No
6	Kohhran Beng	1946	Monthly	BCM	Yes
7	Upa Lengkhawm*	1949	Monthly	PCI	No
8	Thudik Tlangau*	1951	Monthly	Individual	No
9	Krista Thuchah Puangtu*	1956	Monthly	ZSDA	No
10	Khawchhak Arsi*	1959	Monthly	-	No
11	Catholic Kantu*	1960	Monthly	RC	Yes
12	Kristian Thalai	1970	Monthly	PCI	Yes
13	Krista Thupuangtu (earlier Bethlehem Arsi Eng)	1973	Monthly	IKK	Yes
14	Thlamuantu	1980	Monthly	UPC, NEI	Yes
15	Pentecostal Voice	1982	Monthly	UPC, NEI	Yes
16	Ramthar	1984	Monthly	PCI	Yes
17	Agape	1986	Monthly	PCI	Yes
18	Missionary Tlangau	1989	Monthly	BCM	Yes
19	Loisi	1992	Monthly	BCM	Yes
20	Phileo	1992	Monthly	KT	Yes
21	Kristian Naupang	1994	Monthly	PCI	Yes
22	Naupang te thian	1997	Monthly	BCM	Yes
23	Zanlai Au Aw	1998	Monthly	KT	Yes
25	Baptist Today	2001	Weekly	BCM	Yes
26	Pentecostal Lady	2008	Monthly	UPC, NEI	Yes
27	Thalai Entu	1978	Monthly	BCM	Yes
28	Kerugma	1984	Monthly	FBC	Yes

Source:

* Lalthangliana, B. (2004). History of Mizo Literature (2nd Ed.). M.C. Lalrinthanga

II. List of Non-Religious Periodicals in Mizoram:

Sl. No.	Name of Newspaper	Estd.	Perodicity	In Print
1	<i>Mizo Chanchin Laisuih*</i>	1898	Monthly	
2	<i>Mizo leh Vai Chanchin*</i>	1902	Monthly	No
3	<i>Mizo Zirlai Pawl Chanchinbu*</i> (earlier <i>LSA Chanchinbu</i>)	1939	Monthly	Yes
4	<i>Tun Kapta Kar Chanchin*</i>	1939	Weekly	No
5	<i>Nitin Chanchin*</i>	1939	Daily	No
6	<i>Zoram Thupuan*</i>	1947	Weekly	No
7	<i>Mizo Arsi*</i>	1948	Daily	Yes
8	<i>Thlirvelna</i>	1951	Weekly	No
9	<i>Sikul Thlirna*</i>	1952	Bi-monthly	No
10	<i>Hun Thar</i> (merged with <i>Zoram Thupuan</i> in 1958)	1954	Daily	Yes
11	<i>Zirtirtu Thiante*</i>	1959	Monthly	Yes
12	<i>Ram Thar*</i>	1961	Weekly	No
13	<i>Hruaitu*</i>	1961	Weekly	No
14	<i>Zalen Chanchinbu*</i>	1962	Weekly	No
15	<i>Thu leh Hla</i>	1965	Monthly	Yes
16	<i>Tawrhbawm</i>	1968	Daily	Yes
17	<i>Khawpui Aw</i>	1971	Daily	Yes
18	<i>Highlander</i>	1972	Daily	Yes
19	<i>Romei</i>	1973	Daily	Yes
20	<i>Chhawrpial</i>	1975	Daily	Yes
21	<i>Vanglaini</i>	1979	Daily	Yes
22	<i>Zoram Tlangau</i>	1980	Daily	Yes
23	<i>Kolasib Aw</i>	1981	Daily	Yes
24	<i>Lenkawl</i>	1981	Daily	Yes
25	<i>Hnamdamna</i>	1983	Daily	Yes
26	<i>Lairam</i>	1984	Daily	Yes
27	<i>Lentlang</i>	1984	Daily	Yes
28	<i>Rawlthar</i>	1984	Monthly	Yes
29	<i>Turnipui</i>	1984	Daily	Yes
30	<i>Youth Herald</i>	1984	Daily	Yes
31	<i>Sakeibaknei</i>	1985	Weekly	Yes
32	<i>Saiha Times</i>	1986	Daily	Yes
33	<i>Zoram Chhantu</i>	1986	Daily	Yes
34	<i>Hnehtu</i>	1988	Daily	No
35	<i>Hringlang</i>	1988	Daily	Yes
36	<i>Phawngpui Express</i>	1988	Daily	Yes
37	<i>Thlirtu</i>	1988	Daily	Yes
38	<i>Zawlkhawpui</i>	1988	Daily	Yes
39	<i>Entlang</i>	1989	Daily	Yes

40	<i>Lenrual</i>	1989	Daily	Yes
41	<i>Pasaltha</i>	1989	Daily	Yes
42	<i>Zorin</i>	1989	Daily	Yes
43	<i>Virthli</i>	1989	Daily	Yes
44	<i>Calathea</i>	1990	Daily	Yes
45	<i>Morning Post</i>	1991	Daily	Yes
46	<i>The Zoram Voice</i>	1991	Daily	Yes
47	<i>Si Ar</i>	1991	Daily	Yes
48	<i>Buannel</i>	1992	Daily	Yes
49	<i>Moonlight</i>	1992	Daily	Yes
50	<i>The Hero</i>	1992	Daily	
51	<i>Tipa Express</i>	1992	Daily	Yes
52	<i>Zawlbuk Aw</i>	1992	Tri-weekly	Yes
53	<i>Lenlaini</i>	1993	Daily	Yes
54	<i>The Vox</i>	1993	Daily	Yes
55	<i>Zawlkhawpui</i>	1994	Daily	Yes
56	<i>Hnahthial Times</i>	1996	Daily	Yes
57	<i>National Observer</i>	1996	Daily	Yes
58	<i>Zoram Hruaitu</i>	1996	Daily	No
59	<i>Mizo Express</i>	1996	Daily	Yes
60	<i>Entlang</i>	1997	Daily	
61	<i>Hlimthla</i>	1997	Daily	Yes
62	<i>Kolasib Today</i>	1997	Daily	Yes
63	<i>Ramlai Arsi</i>	1997	Daily	Yes
64	<i>Mamit Times</i>	1998	Daily	Yes
65	<i>News Link</i>	1998	Daily	Yes
66	<i>Hnahthial Today</i>	2000	Daily	Yes
67	<i>Kawl Eng</i>	2000	Daily	Yes
68	<i>Laisuih</i>	2000	Daily	No
69	<i>Ralvengtu</i>	2000	Daily	Yes
70	<i>Serchhip Times</i>	2000	Daily	Yes
71	<i>Daifim</i>	2001	Daily	Yes
72	<i>Rameng</i>	2001	Daily	No
73	<i>Serkhawpui</i>	2001	Daily	Yes
74	<i>Hnehtu</i>	2002	Daily	Yes
75	<i>Hrangturzo</i>	2002	Daily	Yes
76	<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	2002	Daily	Yes
77	<i>Aizawl Observer</i>	2003	Daily	Yes
78	<i>Chhawkhlei Times</i>	2003	Daily	Yes
79	<i>Lamkal</i>	2003	Daily	Yes
80	<i>Rihlipui</i>	2003	Daily	Yes
81	<i>Lawngtlai Post</i>	2004	Daily	Yes
82	<i>Vulmawi</i>	2004	Daily	Yes
83	<i>Zalen</i>	2004	Weekly	Yes
84	<i>Chhuahtlang</i>	2005	Daily	Yes

85	<i>Khawzawl Times</i>	2005	Daily	Yes
86	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	2005	Daily	Yes
87	<i>Vantawng</i>	2005	Tri-weekly	Yes
88	<i>Zochhiar</i>	2006	Daily	Yes
89	<i>Changdam</i>	2008	Daily	Yes
90	<i>Zunzam</i>	2008	Daily	Yes
91	<i>Zoram Kanan</i>	2008	Daily	Yes
92	<i>Zothlifim</i>	2008	Daily	Yes
93	<i>Huihchhuk</i>	2009	Daily	Yes
94	<i>Duhlai</i>	2010	Daily	Yes
95	<i>Rauthla</i>	2010	Daily	Yes
96	<i>Lungsen Post</i>	2012	Daily	Yes
97	<i>Saitual Post</i>	2012	Tri-weekly	Yes
98	<i>Zingtian</i>	2012	Daily	Yes
99	<i>Times of Maraland</i>	2014	Daily	Yes
100	<i>Zo Rin</i>	2015	Daily	Yes
101	<i>Vairengte Aw</i>	2015	Daily	Yes
102	<i>Kumtluang</i>	2016	Daily	Yes
103	<i>Rengkhawpui</i>	2016	Daily	Yes
104	<i>Ziakfung</i>	2016	Daily	Yes

Source:

* Lalthangliana, B. (2004). History of Mizo Literature (2nd Ed.). M.C. Lalrinthanga

Appendix – IV
A Glance of the Select Newspapers



Figure 1: Front and Last Page of Vanglaini Newspaper



Figure 2: Front and Last Page of *The Aizawl Post* Newspaper



Figure 3: Front and Last Page of The Zozam Times Newspaper



Figure 4: Front and Last Page of *The Mizoram Post* Newspaper



Figure 5: Front and Last page of Highlander Newspaper

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MARKETING OF SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

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Submitted

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INTRODUCTION

A newspaper is any printed periodical work containing public news or comments on public news, according to the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) (2020), a central government organisation in India. The need for news is universal and is fundamental in human nature. The desire for news, coming from people of all levels of intelligence, interests and tastes, is significantly satisfied by the newspaper. The need for news and newspaper arise out of the need for information (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). Consumption of newspapers undoubtedly has an impact on people and society.

Newspapers traditionally have been production-oriented, burdened with a complex manufacturing process that led to business strategies revolving around the newspaper and its problems, not around consumers and their needs (Fink, 1988). Newspapers are now switching to the marketing concept, looking upon themselves as products that must be tailored to suit consumer needs and which must be sold in a competitive marketplace, just like any other product. The marketing concept enables the management to create a consumer-oriented newspaper whose business philosophy is one of creating customer-satisfaction (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). The newspaper industry is a two-sided market: besides the readers market there is also a market for advertising space, and the two are closely linked by inter-market network externalities. In other words, the willingness-to-pay of advertisers depends on the size (and sometimes on the composition) of the readership; readers' demand might also be a function of the amount of advertising. The trend at the beginning of the twenty-first century is changing from “delivering information” to “making information resonate with the audience,” or packaging news to best meet the needs and values of advertisers and consumers.

On every continent and in every market context, innovating news publishers are finding ways to adapt and thrive in the face of changing consumer behaviour and competition that is driven, in large measure, by the rapid changes and challenges of digital technology. According to the World Press Trends (WAN-IFRA, 2019), the

global newspaper industry is a 123 billion dollar industry serving at least 640 million paying news users and millions more through free products. Media and communication technologies of various kinds have during recent decades been powerful tropes of social change in India. Few people around the world could be unaware that India has undergone a communication revolution.

India's newspaper market is now among the largest in the world (Sterling, 2009). The industry in 2021 witnessed a total of more than 225 million daily circulations (*Press in India*, 2021) compared to 24.3 million U.S. daily newspaper circulations (Pew Research Center, 2021). Newspaper revenues across India amounted to about Rs. 220 billion in 2021 with print advertising contributing about Rs. 151 billion (Statista, 2022). About Rs. 900 million was estimated to be generated by the print industry through digital media in 2021. As of 2019, digital news reached approximately 80 per cent of internet users across India. India is a linguistically diverse country, and the large array of languages in which newspapers are published is symptomatic of this. The Census of India 2011 reported the total number of languages as 121 comprising 22 Scheduled languages and 99 Non-Scheduled languages. Newspapers and periodicals are published in 189 languages and dialects (*Press in India*, 2021). Such pluralism is richly represented in the newspapers that reflect multicultural heterogeneity, diverse social values, and an array of linguistic traditions (Sterling, 2009).

Mizoram has proved itself to be a home for print media. According to *Press in India* (2021), the total number of newspapers and periodicals in Mizoram registered with the RNI were 206. As per the Directorate of Economics and Statistics data of 2020, there are 95 dailies, nine weeklies and two monthly newspapers published in Mizoram. Out of these newspapers, only three are in English and one in Mara language. Mizo language is one of the registered tribal languages of India and the *lingua franca* of Mizoram. English newspapers that are published from the States of Assam and West Bengal include *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, *BusinessLine* and *Eastern Chronicle*; however, they do not have considerable circulation within Mizoram. The newspaper industry, although characterised with low circulation and slow development, has potential to grow and expand. The dominance of Mizo

language newspapers is evidence of the preference for local language newspapers. The high rate of literacy, the growth of population, the infrastructural developments, rising economy and rapid adaptation of technological advancements are propellants for growth of the industry.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

The present study has been structured and presented in the form of the following five chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: The Newspaper Market in India with reference to Mizoram: Characteristics, Circulation and Competition
- Chapter 3: Marketing Strategies of Select Newspapers in Mizoram
- Chapter 4: Consumer Behaviour of Newspaper Readers in Mizoram
- Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusions

The chapters in the study are summarised as follows:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introduction to the main concepts, importance and components of a newspaper. It lays emphasis on the marketing of newspapers and on the newspaper industry in the world, in India and in Mizoram. A review of literature covering the areas of newspaper industry, consumer behaviour of newspaper readers and impact of information technology and new media on newspaper industry are detailed in the chapter. The research design of the study is included which describes the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, methodology and limitations of the study.

1.1 Newspaper:

This section describes the meaning of newspapers and the importance and crucial role they play in the lives of the readers and the society. The components of a newspaper are detailed and classifications made by the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) are also discussed.

1.2 Marketing of Newspapers:

This section highlights the importance of consumer oriented marketing practices for newspaper organisations to provide news product tailored to meet the needs and values of advertisers and consumers.

1.3 The Newspaper Industry:

This section presents the current scenario of the newspaper industry from a global perspective and narrates the Indian experience as it gradually shifts from an industry with missionary motives to a profit driven and capitalistic industry. It describes the situation of the newspaper industry in Mizoram and the multitude of print periodicals. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the newspaper industry has been outlined to understand its effect on the newspaper industry.

1.4 Review of Literature:

This section provides the review of literature of over 95 research studies. The literature has been reviewed following a thematic approach to highlight their main findings and covering the areas of newspaper industry, consumer behaviour of newspaper readers and impact of Information Technology (IT) and New Media on newspaper industry. The literature incorporates the state of the newspaper industry from a global and national perspective. The consumer behaviour of newspaper readers and the impact of digital transformation on newspapers were also taken into account.

1.5 Statement of the Problem:

The Indian-languages newspapers in most of the regions of India have been expanding in terms of circulation and advertising revenue. However, in small linguistic States such as Mizoram, though there is a growing demand for vernacular dailies, the newspaper industry is facing serious challenges such as small readership base, physical distribution in the hilly terrain, and inadequate advertising support.

Marketing of newspaper is not comparable to the marketing of a product like toothpaste or a ball pen or a detergent soap (Jyoti Kumar, 2003). The newspapers

play a significant role in shaping the public opinion in any society and they influence all sections of the people as citizens rather than mere customers. Being a media product, newspaper marketing dwells on the knowledge of various disciplines such as journalism, mass communication, business management besides marketing and media economics.

The total circulation of Mizo language daily newspapers surpasses the total circulation of English language newspapers that are published in Mizoram. The national newspapers such as *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, *BusinessLine* and *Eastern Chronicle* which are being published from other States could reach the readers in the capital city of Aizawl either in the late evening or on the next day only. Their circulations are too limited and confined to mostly the institutional buyers. This is mainly due to the fact that the State is not well-connected by any railway line due to its hilly terrain. Guwahati - Aizawl is not a preferred route for the national dailies (English) as the road transportation involves more time and cost. In view of this, the dailies published in Mizoram are the main source of news and views among the print media, and therefore, need to strive for achieving superior quality in respect of news contents, maintenance of journalistic standards, performing agenda-setting function, improving the distribution efficiency and most importantly, in understanding the ever-changing needs of the readers and advertisers. It is in this context, the present study is conducted to explore the marketing strategies or practices followed by the leading newspapers published in Mizoram. Further, it is attempted to enquire into the consumption behaviour of newspaper readers. The study is expected to provide insights to the entrepreneurs interested in publishing newspapers, media managers, advertisers, and other stakeholders concerning media.

The dailies published in Mizoram have been facing stiff competition among themselves, in addition to national dailies, magazines, and competition from electronic media such as television and radio, the digital media and the New media (social media). Although the number of newspapers published has been increasing in the State, their circulations have not increased significantly despite Mizoram being a highly literate State in the country with over 91 per cent of literacy rate even in 2011 Census. The print industry in Mizoram has adopted sophisticated printing technology

in terms of offset printing and laser printing to improve the printing quality of newspapers. However, physical distribution of the newspaper in the hilly terrain poses a serious challenge to the marketers. Expansion of circulation by establishing new publication centres in other places in the State requires additional investments and motivation on the part of the publishers. Another serious constraint faced by the newspapers published in Mizoram is relating to advertising support. Advertising is the financial heart of the newspaper. The newspaper is to be created as a successful advertising medium, because readers alone do not come close to fully supporting it financially. It is advertisers, contributing 80 per cent or more of total revenue, who determine whether a newspaper will succeed financially (Fink, 1988). The readers' loyalty should be translated into advertiser support. In other words, a circulation-advertising imbalance – high circulation costs, low ad revenue – creates a cost structure so high that the newspaper is vulnerable to disruptions in internal operations or external environment. It is here the newspapers published in Mizoram are subject to disadvantageous position as they find it difficult to create advertising revenue. Hence, the study of newspaper market in terms of its characteristics, entrepreneurial motivations, inter-intra media competition, circulation and advertising performance, and buyer expectations and satisfaction assumes significance in a remote, highly literate and tribal dominant society of Mizoram.

1.6 Objectives of the Study:

The main aim of the study is to identify the marketing practices adopted by the daily newspapers in Mizoram and to study the consumption behaviour of newspaper readers in the State.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To study the characteristics of the newspaper market in Mizoram in respect to the number of players (language-wise), ownership, technology, marketing performance in terms of circulation, intra and inter-media competition.

2. To identify the marketing strategies viz. product, pricing, placing, promotion, and space selling of the dailies in Mizoram.
3. To enquire into consumption behaviour of newspaper readers in the State.
4. To offer suggestions for improvement of marketing performance of dailies.

1.7 Hypotheses of the Study:

The following hypotheses have been formulated and tested in the study:

1. H₀₁: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels.
2. H₀₂: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualifications.
3. H₀₃: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the local news.
4. H₀₄: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the national news.
5. H₀₅: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.
6. H₀₆: There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news.

1.8 Methodology:

The study is exploratory in nature and is expected to identify and evaluate the marketing strategies adopted by select newspapers in Mizoram. Exploratory research is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem for which very little information is available. The study is conducted based on primary and secondary sources of information.

1.8.1 Scope of the Study

For the present study, the sampling frame constitute five daily newspapers in Mizoram that are registered with the RNI and are empanelled under the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), the erstwhile Directorate of Advertising and

Visual Publicity (DAVP), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. However, none of the dailies published in the State have enrolled as member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC). Table 1.1 shows the selected newspapers and their RNI registration number and DAVP newspaper code number. Out of the five newspapers, *Vanglaini*, *The Aizawl Post* and *The Zozam Times* are published in Mizo language. The remaining two newspapers namely, *The Mizoram Post* and *Highlander* are published in English language. As discussed, five leading dailies namely, *Vanglaini* (Mizo), *The Aizawl Post* (Mizo), *The Zozam Times* (Mizo), *The Mizoram Post* (English), and *Highlander* (English), published in Mizoram were selected for the study. All these newspapers are claiming to have state-wide circulation. Therefore, Mizo language newspapers confining their circulations only to specific towns or Districts are not included in the study. In addition, only the daily newspapers published in Mizoram that are empanelled with the CBC have been selected.

Two considerations went into the selection of the two different Language dailies: 1. English being the associate official language and the main medium of intellectual exchange, the English dailies are read by the majority of policy-makers, decision-makers and administrators. 2. The Mizo language newspapers are read by the common people and reach the vast majority of the population in the State.

Table 1.1: Select Daily Newspapers in Mizoram and their RNI Registration Number, DAVP Empanelment Code Number and Daily Circulation as on 2022

Newspaper	RNI Registration Number	DAVP Code	Publication Centre	Daily Circulation (2022)
<i>Vanglaini</i>	34227/79	520010	Aizawl	35,000
<i>The Aizawl Post</i>	MIZMIZ/2003/12043	520013	Aizawl	13,000
<i>The Zozam Times</i>	MIZMIZ/2006/16849	520015	Aizawl	13,000
<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	MIZENG/2002/10461	100992	Aizawl	44,000
<i>Highlander</i>	24501/1972	100520	Aizawl	30,000

Source: Compiled based on the data provided by the Registrar of Newspapers for India and the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information, Government of India.

As per the data provided in the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram (2020), as mentioned earlier, there were 95 daily, nine weekly and two monthly newspapers in Mizoram, with 33 daily newspapers in Aizawl District.

1.8.2 Sources of data

The study relied on primary data and secondary data.

- a. ***Primary data:*** The sources of primary data are given below:
 - i. ***Structured Questionnaire for Newspaper Organisations:*** A structured questionnaire (*Appendix-I*) was administered to the newspaper organisations, which has been designed to obtain information from the managerial perspective. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the publishers of the five select daily newspapers. The questionnaire consisted of: general information of the publisher, historical background of the newspaper, growth and present status of the newspaper, pricing of the newspaper, newspaper revenue, distribution and promotion of the newspaper.
 - ii. ***Interview:*** An open-ended interview was conducted with the publishers of the select newspapers to gain insights on the publishers' perception about the industry. Moreover, data on the daily newspapers published in each administrative District of the State were collected by telephone interviewing of the editors or publishers.
 - iii. ***Structured Questionnaire for the Select Newspaper Readers:*** A structured questionnaire was administered to the readers of the select newspapers (*Appendix-II*). This questionnaire has been designed based on the literature surveyed (e.g. Jyoti Kumar 2003; Padmaja 2008). The questionnaire was designed to study the consumption behaviour of the newspaper readers and consisted of three parts: Part I deals with the socio-economic background of the readers; Part II deals with the readership preferences in terms of regularity of reading newspapers, preferential contents of newspaper, time of reading newspaper, type of news, perception of coverage of news items, level of

satisfaction, first source of news, and so on, and; Part III deals with the media habits of the readers.

The universe of the study comprise of all the readers of the select daily newspapers in Mizoram. A sample size of 450 readers was selected for assurance of 95 per cent confidence level with a probability of 5 per cent margin of error. The desired sample size for population above 1,00,000 with 5 per cent margin of error and 95 per cent confidence level is 400 (Glenn, 1992). The sample was drawn from Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) area. The AMC area has been selected as majority of the circulation of the select newspapers are within the AMC area and Aizawl being the capital city of Mizoram has the largest population in the State. For this purpose, the AMC area was divided into four clusters of places namely Aizawl North, Aizawl East, Aizawl West, and Aizawl South. Thus, the cluster-wise sample was of 25 readers of each of five dailies, totalling 125. However, the researcher found it extremely difficult to identify 100 intense readers of *Highlander* from four clusters in view of very limited circulation of the daily. Therefore, the researcher was compelled to confine to only 50 intense readers of *Highlander*.

The intense readers of the select dailies were selected as sample by following the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling method in which units are selected because they have characteristics that the researcher needs in the sample. In other words, the purposive sampling method relies on the researcher's judgement when identifying and selecting the respondents that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives. It is particularly useful in newspaper readership surveys for obtaining rich information out of limited resources. The intense reader is one who reads at least one of the select newspapers frequently (at least three times in a week) with interest. Readership experience of three years is another criterion for drawing the purposive sample of the intense readers.

The questionnaire for the newspaper readers was translated into Mizo language and the answers to the questionnaires were again translated into English to facilitate analysis. The questionnaires were distributed to the readers of the select newspapers with the help and guidance of newspaper distributors as they possess the necessary information in choosing the right respondents. The Reader survey was conducted prior to COVID-19 pandemic.

b. Secondary data: For the secondary data, extensive literature review was undertaken on different studies, carried out both internationally and nationally, in the area of the newspaper industry and consumer behaviour of newspaper readers. In addition, data were collected from the office records of newspaper organisations of the select dailies and from the reports by Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, and Planning and Programme Implementation Department in Government of Mizoram. Other reports include:

- i. *Press in India* published by Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI).
- ii. Circulation figures published by Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC).
- iii. *Indian Readership Survey* published by Media Research Users Council India (MRUC India).
- iv. Reports published by Press Information Bureau (PIB), Government of India.
- v. *World Press Trends Report* published by WAN-IFRA.
- vi. *Digital News Report* published by Reuters Institute
- vii. Annual Reports published by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF)
- viii. *India's Media and Entertainment Report* published by KPMG
- ix. *FICCI-EY Report* published by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young
- x. Reports published by Pew Research Center, USA
- xi. *World Trends Report* published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- xii. Annual Reports of Mizoram Journalists Association (MJA)
- xiii. *Marketing Whitebook* published by *BusinessWorld*

1.8.3 Tools for analysis

The data collected and tabulated from the questionnaire and other secondary sources has been analysed using appropriate statistical tools to draw inferences as per the objectives of the study. The software used for analysis of data was SPSS. Descriptive statistics was used for describing the responses of the respondents in different categories. To test the hypothesis, Chi-squared tests of independence were used to test the significant association.

1.9 Operational Definitions:

This section provides the operational definitions of the newspaper industry.

- a) **Advertisement (ad):** A message printed in the newspaper in space paid for by a company, organisation or individual.
- b) **Broadsheet:** A newspaper printed on a large sheet of paper, measuring about 40x55 cms (16x22 inches). Broadsheets are often considered to have a greater depth of reporting.
- c) **Classified advertising:** Advertising space usually purchased in small amounts by the public and placed under a special classification. Advertisements grouped by subject usually appearing under categorical headings in a section of a newspaper such as auto sales, employment opportunities or rental properties.
- d) **Column centimetre:** Advertising space one column wide and 1 centimetre deep.
- e) **Display Advertising:** An advertisement in relatively large type, usually with headlines, border, signature, and illustrations that can appear on any page throughout a newspaper.
- f) **Edition:** One version of the newspaper for the day. Some papers may have three editions with certain updates and changes from the previous ones. So there may be several editions of one issue of a paper.

- g) **Editorial:** The leading article or leader - a special column stating the opinion of the editor usually on a key issue of the day. It is usually in a different type face, in a special identifiable location. In larger papers editors have a say in the editorial but several people are assigned to write the leader on various days.
- h) **Feature:** A story which concentrates on issues other than those with straight news value. Features are usually longer and written in a different style from news stories. They elaborate, amplify or provide background to news reports. They may also deal with subjects as varied as travel, personal finance, fashion and computers.
- i) **Headline:** Display type placed over a story intended to catch the reader's attention and signal what the story is about.
- j) **Laser Printing:** Printing technique that uses a non-impact photocopier technology in which there are no keys striking the paper. When a document is sent to the printer from the computer, a laser beam "draws" the document on a selenium-coated drum using electrical charges.
- k) **Layout:** It includes the arrangement of text and illustrations on a page, whether editorial content or advertisements. Newspaper layout is designed to communicate visually and easily the important and current news of the day.
- l) **Newsprint:** A low-grade, machine-finished paper made from wood pulp and a small percentage of sulphite pulp, used chiefly for newspapers. It is thin enough to be economically manufactured, but thick enough to be printed on both sides.
- m) **Offset Printing:** Printing technique in which the inked image on a printing plate is printed on a rubber cylinder and then transferred (i.e., offset) to paper.
- n) **Tabloid:** A newspaper half the size of a broadsheet.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

- Newspaper organisations under the study were deficient of proper records and documents to provide required data to the researcher.

- The circulation figures in Mizoram do not come under the Audit Bureau of Circulation. The researcher used claimed circulation from the publications and it may not be authentic. However, the claimed circulation figures give an indication of the performance of the newspapers.
- The readership survey is conducted based on the assumption that the responses are true and hence, no statistical test has been performed to study non-response bias and consistency of individual responses.
- There is limited literature available with regard to the newspaper market in Mizoram.

CHAPTER-2: THE NEWSPAPER MARKET IN INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO MIZORAM: CHARACTERISTICS, CIRCULATION AND COMPETITION

The main objective of Chapter-2 is *“to study the characteristics of the newspaper market in India with reference to Mizoram in respect of the number of players (local and national), marketing performance in terms of circulation and intra and inter-media competition”*. In compliance with the objective, the main findings of the chapter have been presented with reference to the newspaper market in India, the newspaper market in Mizoram and its evolution, the characteristics of newspapers in Mizoram with respect to language, ownership, journalist, technology, advertising, pricing, distribution and registration with the government. The marketing performance of the newspapers in terms of circulation has been highlighted for each of the administrative Districts in Mizoram. Competition faced by the newspapers within the industry and growth of other media and their implications have been described.

The Newspaper Market in India

- The newspaper industry in 2021 had a total of 1,44,520 publications (newspapers and other periodicals) with more than 386 million copies

published in 189 different languages and dialects and a readership of 400 million.

- The largest circulated daily in 2021 was a Hindi language newspaper *Dainik Bhaskar*, with a circulation of more than 3.8 million copies. The largest circulated English Daily, the *Times of India*, had a daily circulation of more than 2.1 million copies.
- In 2021, Hindi dailies were among the highest number of all the languages (4349), followed by Urdu (1107), Telugu (1083), English (820), Marathi (617), Kannada (560), Gujarati (369), Tamil (180), Odia (132) and Malayalam (119).
- The ownership pattern, in 2021, showed that 8218 newspapers were owned by individuals (84.28%) followed by 652 newspapers owned by private limited companies (6.68%), 326 newspapers owned by public limited companies (3.34%) and the government owning only two newspapers (0.02%).
- Of the ten top dailies that had the highest readership in 2019, each had different ownership and controlled by a different family.
- About Rs. 900 million was estimated to be generated by the print industry through digital media in 2021. As of 2019, digital news reached approximately 80 per cent of internet users across India.
- The newspaper industry although it follows self-regulation, is monitored by the RNI and regulated by the PCI in terms of ethics and standards. Regulators such as SEBI and CCI actively regulate competition in the market.
- Newsprint is regulated with an import duty of five per cent since 2020.
- The revenue from print advertising across India in 2021 was about Rs. 151 billion. In 2022, the Indian government spent over Rs. 1.7 billion on advertisements in newspapers distributed among more than six thousand newspapers.

The Newspaper Market in Mizoram: Characteristics

- The first newspaper published in Mizoram was *Mizo Chanchin Laisuih*, in 1898 making the newspaper one of the first industries in Mizoram.
- The newspaper industry has 95 dailies, nine weeklies and two monthly newspapers as on 2021.
- The daily newspapers published in the State are in Mizo language (91), English language (3) and Mara language (1).
- All the daily newspapers are owned by individuals and residents of Mizoram.
- Periodicals are owned by individuals, non-government organisations, societies and churches. The highest circulated monthly newspaper, *Synod*, is owned by the Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram Synod.
- The newspaper industry in Mizoram has not experienced a non-Mizo owner apart from the missionaries and British officials who established the pioneer newspapers.
- A single journalist association, the Mizoram Journalists' Association (MJA) exists in the State and claimed 192 members as on 2020. The MJA enjoys a journalist welfare fund of Rs. Twenty lakhs annually from the Government of Mizoram, through the Directorate of I&PR, which is used for medical reimbursement for the member journalists.
- The printing technology used by the industry has developed from cyclostyle printing to offset printing and laser printing.
- The newspapers rely heavily on advertisement revenue and it is the main source of revenue.
- The price of newspapers in Mizoram varies with the size and number of pages of the newspaper. *Vanglaini* has the highest price in the market with Rs. 8 per copy as on October, 2022. Newspapers namely *The Aizawl Post*, *The Zozam Times* and *The Mizoram Post* charge Rs. 6 per copy. Prices of other newspapers ranged from Rs. 2.80 to Rs. 5 per copy.
- The daily newspapers of each District of the State typically confined their circulation within their District if not their town or city. Only few of the daily newspapers circulate beyond the District in which it is published.

- Out of the 95 daily newspapers in Mizoram, 51 (57%) dailies have registered with the RNI as on 2022.

The Newspaper Market in Mizoram: Circulation

- The District of Aizawl, the State capital, has 33 daily newspapers, three weekly newspapers and two monthly newspapers. Daily circulations of the newspapers range from 200 copies to 20,000 copies as on 2021.
- Champhai District has five daily newspapers with daily circulation ranging from 900 to 1200 copies as on 2021. All the five dailies are two page newspapers of the same size.
- Kolasib District has nine daily newspapers and one weekly newspaper. Daily circulation of the newspapers range from 500 to 1000 copies.
- Lawngtlai District has seven daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 500 to 1200 copies per day.
- Lunglei District has 15 daily newspapers and five weekly newspapers with circulation ranging from 300 to 2400 copies per day.
- Mamit District has a total of four daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 150 to 700 copies per day.
- Serchhip District has a total of ten daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 120 to 1500 copies per day.
- Sialha District has a total of nine daily newspapers with circulation ranging from 150 to 550 copies per day.

The Newspaper Market in Mizoram: Competition

- Within the newspaper industry in Mizoram, 95 daily newspapers, nine weekly newspapers and two monthly newspapers compete with each other.
- The competition between the newspapers is mostly confined within the administrative Districts as circulations are limited within the Districts except for a few newspapers that distribute throughout the State.

- A unique competition is also present from weekly and monthly news bulletins of different non-government organisations like the YMA, different church denominations and trade, sports and entertainment associations. These weekly and monthly newspapers are mostly in tabloid forms, and contain information and news pertaining to a particular locality or area.
- The newspapers compete with other media, namely, radio, television, magazines and the internet. Television news sources are mainly *Doordarshan* (TV channel owned by the Government of India), local cable TV channels of *LPS* and *ZONET* and regional, national and international news programmes. Radio news sources are mainly *All India Radio AIR*, *Aizawl 100.1 FM*, *All India Radio North Eastern Service 100.7 FM*, and *Red 93.5 FM*.
- Newspapers are progressively encountering competition from the internet through newspaper websites and social media. Online media platforms such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *WhatsApp*, *Pinterest*, *LinkedIn*, *YouTube*, and so on have increasingly become the source of news for internet users.
- The online and social media presence of newspapers in Mizoram is still in its infant stage with only five newspapers having their own website, seven newspapers having *Facebook* accounts, two newspapers having *Instagram* accounts, three newspapers having *Twitter* handles and one newspaper having a mobile application.

CHAPTER-3: MARKETING STRATEGIES OF SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN MIZORAM

The main objective of Chapter-3 is “to identify the marketing mix viz. product, pricing, distribution, promotion, and space selling of the select dailies in Mizoram”. The chapter examined the importance of marketing strategies in the newspaper industry and attempted to identify the marketing strategies of the five select newspapers in Mizoram in terms of their product, pricing, placing and promotion decisions.

Vanglaini

- A Mizo language newspaper, *Vanglaini* has been in the newspaper industry for 44 years and has grown from an initial circulation of 1000 copies in 1978 to 35000 copies in 2022.
- It upgraded its newsletter size pages to a four page black and white broadsheet size in 2001 and to twelve pages since 2013 with four pages in colour.
- Newsprint is purchased from State of Punjab.
- *Vanglaini* launched its website in 2015 and continued its online presence with an active social media presence on *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Twitter* and a mobile phone application.
- *Vanglaini* is the most widely circulated newspaper among the daily Mizo language newspapers in the state of Mizoram with a circulation of 35,000 as of 2022.
- The page layout of the twelve pages of *Vanglaini* consists of the first page, in colour, providing State and local news, the second page consisting entirely of State and local news, the third page, in colour, carrying entertainment, the fourth page consisting of North East news and national news, the fifth page displaying classified ads, display ads and memoriam, the sixth page providing advertisements and government notifications, the eighth page consisting of international news and column articles, the ninth page providing advertisements and government tenders, and the tenth to twelfth page carrying sports news with pages ten and twelve in colour.
- After a decade of its price remaining at Rs. 150 per month, *Vanglaini* increased its price to Rs. 200 per month since April, 2022.
- The mode of collection of subscription fees from the subscribers is through the distributors and the average time required to complete collection of fees is 15 days.
- The cost of advertising in *Vanglaini* is Rs. 130 per column centimetre in 2022.

- *Vanglaini* is distributed throughout the State of Mizoram with 150 distributors within the capital District of Aizawl and 27 distributors for the remaining Districts.
- The mode of delivery of *Vanglaini* to the distributors is a blended mode of using own vehicles and hiring vehicles.
- The distributors receive 26 per cent of the subscription fee as their commission.
- *Vanglaini* conducts various promotional activities through television, social media, sponsorships, awards, discussion forums and so on.
- *Vanglaini* allocated two per cent of profits per annum for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure.

The Aizawl Post

- *The Aizawl Post*, a Mizo language daily newspaper, began publication in 2003 and has continued publication for 19 years.
- It began publishing with an offset printing technique and is currently an eight page broadsheet size newspaper with its first and last page in colour.
- With an initial circulation of 2000 copies, the newspaper has reached a circulation of 13,000 copies.
- Newsprint is purchased from Sapphire Papers Mill Pvt. Ltd., West Bengal.
- The page layout of the eight pages of *The Aizawl Post* consist of the first page, in colour, providing State news, the second page consisting of State, local news and entertainment, the third page consisting of classified ads, display ads and government notifications, the fourth page providing national and international news, the fifth page consisting of editorial and opinion articles, the sixth and seventh pages consisting of sports news and the eighth page, in colour, providing entertainment news.
- *The Aizawl Post* has its own website and a strong social media presence on *Facebook*.

- Priced at Rs. 150 per month, it has remained at this price since 2013 when it was increased from Rs. 100.
- Contributions to the total revenue of the newspaper are made through subscription fees (35%), advertising fees (60%) and sale of scrap paper (5%).
- The cost of advertising in the newspaper was Rs. 130 per column centimetre for black and white advertisements and Rs. 500 per column centimetre for coloured advertisements as in March 2022.
- Distribution of the newspaper is concentrated mainly within Aizawl District and a few copies distributed to the other Districts with 200 distributors with the Aizawl District and ten distributors, one each, for the rest of the Districts.
- Distribution to the Districts outside the publication centre is made on the publishing day itself, by use of hired vehicles.
- The subscription price for the newspapers is collected by the distributors and the collection from the subscribers is completed in 15 to 20 days.
- The newspaper does not conduct any definite promotional activities. However, it has an online presence in social media platforms.

The Zozam Times

- A Mizo language daily newspaper, *The Zozam Times*, was established in 2005 and was the first daily newspaper in Mizoram to print in colour.
- An eight page broadsheet size newspaper, it uses offset printing technique. The first and last page is in colour.
- It claimed a circulation of 13000 per publishing day in 2022.
- The newsprint used is obtained from Guwahati, Assam.
- *The Zozam Times* has its own website and a strong social media presence in *Twitter*.
- The page layout of the eight pages of *The Zozam Times* consist of the first page, in colour, providing State and local news, the second page consisting of editorial, regional and local news, the third page presenting opinion articles, the fourth page consisting entirely of advertisements, the fifth page providing

national and international news, the sixth page consisting of entertainment news, the seventh page consisting of sports news and entertainment for children, and the eight page, in colour, consisting of sports news.

- Priced at Rs. 150 per month, it has remained at this price since 2013 when it raised its price from Rs. 100.
- The subscription fee of the newspaper is collected by the distributors and the collection from the subscribers is completed in 15 to 20 days.
- Its main sources of revenue are subscription fees and advertising fees in the ratio of 3:7.
- The cost of advertising in the newspaper was Rs. 130 per column centimetre for black and white advertisements and Rs. 500 per column centimetre for coloured advertisements as on March 2022.
- Distribution of *The Zozam Times* is mainly within Aizawl District with a few subscriptions in other Districts with 70 distributors within Aizawl District and 11 distributors in the remaining Districts.
- Newspapers are delivered to four main distribution points in Aizawl city from where the distributors pick up and deliver to the subscribers.
- The distribution to the Districts outside the publication centre is made on the publishing day itself, through hired vehicles.
- It does not conduct any specific promotional activities to boost circulation and relies on the distributors to obtain and retain customers. It depends, like most newspapers in the State, on word-of-mouth marketing. Nonetheless, it has a strong online social media presence.

The Mizoram Post

- An English language daily newspaper, *The Mizoram Post*, began publication in 2003.
- Its initial publication centre was Silchar, Assam which was later shifted to Aizawl.
- It is the only newspaper in the State to have a non-Mizo editor.

- It began publication with twelve pages and has reduced its number of pages to eight with four pages in colour.
- The claimed circulation of *The Mizoram Post* in 2022 was approximately 44,000 copies.
- The page layout of the eight pages of *The Mizoram Post* consist of the first page, in colour, consisting of state, regional and national news, the second page, in colour, consisting of editorial and opinion articles, the third page providing state news and advertisements, the fourth page consisting of national news, the fifth page providing international news, the coloured sixth page providing general knowledge items, the seventh page providing employment related issues, and the coloured eighth page consisting of advertisements and sports news.
- The price of *The Mizoram Post* is Rs. 150 per month since 2020. Priced at Rs. 75 in 2003 when it began publication, it increased its price to Rs. 125 from 2011.
- Contributions to the total revenue of the newspaper are made through subscription fees (30%) and advertising fees (70%).
- Distribution is concentrated mainly within the capital city, Aizawl with one distribution centre in the city.
- *The Mizoram Post* does not employ any direct promotional activities. It has social media presence in *Facebook*.

Highlander

- The oldest English language daily newspaper in Mizoram, *Highlander* was established in 1972.
- Beginning its publication with the now obsolete treadle printing machine, it upgraded to offset printing in 1993.
- With an initial circulation of 500 copies per publishing day, it claimed a circulation of 30000 in 2022.

- The page layout of the twelve pages of *Highlander* consist of the first page providing state news, the second page consisting of international news, the third page consisting of regional North East news, the fourth and fifth pages consisting of national news, the sixth page consisting of editorials, national and international news, the seventh page providing national news and advertisements, the eighth and ninth pages consisting of national news and advertisements, the ninth page detailing international sports news, the tenth page consisting of international news and advertisements, the eleventh page providing international entertainment news, and the final page consisting of regional news and advertisements.
- Priced at Rs. 150 per month, it distributes mainly within the capital city, Aizawl.
- The newspaper does not adopt any promotional activity and relies on word-of-mouth influence.

SWOT Analysis of Vanglaini Newspaper

The marketing and circulation performance of Vanglaini has been reflected in its market leadership among the newspapers in Mizoram. It has the highest circulation among all the language newspapers in Mizoram. Furthermore, it is the only newspaper that extensively distributes throughout the state. The application of the SWOT analysis will enable the marketer to evolve better competitive strategies.

- The *strengths* of Vanglaini include it being the largest circulated daily newspaper in Mizoram since 2000 and a leading advertising vehicle. It is a forerunner in product development in the newspaper industry of Mizoram. It is a newspaper that covers local news extensively and employs efficient managerial and professional human resources. It is proactive in adapting to changes in technology with the development of its own website and mobile application and strong online social media presence. It also has strong manufacturing resources.

- The *weaknesses* of Vanglaini include the limited market reach, difficulty in generating digital revenue, high monthly price of product as compared to other newspapers in the market, high cost of production, higher price per copy among Mizo language newspapers, absence of marketing research and low investment in circulation promotion.
- The *opportunities* available to Vanglaini include the possibility of market expansion, segmenting content to reach new niche markets, technological up-gradation, relationship marketing with suppliers and distributors to save costs, investment in newsprint, taking advantage of the press credibility it enjoys and publishing on Sunday.
- The *threats* faced by *Vanglaini* are rapid progress of new media and information technology, high competition from other media, competition within the newspaper industry and the general decline in newspaper reading habit.
- The goal for *Vanglaini* should be to match the newspaper's strengths to the opportunities in the environment while simultaneously eliminating or overcoming the weaknesses and minimizing the threats.

CHAPTER-4: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF NEWSPAPER READERS IN MIZORAM

The main objective of Chapter-4 is “*to enquire into consumption behaviour of newspaper readers in the State*”. It is intended to identify the socio economic background of the respondents, their preferential contents of newspaper, the nature of buying newspapers and the frequency with which the newspapers are read. The types of news preferred by the readers as well as the readers' perception of coverage of news items are examined. Evaluations made by readers on ratio of news to advertisements and the evaluation of value of newspapers based on 12 premises were studied. The readers' level of satisfaction in terms of types of news items covered and other features of the newspapers were analysed. Dependency on newspapers for news and other media habits were also studied.

Socio Economic Background of Readers

- Gender-wise, 57.6 per cent of the readers were males and 42.4 per cent were female readers.
- Nearly one-third of the respondents were in the 20-29 age groups. Over 22 per cent of the readers were below 20 years of age. In contrast, only 3.8 per cent of the readers were 60 years and above.
- Education-wise, the non-graduates (57.3%) outnumbered the graduates and postgraduates (42.7%) combined. Majority of the readers (34 %) were Class 12 level.
- Classification by occupation shows that 43.6 per cent of the respondents were students and 31.8 per cent were employees. Only 1.8 per cent was involved in agriculture.
- Distribution of readers by income show that over 27 per cent of the respondents have an annual income exceeding Rs. 2,50,000. Over 22 per cent readers were having below Rs. 1,00,000 of income.

Readership Preferences and Habits

- Over 73 per cent of the readers read a newspaper daily and 26.9 per cent of respondents read it frequently, which is at least three times a week.
- Majority of the respondents (85.56 %) read newspapers for one hour or less in a day. Only 14.46 per cent read for more than one hour a day.
- Over 48 per cent of the readers prefer to read the whole paper. Thirty per cent of the readers glanced at the headlines only. Eighteen per cent read the first page only. And only 3.6 per cent read selected columns.
- With over 91 per cent of the respondents buying their newspaper through subscription, majority of the respondents read more than one newspaper.
- Half of the respondents read their newspaper in the morning from 6 to 8 a.m.
- Over 83 per cent of the readers reveal that their parents exhibited interest in newspaper reading during their childhood. Over 82 per cent of the readers admitted that their habit of reading a newspaper was self-instilled.

- The type of news preferred by the respondents was mostly local news with over 64 per cent of the readers preferring it, followed by 18 per cent of the readers preferring international news.
- As regards the readers' perception of coverage of news items to be adequate or whether it needs to improve or reduce, majority of the readers consider the local news, international news, editorials, editorial articles, sports news, financial news, entertainments news and advertisement news to be adequate. However, more than half of the respondents consider the regional news and national news in need of reduction.
- Over 76 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the price of the newspaper and nearly half of the readers (48%) would continue to purchase or subscribe to the newspaper even if the price increased.
- Over 84 per cent of the readers considered the quality of newsprint as very important or important.
- All the newspapers under the study are published throughout the week except on Sundays. Over 34 per cent of the readers would like to receive newspapers on a Sunday. On the other hand, over 45 per cent of the readers do not want to receive newspapers on a Sunday.
- In terms of newspaper and its value, there is an overall positive response among the readers and the readers felt that their newspaper's performance were good regarding the newspapers' role in educating and moulding opinion, in promoting national integration and universal brotherhood, in highlighting developmental issues, in promoting cultural and literary values, in providing entertainment and in upholding human rights. At the same time, the newspapers have to give better efforts in serving their various purposes of upholding democratic values, promoting scientific temper, highlighting the problems of the poor and consumer problems, fighting against corruption and maintaining high standards in journalism without bias.
- In general, more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the coverage of different type of news and other features of the newspapers. However, a closer look at the neutral responses indicates that there is room for

improvement for the newspapers. More than one-third of the readers gave neutral responses in North East India news coverage, business news coverage, editorial page articles, advertisements, and price of newspapers.

- Newspaper was the first source of news for 24 per cent of the respondents and is considered to be the most reliable news medium by 45.3 per cent of the readers.
- Over 77 per cent of the readers claimed that they are in a habit of using the internet and only 14.9 per cent did not use the internet.
- Only 28 per cent of the respondents read their newspaper through the internet and over 69 per cent of the respondents did not prefer to read it through internet.
- Over 75 per cent of the readers use social media. Only 16.9 per cent of the readers are not using social media.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

- The hypothesis (H_{01}) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels*” was tested (p value of $0.003 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their income levels.
- The hypothesis (H_{02}) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualifications*” was tested (p value of $0.00001 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their educational qualification.
- The hypothesis (H_{03}) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the local news*” was tested (p value of $0.000055 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected and implies that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preferences of local news.

- The hypothesis (H₀₄) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for the national news*” was tested (p value of 0.041<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected and implies there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their preference for national news.
- The hypothesis (H₀₅) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers*” was tested (p value of 0.047<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction about price of the newspapers.
- The hypothesis (H₀₆) “*There is no significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news*” was tested (p value of 0.000310<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is a significant association between the readers of the five selected dailies and their satisfaction of the coverage of latest news.

CHAPTER-5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The last chapter enumerates the important findings of the study, chapter-wise, specific suggestions to the newspaper organisations and to the Government of Mizoram, scope for further research and the overall conclusion are presented. The suggestions given are shown below:

Suggestions to Newspapers:

- Adopt changes in business model
- Explore niche marketing
- Apply bundling strategy
- Subscribe to news agencies
- Intensify promotional activities

- Establish cross media collaborations
- Conduct market research
- Improve news contents
- Refine local news
- Publish local business news
- Construct efficient distribution system
- Introduce Sunday edition
- Target Youth
- Enhance newsprint
- Invest in printing press
- Address economic and social issues

Suggestions to Government:

- Categorisation of local newspapers for distribution of advertisements
- Avail Central Government schemes
- Procure actual data on circulation figures of local newspapers

Conclusion

Marketing is indispensable for any industry. It helps an industry to plan and develop consumer oriented products, pricing, placing and promotion strategies. The newspaper industry, similar to other industries, would stand to gain from planning and executing marketing strategies applicable to the industry. The newspaper market being a two-pronged market ought to comprehend the needs of both its readers and advertisers. Newspapers depend on readers for higher circulation and readership; at the same time they strive to sell this audience to advertisers for higher revenue to cover up the ever-growing costs and to satisfy the investors' profit motive. Hence, it is imperative for the survival and success of newspapers to recognize the specific needs of the readers and advertisers, and provide satisfactions and create brand loyalty.

The newspaper market in Mizoram, primarily dominated by Mizo language newspapers shares the experience of newspaper markets elsewhere in terms of innovation in technology, increase in number of players, and changes in consumption habits of the readers. The newspaper industry faces challenges imposed by digital transformation and socio-economic changes that occur in the society. The select newspapers under the study adopted and adapted to the improved printing technology such as offset printing and laser printing. However, with internet usage on the rise and smartphones becoming widespread, the newspapers are competing with the New media for seizing the limited time available with the people. News consumption habits are evolving and the methods of finding news are changing. Meanwhile, the newspaper industry is swamped with small newspaper organisations with low circulations and digital transformation is restricted by lack of capabilities and financial constraints. The market leader and only a handful of other newspapers have been able to manage their newspaper as a multi-platform media organisation and exploit social media. In the small state of India's North-East, which is characterised by the predominance of Christianity in different denominations, a unique competition is posed by the multitude of religious and community weekly and monthly newspapers which are mostly in tabloid form and contain information and news pertaining to a particular locality, area or issue. Although they seem unthreatening for the daily newspapers, they pose an indirect competition as they divert the time, resources and attention of the readers away from the daily newspapers.

The performance of any newspaper is often measured by its circulation. The relatively low population of only around twelve lakhs may be a hindering factor for the growth of circulations in case of the newspapers that are published in Mizoram. Rapid growth of other media may also be a factor thwarting the growth of print media. Television, digital media, and FM radio present a mighty competition for newspapers. The sluggish state of advertising revenues may be another factor deterring new investments in the print news media. Newspapers mainly sustain on advertising revenue and the dependence on advertising revenue is evident from the intrinsic nature of newspaper pricing. The price of newspapers in Mizoram is minimal, necessitating reliance on advertising revenue. However, the advertising

market is not yet fully developed and sufficient enough to sustain profitability and growth of the newspaper organisations.

For newspaper organisations, the product is the newspaper itself. Innovation in product design and layout is crucial to the continuing success of a newspaper. Most of the newspapers in Mizoram are printed in tabloid size papers ranging from two to four pages. Just a few newspapers are printed in broadsheet size papers ranging from six to twelve pages. Changes in layout of the newspapers have been scarce for a number of years. The newspapers have been lagging behind the market leader in product innovation. This is also true in the case of promotional activities. Most of the newspapers in Mizoram have not taken up any intense promotional activity except for their dependence on word-of-mouth influence and its distributors. Some of the newspapers have digital presence and provide their content through websites and various social media platforms. However, it does not seem to be planned in a professional manner as an intentional promotional activity, but as a by-product of transferring content online. Distribution of newspapers is typically confined within the city of publication or the administrative Districts at the most. Only very few newspaper organisations manage to distribute throughout the state, although hindered frequently by natural road obstructions in the hilly terrains of Mizoram.

Readership of the newspapers spans all levels of education and income as well as age and gender in the present study. Local news is preferred by majority of the readers and the engagement of the readers in local community is evident from their preference of local news. This is in tune with the international phenomenon. Despite the lack of diffusion by national newspapers and other languages newspapers, the newspapers, in particular the Mizo language newspaper organisations still require comprehensive knowledge about the audience and should cater to the changing needs of the readers. Local newspapers might not have the resources to compete with national publications' strategies, but they are valued by the readers. The newspapers must, therefore, focus on their core competence as enunciated by C. K. Prahalad i.e., emphasising the local news and views in order to stand out.

One can hardly state that the growth of newspaper industry in Mizoram is exemplary and reaping rewards. Drastic changes in information and communication technology, news consumption habits of people, and penetration of the internet and the New media have posed serious challenges to the news print media. Nevertheless, the future of newspapers in Mizoram yet has good prospects considering the credibility the conventional newspapers enjoy compared to the news and views spread by the social media. The publishers and editors with customer orientation can increase their capacity to fight against the odds in search of healthy profit. Given the quest for earnings, newspapers cannot survive without marketing. The newspapers need to develop market oriented strategies in order to withstand the ever increasing competition within the industry and with other media, especially the digital media. In addition, safeguarding trust in quality journalism is an essential requirement to keep up with the digital news media and social media. Newspapers that realize the importance of holistic marketing can thrive and sustain profitability, in addition to performing their role in safeguarding the spirit of democracy across the country.