

# CHAPTER 4:

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

## 1. Introduction

The chapter is divided into four segments – document analysis, questionnaire and perception scale, in-depth interviews, and converging themes. Document analysis and questionnaire along with perception scale were carried out first in chronology. The primary findings from both the tools were then shared with the interviewees so that they can reflect on the themes emerging from how media looks at the disability sector and how disability sector looks at media.

After analysis of data derived from all the three tools, common points were identified and were presented to reach cohesive conclusion.

## 2. Document Analysis

Two major newspapers having multiple editions in Gujarat and having pan-India group presence – The Times of India of Times Group and Divya Bhaskar of Dainik Bhaskar Group – were chosen for the document analysis. The editions for three years – 2015, 2016 and 2017 – were accessed from the archives and all the stories having mention of disability or disability-related terminology were chosen for analysis for purpose of finding patterns and understanding media representation of disability.

### 2.1 Divya Bhaskar

A total of 331 stories were found based on keyword search in headlines and body of the stories which were considered for the analysis.

#### **Frequency of Coverage**

The year 2015 had 101 stories mentioning disabilities, which increased to 129 in 2016, and again came back to 101 for 2017. The monthly average however is higher for 2017 as the stories for November 2017 could not be accessed from the newspaper archives.

December 2015 recorded the highest monthly stories at 18, whereas September 2015 had the lowest 2. The 18 stories in December 2015 included seven on December 3 or 4 to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities – accounting for 39% of the stories. Moreover, 10 of them were related to an event, whereas five were features or individual profiles. The newspaper took note of the first mention of word ‘Divyang’ in ‘Mann ki Baat’ radio show by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 27, but had no mention of the launch of Accessible India (Sugamya Bharat) on December 3. On the other hand, the two stories in September 2015 included an international event photo feature and an individual profile.

*Table 1: Month-wise disability-related stories in Divya Bhaskar*

2015		2016		2017	
Month	Articles	Month	Articles	Month	Articles
January	9	January	9	January	15
February	4	February	11	February	7
March	9	March	9	March	9
April	13	April	14	April	8
May	5	May	9	May	5
June	11	June	14	June	8
July	17	July	7	July	13
August	6	August	11	August	3
September	2	September	16	September	13
October	4	October	5	October	13
November	3	November	13	November*	0
December	18	December	11	December	7
Total	101		129		101

Average monthly stories for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 were found to be 8.4, 10.75 and 9.2 respectively. Out of 35 months under study, 15 or 43% of the months had more than 10 monthly stories related to disability. It meant that these months had average two or more stories weekly.

While September 2016 had spike in stories due to Paralympics, in other months no sustained factor was found to be responsible for the high frequency of stories. Out of three years, first two years saw high frequency of disability-related stories in December when the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is celebrated.

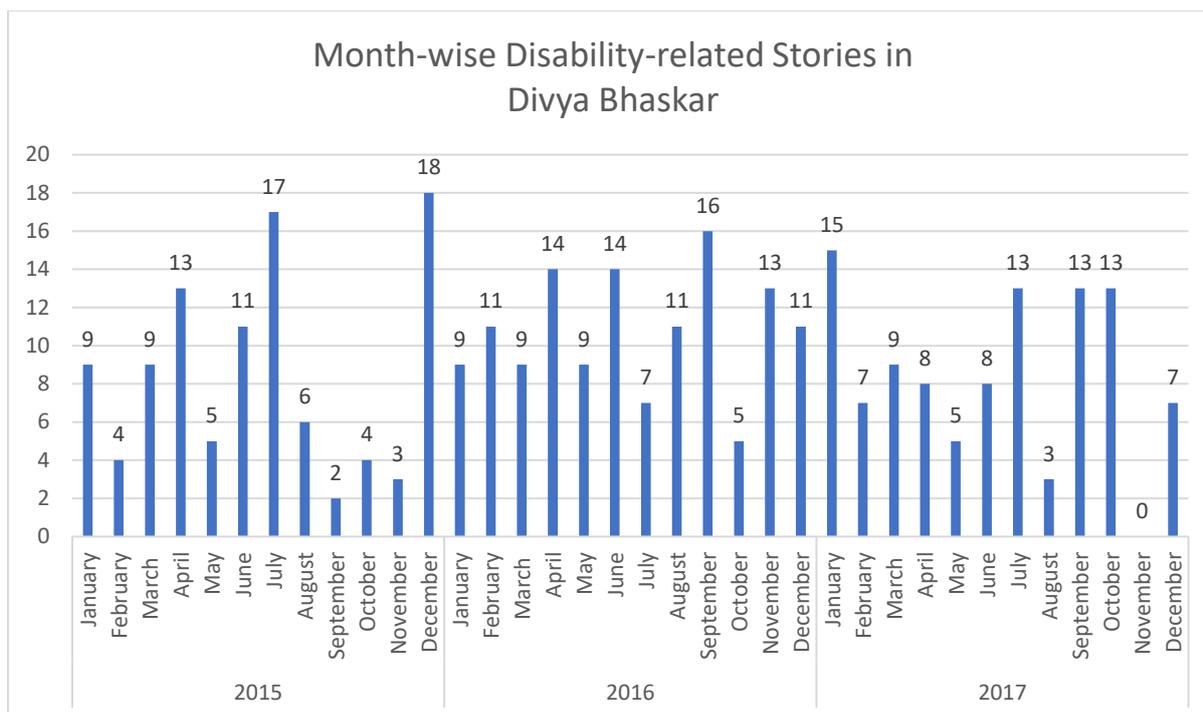


Figure 1: Frequency of disability-related articles in Divya Bhaskar

### **Front page stories**

The analysis indicated that 2016 saw the highest number of front-page stories both in number and percentage. Out of 129 stories that year, 17 or 13% found place on the front page of the newspaper which is considered to be the most important page for the publication.

Table 2: Disability-related articles on front page

Year	Articles	% of total articles
2015	8	8%
2016	17	13%
2017	12	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11%</b>

In all, 37 out of 331 stories or 11% of the total stories found place on the front page. No uniform progression was found in number or percentage. Analysis of the front-page stories indicated that out of 37, 20 were features or human-interest stories whereas 10 were event-related and seven were breaking news. Eight of the stories were photo captions, whereas only four were more than 300-plus words in length.

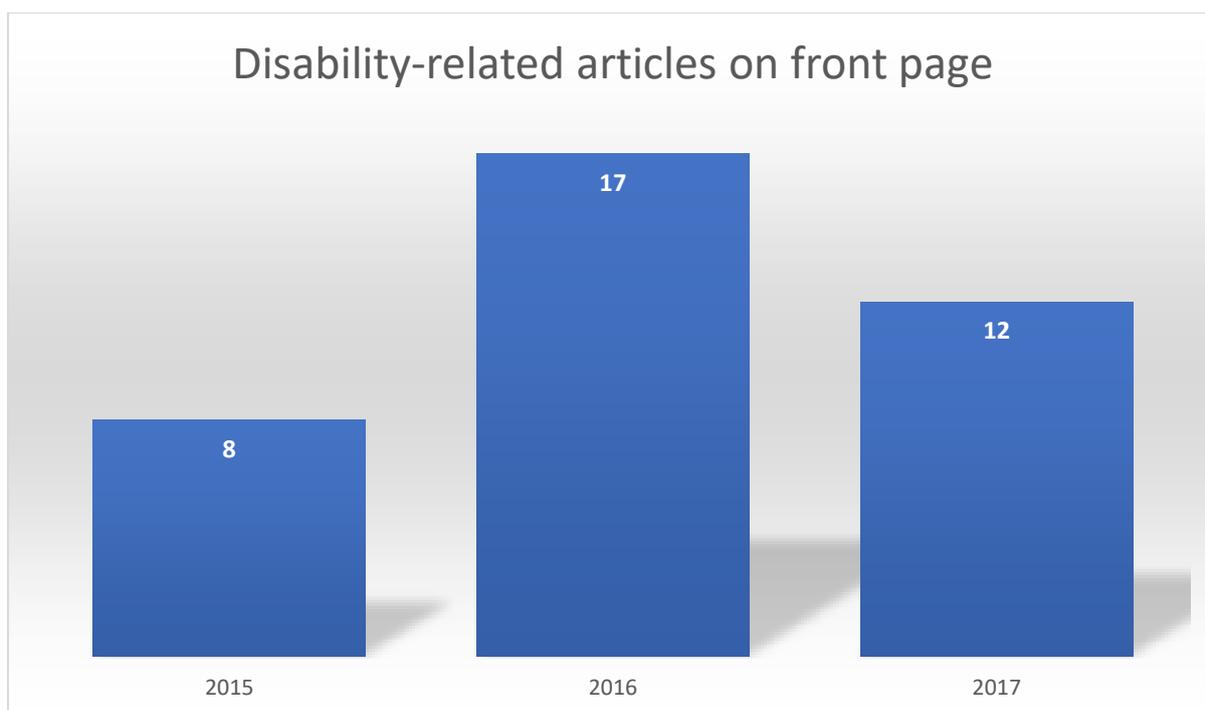


Figure 2: Disability-related articles on front page

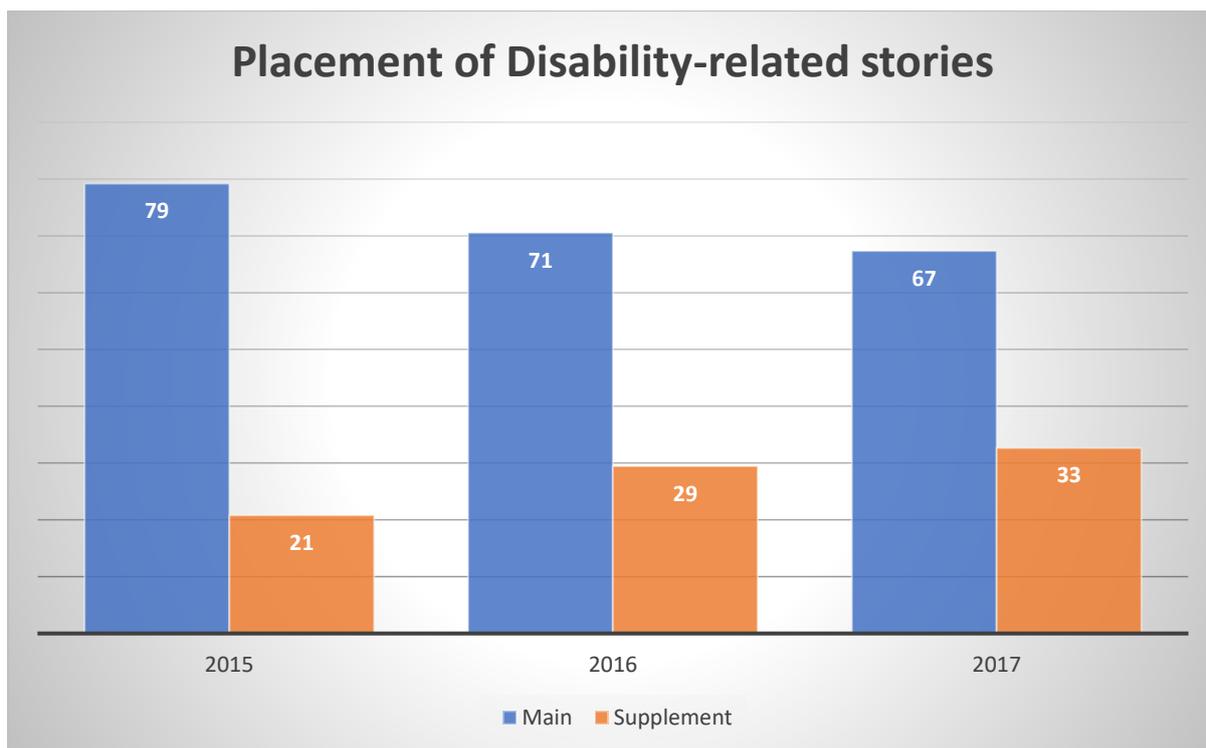
### **Placement of disability-related stories**

In context of Divya Bhaskar, both main newspaper and supplement were chosen as several of the NGO-related news or local features/ human interest stories found place in ‘City Bhaskar’ supplement. It was found that percentage of disability-related stories increased from 21% in 2015 to 33% in 2017.

Table 3: Placement of disability-related stories

Year	Main	Supplement	Total
2015	80	21	101
2016	91	38	129
2017	68	33	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>331</b>

Out of 92 stories published in supplements, 56 or more than half were related to events. Majority of the stories in supplements were found to be either 100-200 words in length or photo captions. On the other hand, main newspaper had more diverse coverage of disability-related stories ranging from crime to policy announcements.



*Figure 3: Placement of disability-related stories*

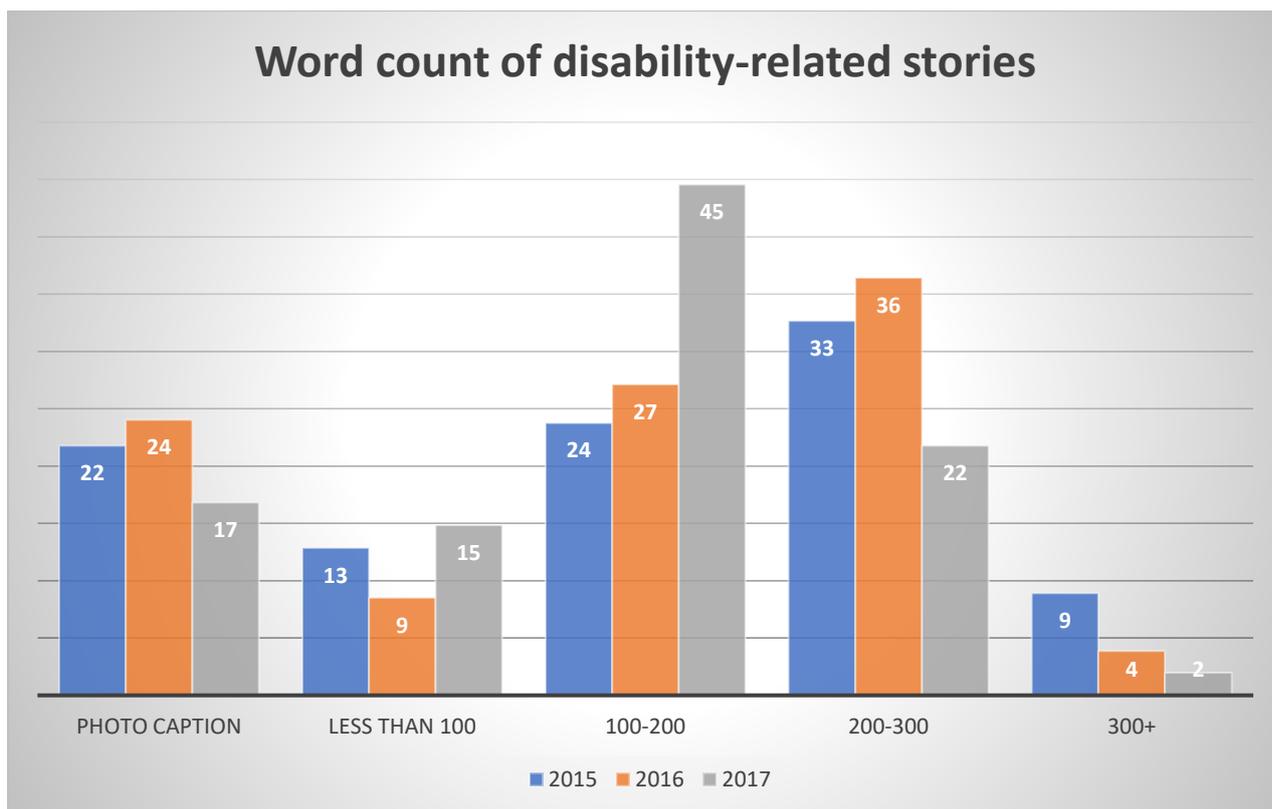
### **Word length of disability-related stories**

Analysis of the word length or word count of disability-related stories indicated that only 2015 had more than 40% of the stories with 200 or more words. The three-year analysis showed decline in full-length stories – against nine stories with more than 300 words published in 2015, the number got reduced to two in 2017. In fact, in 2017 out of 101 stories 77% were up to 200 words in length. About half the stories were 100 to 300 words in length.

*Table 4: Word count of disability-related stories*

Year	Photo caption	Less than 100	100-200	200-300	300+	Total
2015	22	13	24	33	9	101
2016	31	11	35	47	5	129
2017	17	15	45	22	2	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>331</b>

Out of 16 stories with more than 300 words length, 11 were found to have positive or neutral tone. Twelve or 75% of these stories however fell under traditional disability models. These stories included one breaking news and three editorial comments. Out of 70 photo captions, 38 or more than half were features or human-interest stories.



*Figure 4: Word count of disability-related stories*

### **Position of disability-related stories on page**

The current analysis took into consideration three sections of a newspaper page – top (lead), middle (belly), and bottom (anchor) – to ascertain the weightage given to the respective story. Traditionally, the important or breaking news is kept on the top of the page, whereas relatively softer stories or features are placed on the anchor slot. It was found that more than one-third of the total stories (36%) each were placed either on the lead or belly section.

*Table 5: Position of disability-related stories on page*

Year	2015	2016	2017	Total
Lead	28	50	42	120
Belly	41	48	31	120
Anchor	32	31	28	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>331</b>

The year 2016 recorded highest (41%) of the stories placed in lead position. The stories in lead increased from 28% to 32% from 2015 to 2017, whereas stories in belly and anchor positions recorded gradual decline. Out of 120 stories in lead, 68 or more than half were local and 49

were related to events, followed by 12 related to breaking news. Out of 91 anchor stories, 52 or more than half were features, followed by 17 related to events.

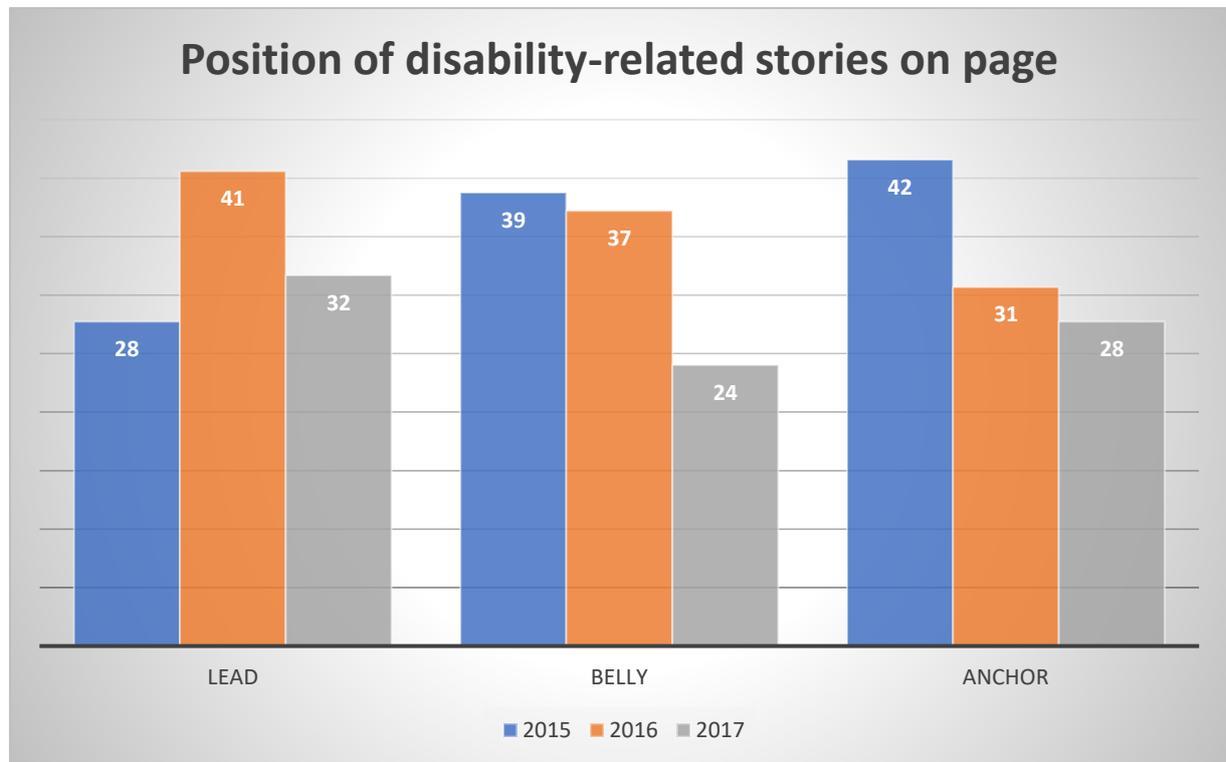


Figure 5: Position of disability-related stories on page

### **Use of pictures with disability-related stories**

Pictures, visuals, or images emphasize the subject of stories, and give the readers a peek into the world of the persons mentioned in text. The analysis indicated that out of 331 stories, 256 or 77% had accompanied image. The use of pictures saw gradual rise from 69% in 2015 to 83% in 2017.

Table 6: Use of picture with disability-related stories

Year	Yes	No	Total
2015	70	31	101
2016	102	27	129
2017	84	17	101
Total	256	75	331

Pictures were used with almost all the categories of coverage – be it event, human interest stories/ features or breaking news. The pictures however were found to be more prominently

related to locomotor disabilities (41%) and blindness (22%) – both having visual aspect of disabilities.

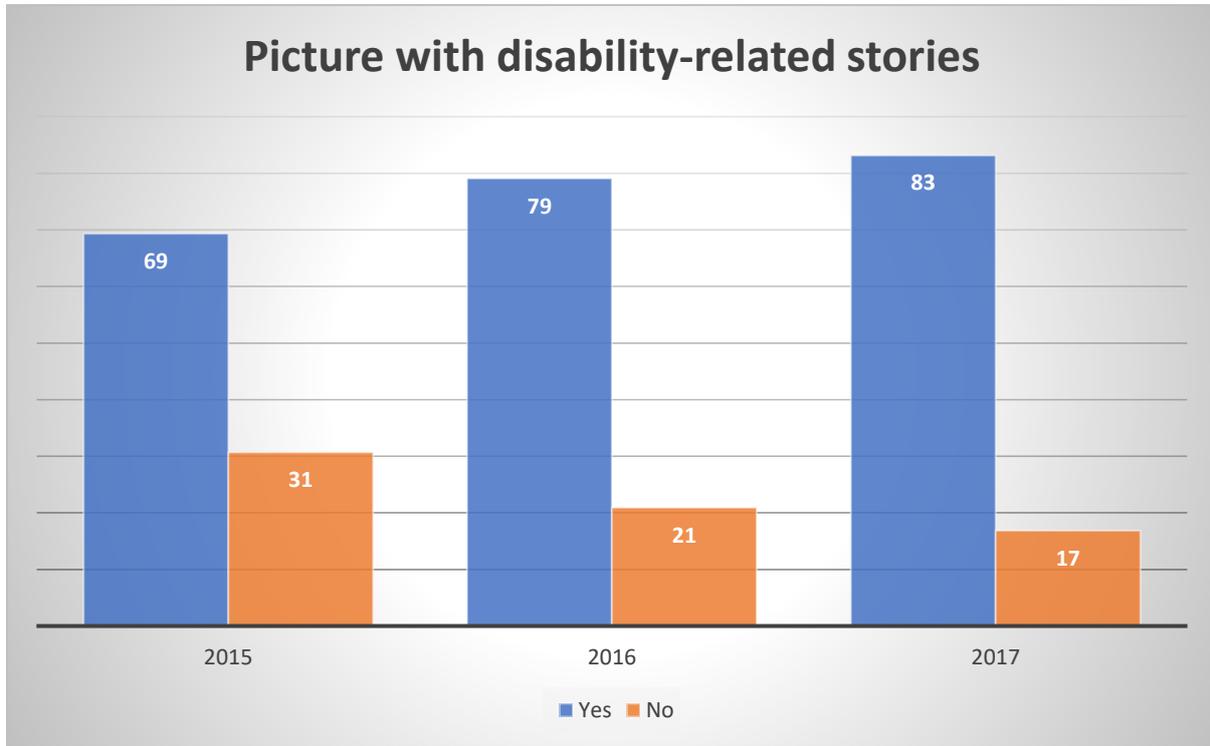


Figure 6: Picture with disability-related stories

### **Disability stories with byline**

Byline in journalistic parlance signifies a story written by a reporter which is exclusive to the publication. Compared to the ‘routine’ stories which is often generated through events or breaking news, special stories hold significance for the reporter and publication alike to be different than the competitors. It also signifies the interest of reporters in the specific ‘beat’ or area of expertise. Analysis of the stories indicated that only 77 or 23% of 331 stories carried byline with it.

Table 7: Disability-related stories with byline

Year	Yes	No	Total
2015	26	75	101
2016	27	102	129
2017	24	77	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>331</b>

The percentage of byline stories over the three years remained almost the same. Out of 77 byline stories, 54 or 70% were features, 13 related to events and 4 related to breaking or developing news.

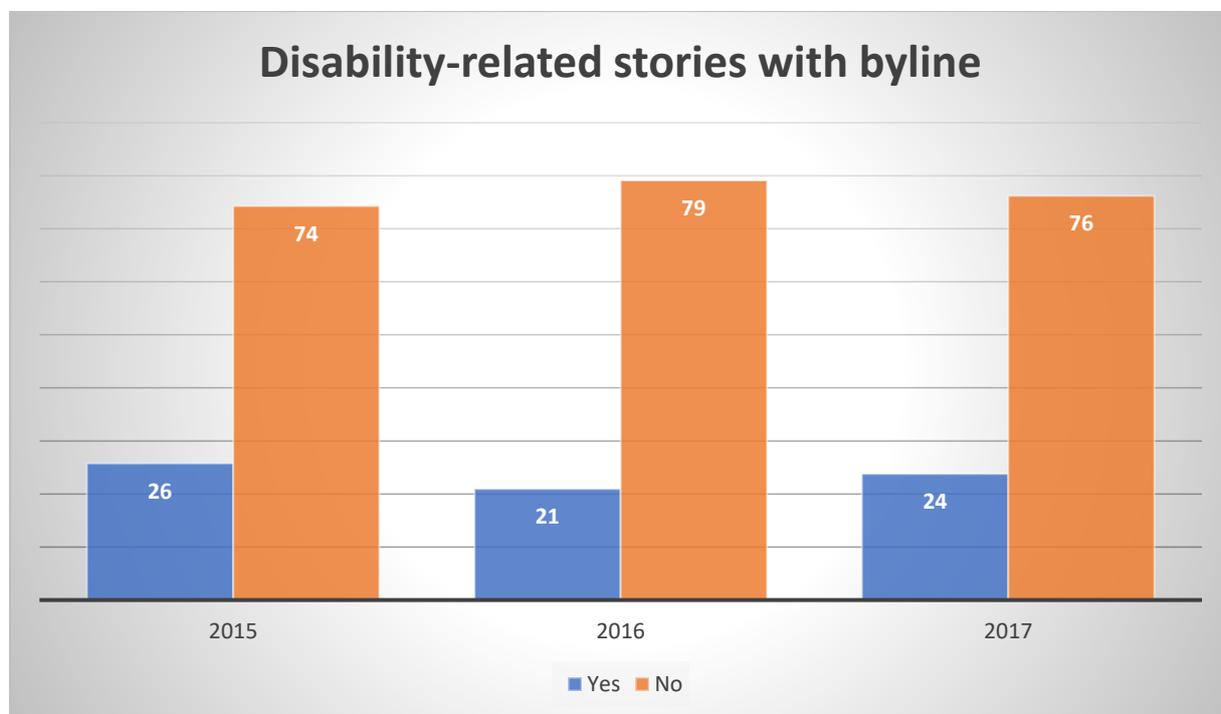


Figure 7: Disability-related stories with byline

### **Persons quoted in stories related to disability**

In less than one-fourth (24%) stories the persons with disabilities (PwDs) were directly quoted, whereas in 39% stories, no person was directly quoted. Government officials and NGO officials were the second most quoted after PwDs in 10% of the stories each (at 34 and 32 respectively). Relatives were quoted in 8% of stories.

The only category that saw jump in 2017 was ‘Other’ with 18% of the total quotes. It included teacher, superintendent of observation home, sports coach, engineer, student innovator, university official, etc. The analysis indicated that there were fewer direct quotes from PwDs and often event organizers, supporters or innovators working in field of disability were featured in the stories.

Table 8: Persons primarily quoted in disability-related stories

Person	2015	2016	2017	Total
Person with disabilities	22	37	21	80
Relative	10	7	10	27

Government official	12	18	4	34
NGO official	16	9	7	32
Medical official	0	2	1	3
Other	4	3	18	25
None	37	53	40	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>331</b>

PwDs were primarily quoted in features or profiles – out of 80, 55 or 69% had the direct quotes of PwDs. Likewise, 68% of the stories where government officials were quoted were breaking news or follow-up, and 66% of the stories where NGO officials were quoted were related to events. About 51% or half of the local stories had no person directly quoted.

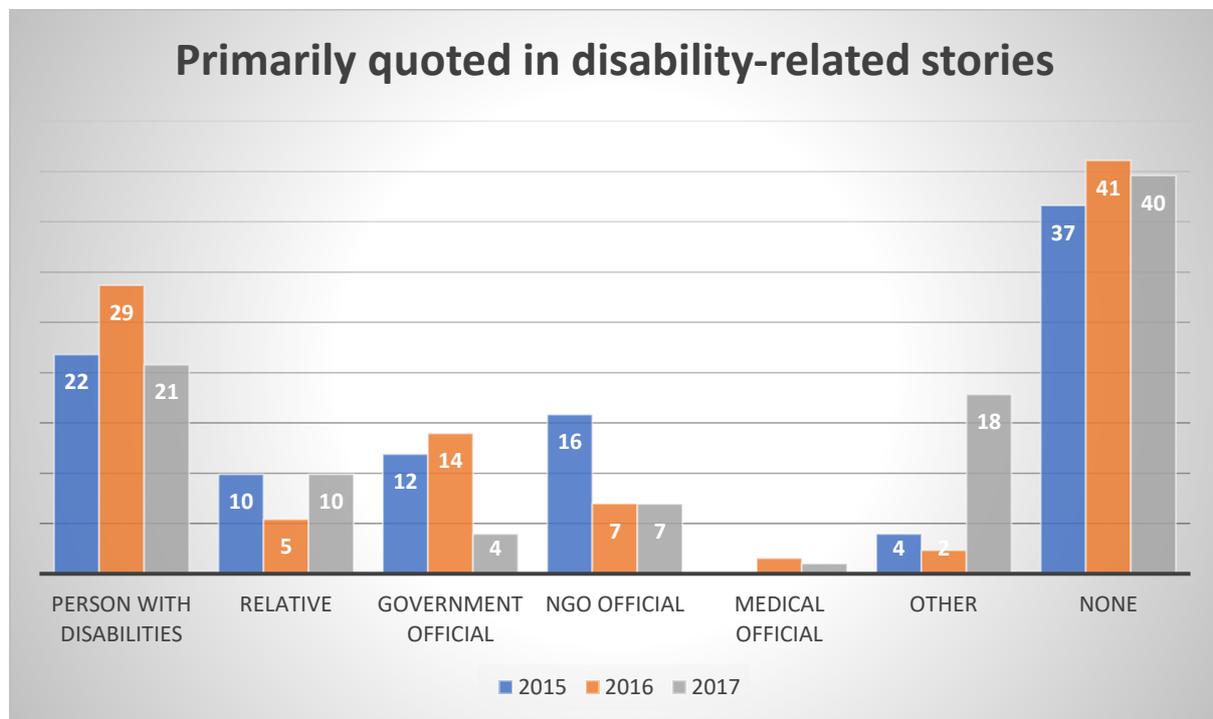


Figure 8: Persons primarily quoted in disability-related stories

### **Tone of disability-related stories**

The tone of a story was decided based on key words such as ‘victim,’ ‘hassles,’ ‘achievement,’ ‘winner,’ etc. in both headline and text of the story. The stories were predominantly positive in nature with 53% of all stories falling under this category. Negative portrayal was less than half of that at 14% whereas the rest of the stories had neither positive nor negative keywords. The ratio of positive, neutral, and negative stories remained almost the same during the three years under the study.

Table 9: Tone of disability-related stories

Year	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
2015	38	49	14	101
2016	81	31	17	129
2017	56	30	15	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>331</b>

While positive tone was found in almost all types of stories, stories with negative tone were primarily breaking news (54%) related to crime, lack of funds or rescue of a person. Out of negative stories, 28% were related to mental illness/ learning disabilities, 24% each for speech and hearing impairment and not defined, and 13% related to blindness or low vision.

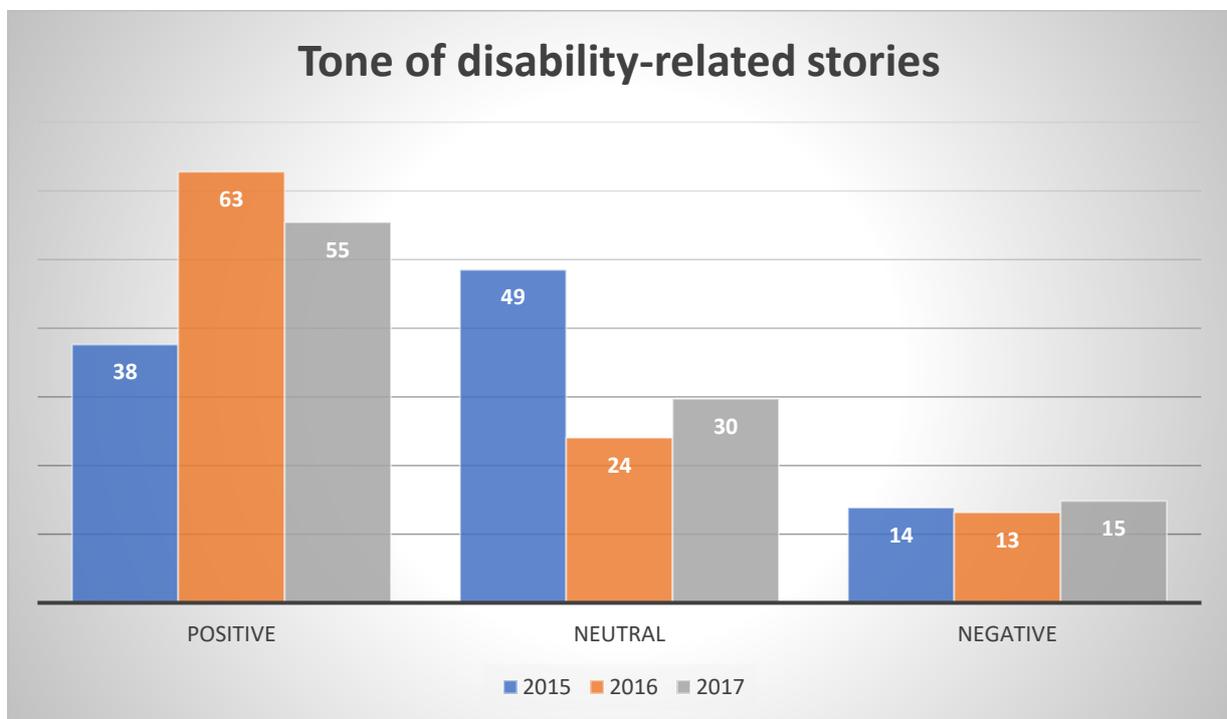


Figure 9: Tone of disability-related stories

### **Dominant model of disability in stories**

Based on work of Haller, Burns and Clogston (as mentioned in section 2.2.1 of Chapter 3), dominant model of disability was ascertained based on representation of disability, words used, and tone of the story. It was found that out of total stories, 63% followed traditional models of disability, most notably Medical Model. In such stories, the individuals or group of individuals with specific disabilities were shown as winners against all odds, victims of their circumstances or recipients of charities. However, the share of traditional models got reduced from 63% in 2015 to 56% in 2017.

Table 10: Dominant model of disability in stories

Year	Traditional	Progressive	Not Applicable	Total
2015	63	34	4	101
2016	89	25	15	129
2017	56	35	10	101
Total	<b>208</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>331</b>

Majority of stories with progressive models were either positive or neutral in nature. Out of total such stories, 48% were local and 21% national. In terms of disabilities, 31% of stories with progressive models were related to locomotor disabilities, followed by 24% related to visual impairment, and 10% related to speech and hearing impairment.

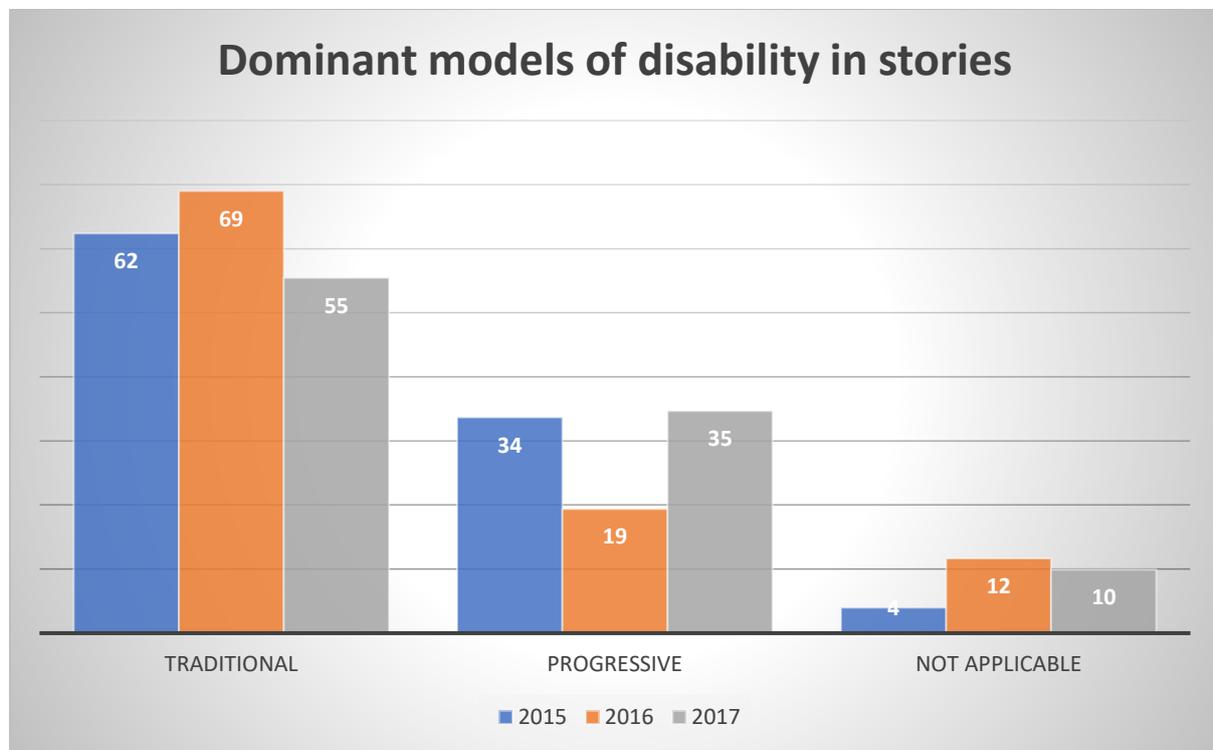


Figure 10: Dominant model of disability in stories

### **Place of occurrence of disability-related stories**

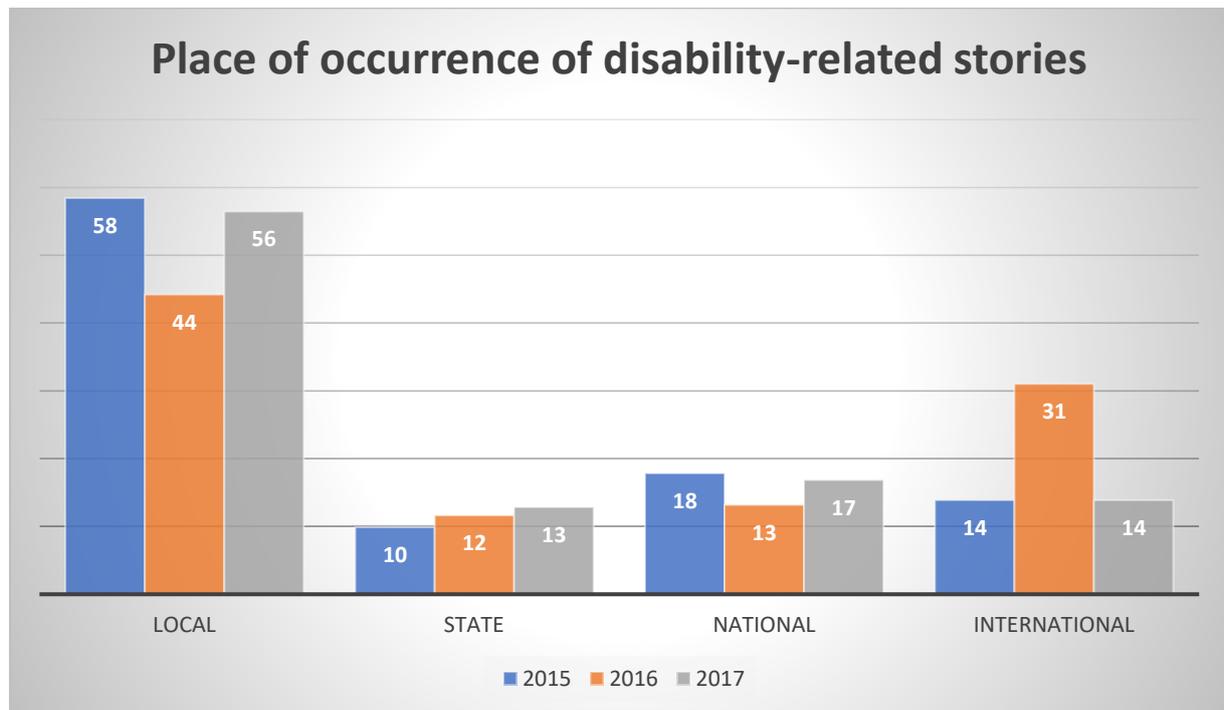
Out of total stories, 52% were from Ahmedabad and periphery, whereas additional 11% were from other parts of Gujarat. Thus, nearly two-thirds of stories were local in nature. The share of different categories did not change drastically except International, which saw nearly three-fold jump in 2016. The rise was due to Paralympics and other stories – out of 40 stories, 14 or 35% were related to Paralympics.

Another prominent category was photo story/ photo caption where 15 of the 40 stories (including Paralympics) were featured. Out of total photo captions across three years, 37% (26 out of 70) were found to be from international sources.

*Table 11: Place of occurrence of disability-related stories*

Year	Local	State	National	International	Total
2015	59	10	18	14	101
2016	57	15	17	40	129
2017	57	13	17	14	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>331</b>

About 69% of the national and international stories were features, and only 12% were breaking news. Majority of the state-level stories were related to breaking news or event. The analysis indicate that the local events got majority of the coverage.



*Figure 11: Place of occurrence of disability-related stories*

### **Nature of disability-related stories**

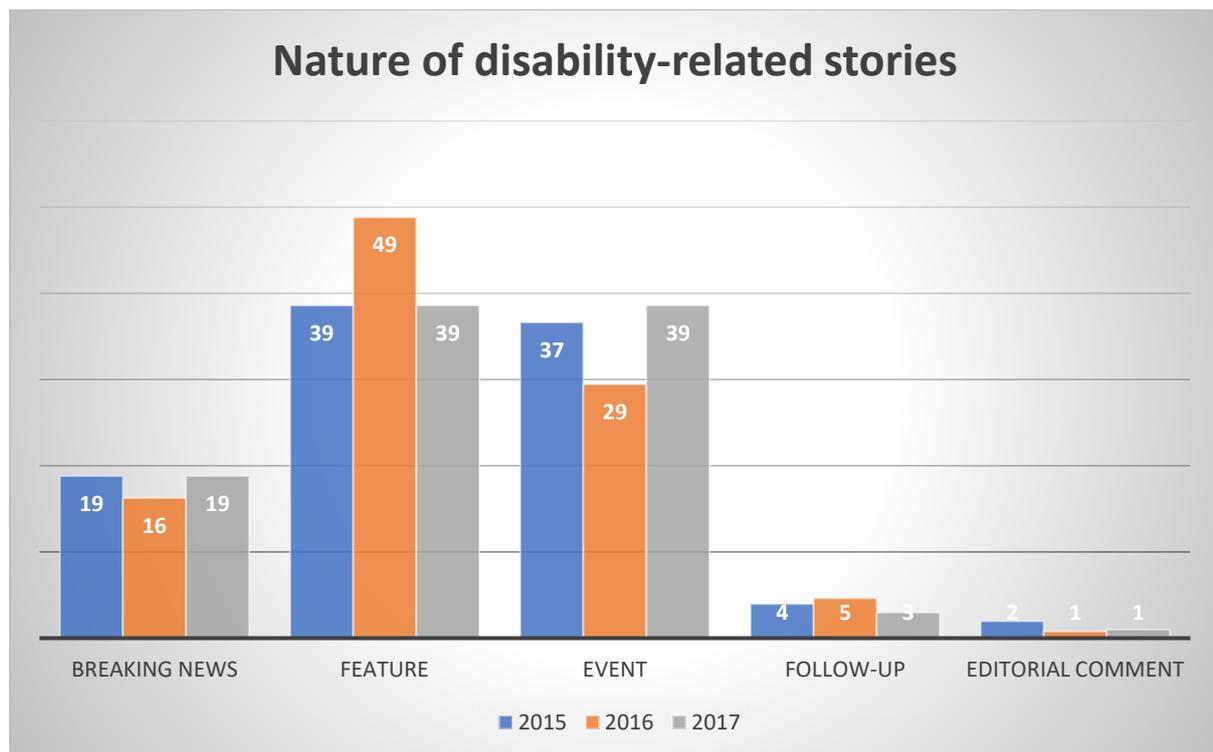
The coverage of disability-related issues was found to be focused on feature (42%) and event (34%) coverage. Together, over three-fourth (76%) of the stories were found to be falling under

either of the categories. The share of different categories remained almost the same over the three years under study. Editorial comments were found to be the least among five categories with less than 2% of total stories.

*Table 12: Nature of disability-related stories*

Year	Breaking news	Feature	Event	Follow-up	Editorial comment	Total
2015	19	39	37	4	2	101
2016	21	63	38	6	1	129
2017	19	39	39	3	1	101
Total	<b>59</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>331</b>

The four editorials had mention of cerebral palsy and blindness among disabilities. In one of the editorials, no specific disability was mentioned. In breaking news category, 42% did not mention any specific disability, 17% blindness, 15% speech and hearing impairment, and 10% mental illness among others.



*Figure 12: Nature of disability-related stories*

### **Topics covered in disability-related stories**

Further classification of disability-related stories indicated that 30% of all stories across three years were human-interest or profile stories, whereas 19% were related to events. While

human-interest stories got reduced from 31% to 25% over three years, event-based coverage increased significantly from 13% to 23%. In 2016, due to Paralympics, the coverage of sports increased from 9% to 15% and remained up at 13% in 2017.

*Table 13: Topics covered in disability-related stories*

Subject/ Topic	2015	2016	2017	Total
Human interest/ Profile	31	43	25	99
Event	13	26	23	62
Policy announcement	4	10	4	18
Column/ Editorial	5	1	1	7
Employment	7	2	2	11
Charity	2	3	4	9
Medical	4	3	2	9
Award	4	0	4	8
Sports	9	19	13	41
Crime/ Legal	10	14	11	35
Education	2	0	2	4
Tech/ innovation	5	4	7	16
News	5	4	3	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>331</b>

The coverage of technology and innovation related to disability increased from 5% to 7% in two years, whereas crime and legal issues remained around 10-11% over three years. Due to multiple initiatives and policies announced, the stories related to announcements by the government also saw a significant jump from 4% in 2015 to 8% in 2016. Share of stories related to fields of medical sciences and charity remained almost the same.

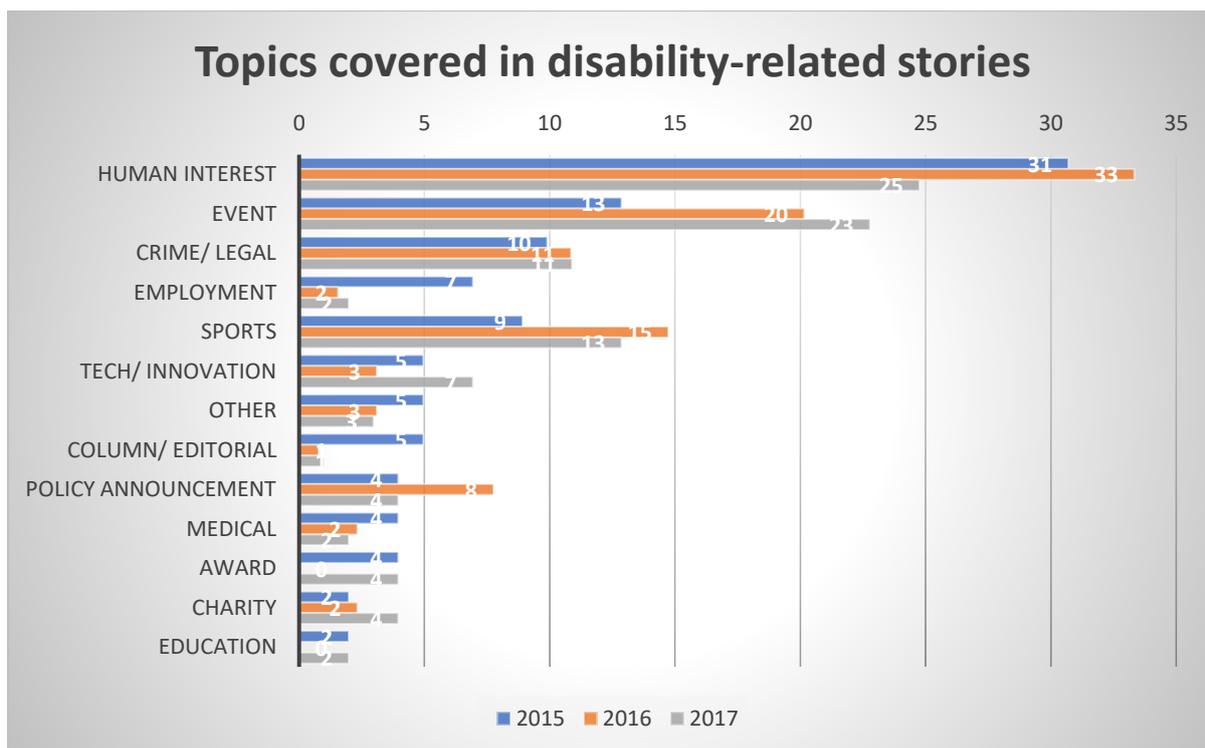


Figure 13: Topics covered in disability-related stories

### **Disabilities mentioned in stories**

In terms of representation of disabilities, corporeal or those which can be seen easily were found to have higher share of stories – locomotor disabilities (32%) and blindness (20%) together accounted for half the stories covered over three years. However, both the categories showed decline in 2017.

Table 14: Disabilities mentioned in stories

Disability	2015	2016	2017	Total
Locomotor	35	49	28	112
Blindness	21	30	19	70
Speech and hearing impairment	12	13	9	34
Not mentioned	11	25	27	63
Intellectual	11	4	4	19
Autism Spectrum Disorder	4	1	3	8
Cerebral Palsy	1	3	2	6
Mental illness	4	3	3	10
Multiple	2	2	2	6
Haemophilia	1	0	1	2
Thalassemia	1	1	2	4
Other	2	3	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>344</b>

In three years, there was a rise in news articles that did not mention specific disabilities. The share increased from 7% to 25% from 2015 to 2017. In overall coverage, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), cerebral palsy, multiple disabilities, haemophilia, and thalassemia together accounted for 7% of media coverage.

Out of 27 stories related to mental illness or intellectual disabilities collectively, 13 or nearly half were negative in tone that were related to cases such as assault or rape on the victims with such disorders. In comparison, only 5 and 3 stories respectively for blindness and locomotor disabilities out of 70 and 112 were negative.

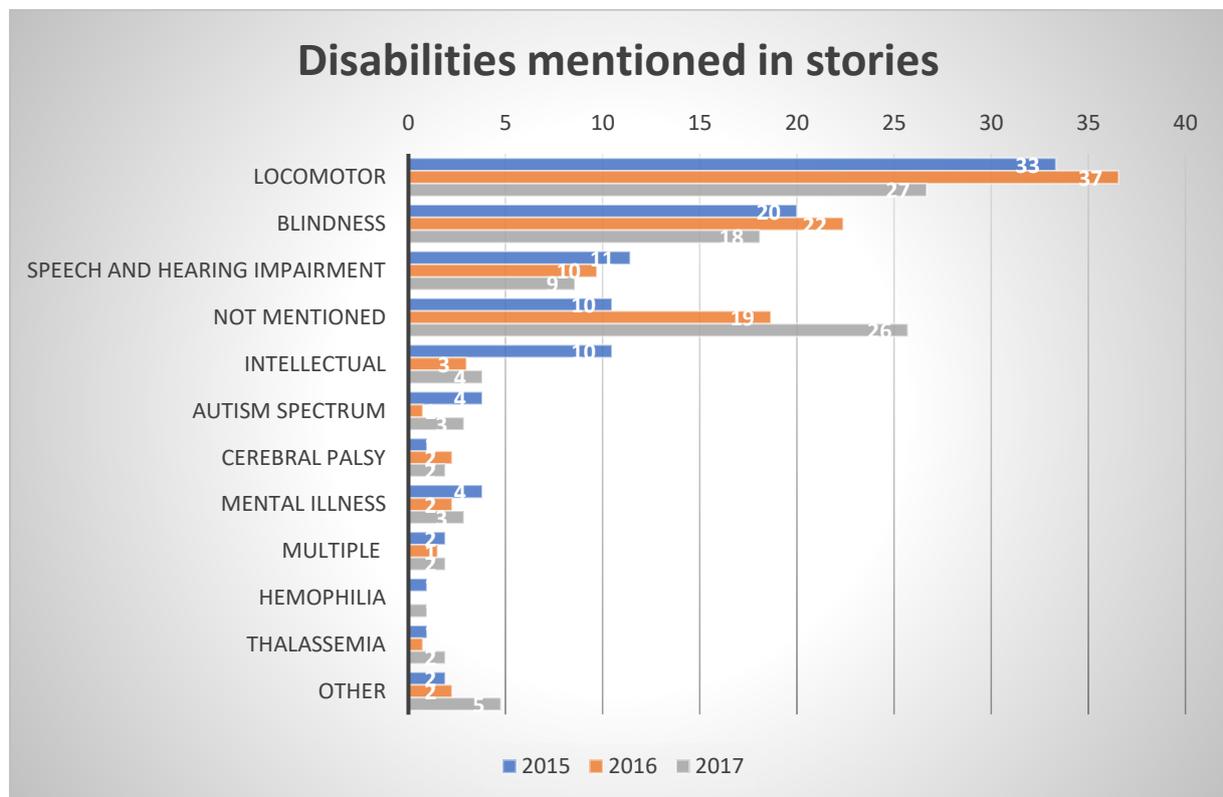


Figure 14: Disabilities mentioned in stories

### **Coverage of existing and new disabilities according to RPwD Act, 2016**

Introduction of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 expanded the existing seven disabilities to 21. Analysis of the coverage of disabilities indicated that out of total coverage in three years, the ‘old’ disabilities according to the Persons with Disability Act, 1995 accounted for 56% of the stories, whereas ‘new’ disabilities introduced in 2016 accounted for 26% of the coverage. The rest of the articles did not specifically mention disability and instead used words such as ‘Viklang’ or ‘Divyang’ among others to mention disability.

Table 15: Coverage of existing and new disabilities in stories according to RPwD Act, 2016

Disabilities	2015	2016	2017	Total
Existing	60	82	50	192
New	34	27	28	89
Not mentioned	11	25	27	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>344</b>

The analysis indicate that the share of ‘old’ disability categories got reduced from 61% in 2016 to 48% in 2017, whereas the share of ‘new’ disabilities increased from 20% in 2016 to 27% in 2017. Simultaneously, the share of categories where the specific disabilities were not mentioned increased from 19% to 26%. The rise indicates higher awareness about the new disabilities that found mention in the coverage.

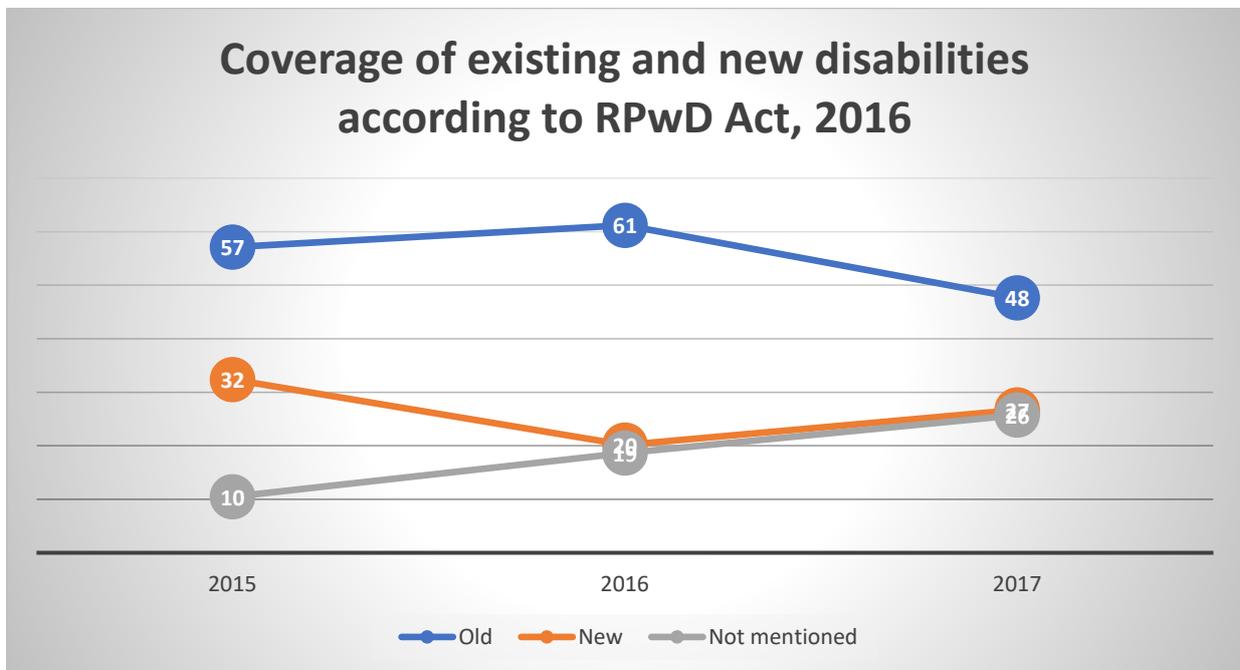


Figure 15: Coverage of existing and new disabilities

## **Use of words related to disability**

### **2015**

A total of 135 words were identified from the headlines and copy of the stories. In all, ‘Viklang’ (disabled) was used 31 times or 23% times, followed by ‘Pragnachakshu’ (used to describe a person with blindness – whose intellect is the eye, literal translation) which was used 13 times or 10% of the total words used. Other words that were used five times or more included ‘Mansik asthir’ (mentally unstable, to describe person with mental illness), ‘Muk-badhir’ (person with

speech and hearing impairment), Aapng (disabled), Physically challenged, ‘Andh’ (blind), and Wheelchair(-user). ‘Divyang,’ the word used by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to describe persons with disabilities in December 2015, got one mention. The word cloud of frequently-used words is as follows –



Figure 16: Word cloud of disability terminology in 2015

## 2016

A total of 208 words were identified from the headlines and copy of the stories. The word ‘Divyang’ was found to have gained currency with 43 mentions or 21% of all the disability-related words used during the year. The words ‘Viklang’ and ‘Apang’ to describe disabilities persisted, but their usage got much less with only 12 and 5 mentions or 6% and 2% of the disability-related words.

The year saw several technical terms used such as Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, Spina Bifida, Achondroplasia, Brittle Bone Disease, Erb’s Palsy, Syringomyelia, etc. which can be attributed to the fact that majority of these stories were related to Paralympics and were possibly translated from English while retaining the technical terminology.

‘Pragnachakshu’ remained high in use with 14 mentions or 7% of total words, whereas other words with five or more mentions included ‘Muk-badhir,’ ‘Andh’ and ‘Paralympian.’ ‘Drashtiheen’ (the one without sight) was also used to describe blindness. The year also saw





Table 16: Month-wise disability-related stories in *The Times of India*

2015		2016		2017	
Month	Articles	Month	Articles	Month	Articles
January	2	January	16	January	6
February	10	February	18	February	18
March	8	March	14	March	16
April	19	April	9	April	15
May	10	May	14	May	3
June	18	June	12	June	10
July	25	July	17	July	4
August	7	August	8	August	9
September	8	September	27	September	4
October	12	October	12	October	8
November	8	November	4	November	14
December	17	December	17	December	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>		<b>168</b>		<b>121</b>

September 2016 recorded the highest monthly stories at 27, whereas January 2015 had the lowest 2.

In September 2016, the coverage was centred around two major events – Paralympics (Rio Paralympics 2016) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday celebration in Gujarat where providing aid to the persons with disabilities (PwDs) was a major part. Paralympics got covered over 15 stories, whereas Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday was covered in eight stories. Four other stories included an editorial, an international photo feature on acid attack survivor, shortage of Thalassaemia drugs, and harassment of a para sportsperson.

The only other month with over 20 stories was July 2015 with 25 stories. The month saw three topics that had higher frequency of coverage. A case of pregnant girl with mental illness had reached HC for abortion. The case got covered in four stories. Bhalaji Damor, a blind cricketer now living in penury, got coverage in four stories. Story of Ira Singhal, a woman with disability, topping UPSC exam, got covered in front page and got featured twice along with another successful candidate with disability. In all, three stories were written on the achievement. The month also saw three photo features on PwDs.

December, considered to be the month with high coverage of disability related issues due to December 3 celebrated as International Day of Persons with Disabilities, saw above average coverage consistently for all three years. However, the reasons varied over years – in 2015, out

of 17 stories nine were related to disability day. The number dropped to three and two in 2016 and 2017. But in 2016 four stories covered the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, whereas in 2017 three stories – mostly photo features or briefs – were related the state assembly elections.

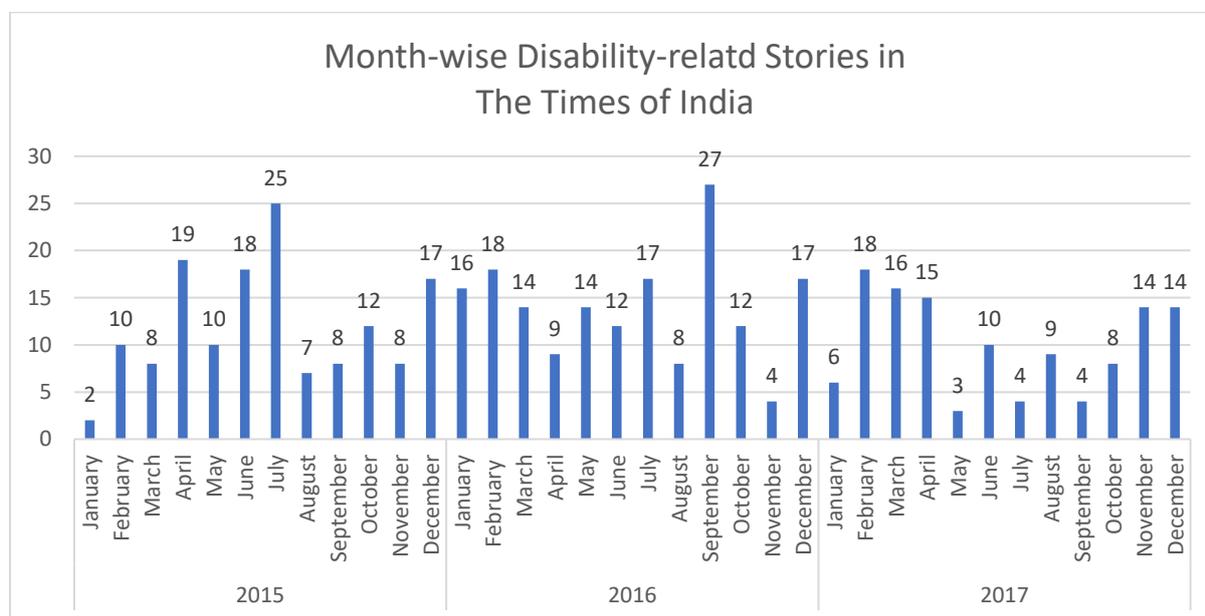


Figure 19: Frequency of disability-related stories in The Times of India

### **Front page stories**

The analysis indicated that 2016 saw the highest number of front-page stories both in number and percentage. Out of 168 stories that year, 18 or 11% found place on the front page of the newspaper which is considered to be the most important page for the publication.

Table 17: Disability-related stories on front page

Year	Stories	% of total stories
2015	15	10%
2016	18	11%
2017	9	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>10%</b>

In all, 42 out of 433 stories or 10% of the total stories found place on the front page. Compared to 10% and 11% of the total stories of the year finding place on front page, the percentage dropped to 7% in 2017. Analysis of the front-page stories indicated that 64% (27) of the stories were more than 300 words in length. The Times of India often provided a segment of the story on front page, with ‘turn’ in inside pages, which was found to be the case in majority of these

stories. Only two stories (5%) were found to have less than 100 words. A total of 69% of the stories had bylines, whereas 50% had pictures with stories.

Ten stories (24%) were in the top portion of the page, whereas 13 stories (31%) were in the bottom portion of the page. Only one story in top portion was feature, whereas all others were found to be breaking news or event. The stories in bottom portion (anchor space) were found to contain both breaking news (46%) and feature (38%).

Out of total stories on front-page, 11 were about locomotor disabilities, seven about blindness, three each about speech-and-hearing-impairment and mental illness, and two about intellectual disabilities. Nine stories had no specific disability mentioned.

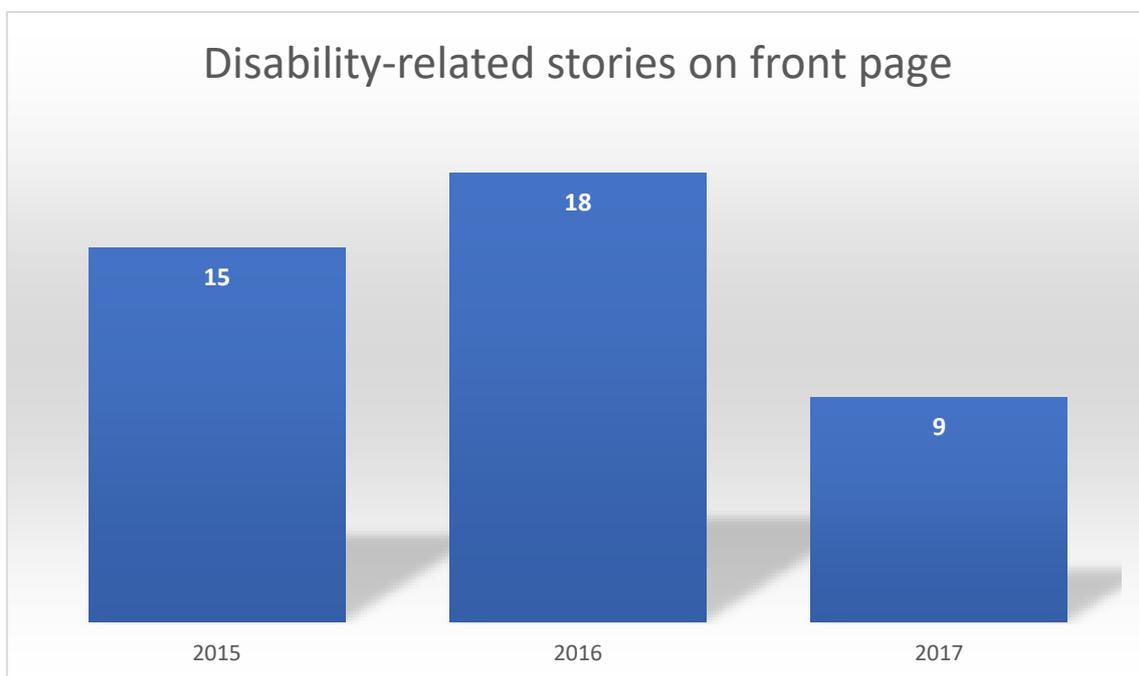


Figure 20: Disability-related articles on front page

### **Word length of disability-related stories**

Analysis of the word length or word count of disability-related stories indicated that across the three years under analysis had one-third of stories had 200 to 300 words. The share of stories with 300-plus word count was the highest in 2016 at 24%. But across the years, more than 50% of the stories were more than 200 words in length. Stories with less than 100 words were the highest in 2015, whereas photo captions were the highest at 9% in 2017.

Table 18: Word count of disability-related stories

Year	Photo caption	Less than 100	100-200	200-300	300+	Total
2015	10	24	35	48	27	144

2016	11	11	43	63	40	168
2017	11	17	30	38	25	121
Total	<b>32</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>433</b>

Out of 92 stories with more than 300 words length, 61% had pictures and 72% had bylines. About 49% of these stories were positive in tone, and had almost similar share of traditional and progressive (39% and 40% respectively) models of disability. Photo captions were primarily related to events (56%), followed by features (37.5%). A section in Sunday paper called ‘Every Face Has a Story’ included several of these features.

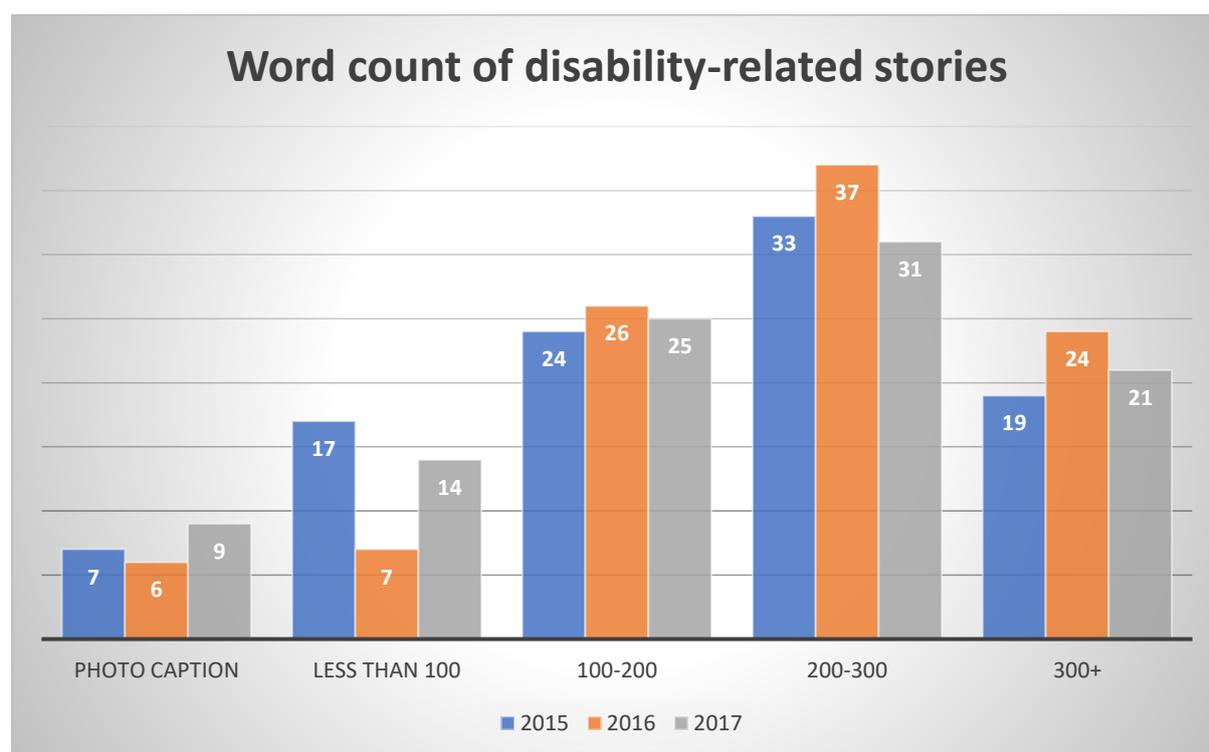


Figure 21: Word count of disability-related stories

### **Position of disability-related stories on page**

While majority of (more than 40%) of the stories appeared in the middle portion of the newspaper page with no significant weightage, about 31% of the stories got published on top portion of the page, whereas 24% were published on bottom portion of the page. Lead stories were the highest in 2016 at 38%, whereas anchor stories were the highest in 2015 at 33%.

Table 19: Position of disability-related stories on page

Year	Lead	Belly	Anchor	Total
2015	39	58	47	144

2016	63	76	29	168
2017	34	58	29	121
Total	<b>136</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>433</b>

Out of total lead stories, 40% were breaking news, 32% feature, 11% event, and 10% follow-ups. Out of total anchor stories, 37% were features, 30% events, and 21% breaking news among others. Positive stories were slightly higher at 44% in lead stories compared to negative ones (42%), whereas majority of the anchor stories were positive in nature at 61% compared to 18% negative stories.

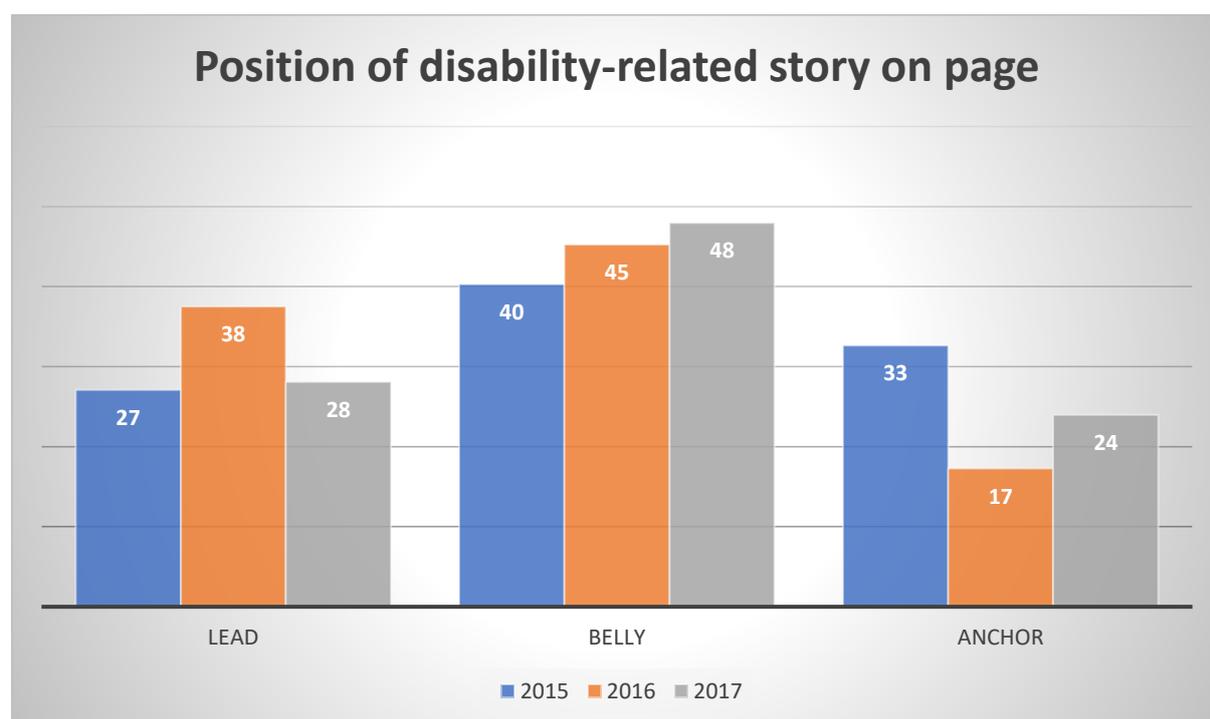


Figure 22: Position of disability-related stories on page

### **Use of pictures with disability-related stories**

The analysis indicated that out of 433 stories, the share of stories with and without images was almost the same at 50.5% and 49.5% respectively. The year 2016 was the only aberration as both 2015 and 2017 saw 52-53% of the stories using images.

Table 20: Use of picture with disability-related stories

Year	Yes	No	Total
2015	75	69	144
2016	80	88	168
2017	64	57	121
Total	<b>219</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>433</b>

About 70% of the stories with pictures were positive in tone, 46% followed progressive models of disability, whereas 35% followed traditional models of disability. Out of total, 48% of the stories were local in nature, 29% national, 18% state, and 5% international.

Out of total stories with pictures, 27% were about locomotor disabilities, 25% blindness, 9% speech and hearing impairment, 4% cerebral palsy, and 3% each for autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities among others.

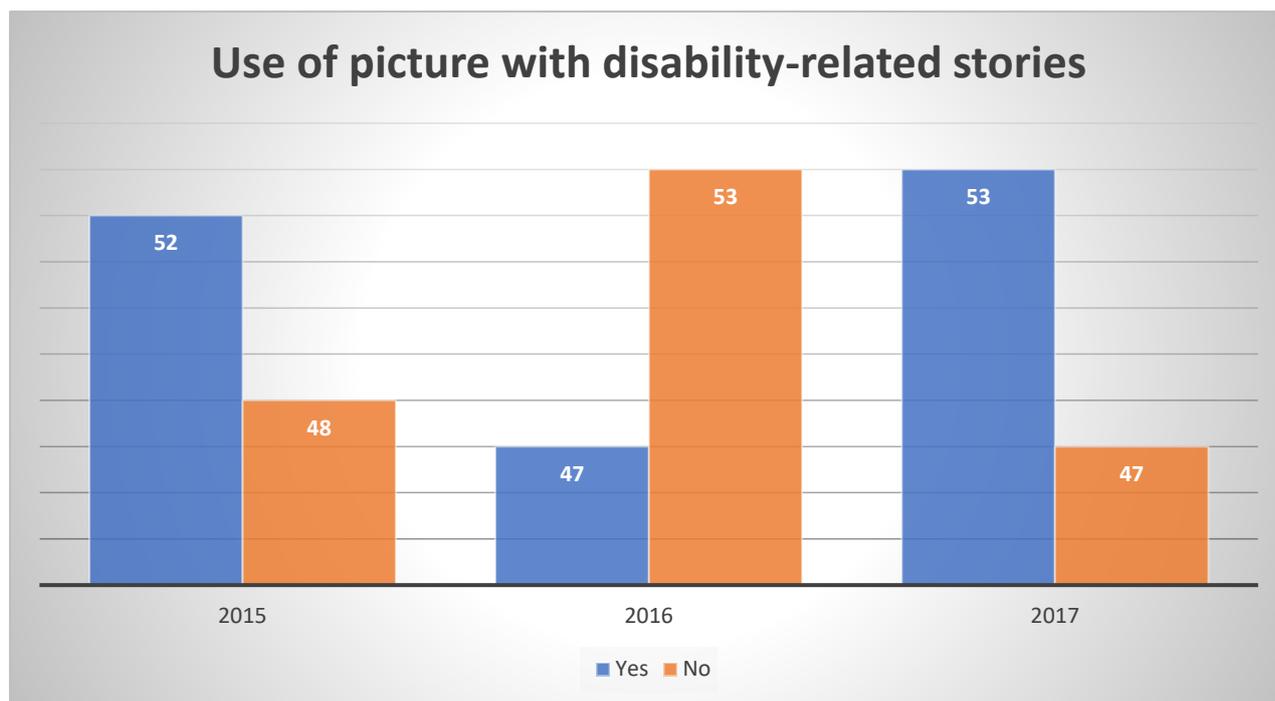


Figure 23: Picture with disability-related stories

### **Disability stories with byline**

Analysis of the stories indicated that 187 or 43% of 433 stories carried byline with it. There was no significant change in share of byline and non-byline stories. In both 2015 and 2016, the byline stories accounted for 44% of total stories, which dipped slightly at 40% in 2017.

Table 21: Disability-related stories with byline

Year	Yes	No	Total
2015	64	80	144
2016	74	94	168
2017	49	72	121
Total	<b>187</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>433</b>

Out of total byline stories, more than half or 51% were national stories or filed from outside Gujarat. Out of 44% stories filed from Gujarat, 29% were from Ahmedabad alone. Out of total,

only 5% byline stories were international. Majority of the byline stories (48%) were features, followed by 33% breaking news. Events and interviews accounted for 5% each among others. Out of total byline stories, 23.5% were related to locomotor disabilities, 17.5% to blindness and 10% related to speech and hearing impairment among others.

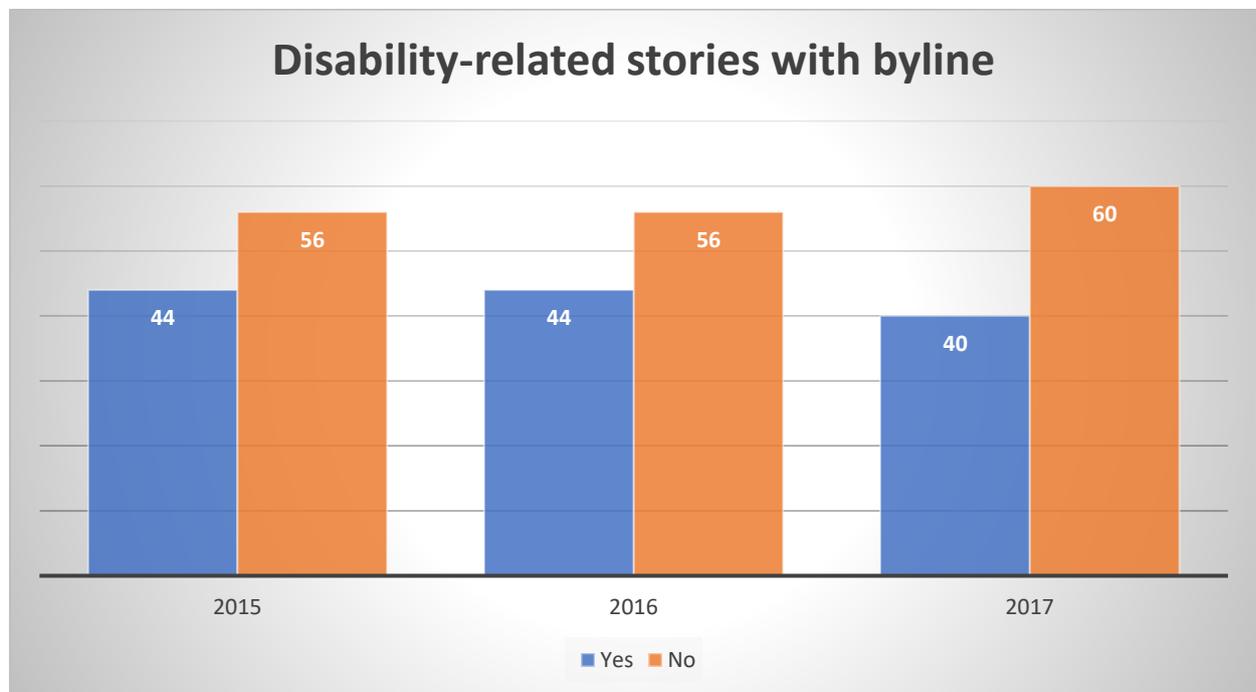


Figure 24: Disability-related stories with byline

### **Persons quoted in stories related to disability**

In less than one-fourth (24%) stories the persons with disabilities (PwDs) were directly quoted, whereas in 19% stories, no person was directly quoted.

Government officials and NGO officials were the second and third most quoted after PwDs in 19% and 15% of the stories respectively. Relatives were quoted in 8% of stories.

The number of direct quotes from PwDs got reduced from 23% in 2015 to 19% in 2017. The share of government officials increased from 17% to 20% during the period, whereas share of relatives increased from 7% to 10%. One category that saw steady rise was medical official that rose from 2% in 2015 to 4% in 2016 to 6% in 2017. The stories with no quotes also rose steadily from 17% in 2015 to 23% in 2017.

In ‘Other’ category, the quoted included event participants, onlookers, innovators, airline official, event organizer, philanthropist, etc. Except 8% in 2016, both 2015 and 2017 saw 13% of the quotes attributed to those other specified in other categories.

Table 22: Persons primarily quoted in disability-related stories

Year	PwD	NGO official	Government official	Relative	Medical official	Other	None	Total
2015	42	36	31	13	4	24	30	180
2016	57	26	43	15	8	16	38	203
2017	27	15	28	14	8	18	33	143
Total	126	77	102	42	20	58	101	526

PwDs were primarily quoted in features or profiles – out of 126 stories with PwD quotes, 73 or 58% were features. Other quotes include 20% in breaking news and 11% events among others. In 71% of the stories where the government officials were quoted were either breaking news or follow-ups, whereas NGO officials’ quotes included 28% events and 16% features. About 43% of the stories where no person was quoted were local.

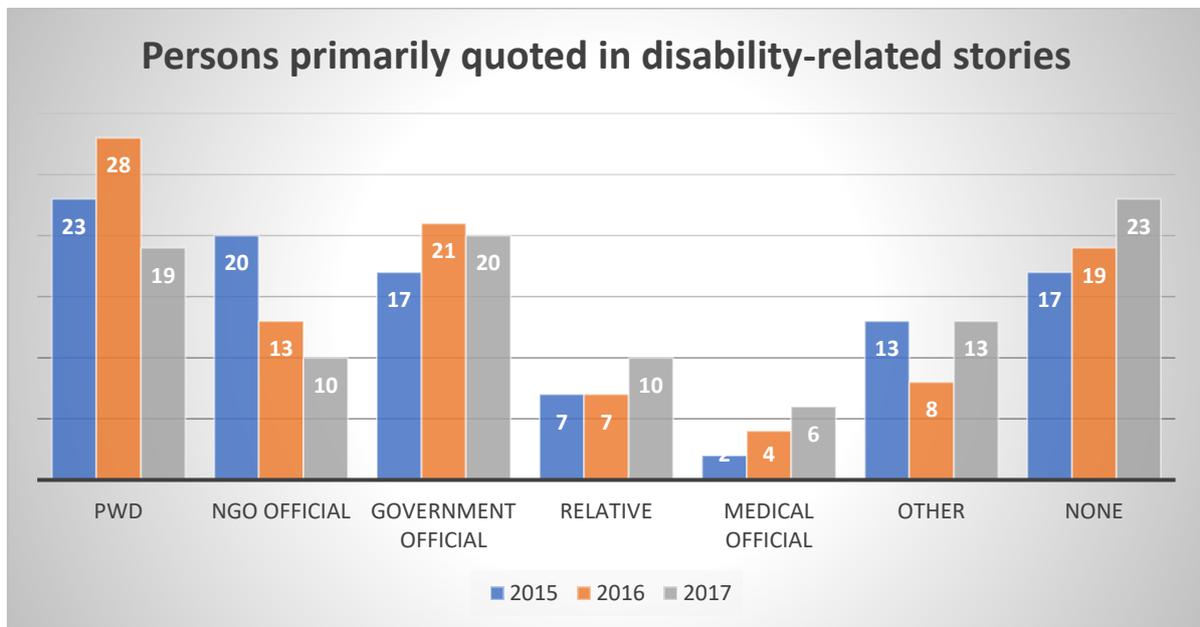


Figure 25: Persons primarily quoted in disability-related stories

### **Tone of disability-related stories**

Half of total stories (49.6%) were positive in nature, whereas 27% were negative and rest 23.4% were neutral. The tone of the story was determined based on keywords both in headline or text of the story. The ratio of positive stories saw a slight dip from 52% in 2015 to 48% in 2017. The ratio of negative stories remained almost the same at 30-31%, whereas the ratio of neutral stories increased slightly from 18% in 2015 to 21% in 2017.

Table 23: Tone of disability-related stories

Year	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
2015	75	43	26	144

2016	82	33	53	168
2017	58	25	38	121
Total	<b>215</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>433</b>

Positive tone was found in almost all types of stories – it included 46% features, 25% breaking news, and 22% events among others. On the other hand, negative stories included 78% breaking news. The stories were related to rape, lack of shelter, perpetrators or victims of assault, and legal fights among others. Out of negative stories, 29% were related to mental illness, 15% locomotor disabilities, 14% blindness, and 12% speech and hearing impairment among others.

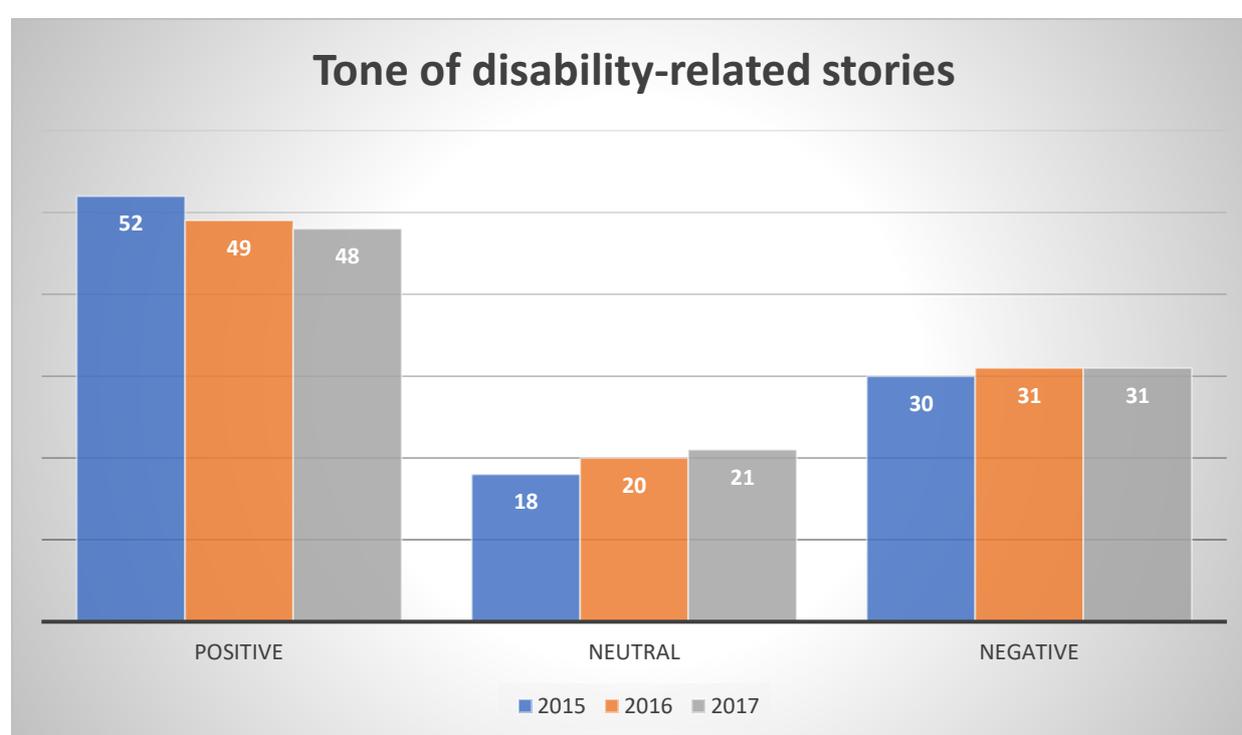


Figure 26: Tone of disability-related stories

### **Dominant model of disability in stories**

Out of total stories, 38% followed traditional models of disability, most notably Medical Model. In such stories, the individuals or group of individuals with specific disabilities were shown as winners against all odds, victims of their circumstances or recipients of charities. However, the share of traditional models got reduced from 51% in 2015 to 31% in 2016 and 34% in 2017.

Share of progressive models increased steadily from 29% in 2015 to 34% in 2016 and 41% in 2017. The stories where there were no definite characteristics of a model varied from 20% in 2015 to 35% in 2016.

Table 24: Dominant model of disability in stories

Year	Traditional	Progressive	Not Applicable	Total
2015	73	42	29	144
2016	52	57	59	168
2017	41	50	30	121
Total	<b>166</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>433</b>

Majority of stories with progressive models were positive in nature (88%) – 44% were local and 36% were national. In terms of disabilities, stories with progressive models had mention of blindness in 27.5% and locomotor disabilities in 22% among others. The stories with traditional models had mention of mental illness in 28%, locomotor disabilities in 26%, blindness in 15%, and speech and hearing impairment and intellectual disabilities in 12% each among others.

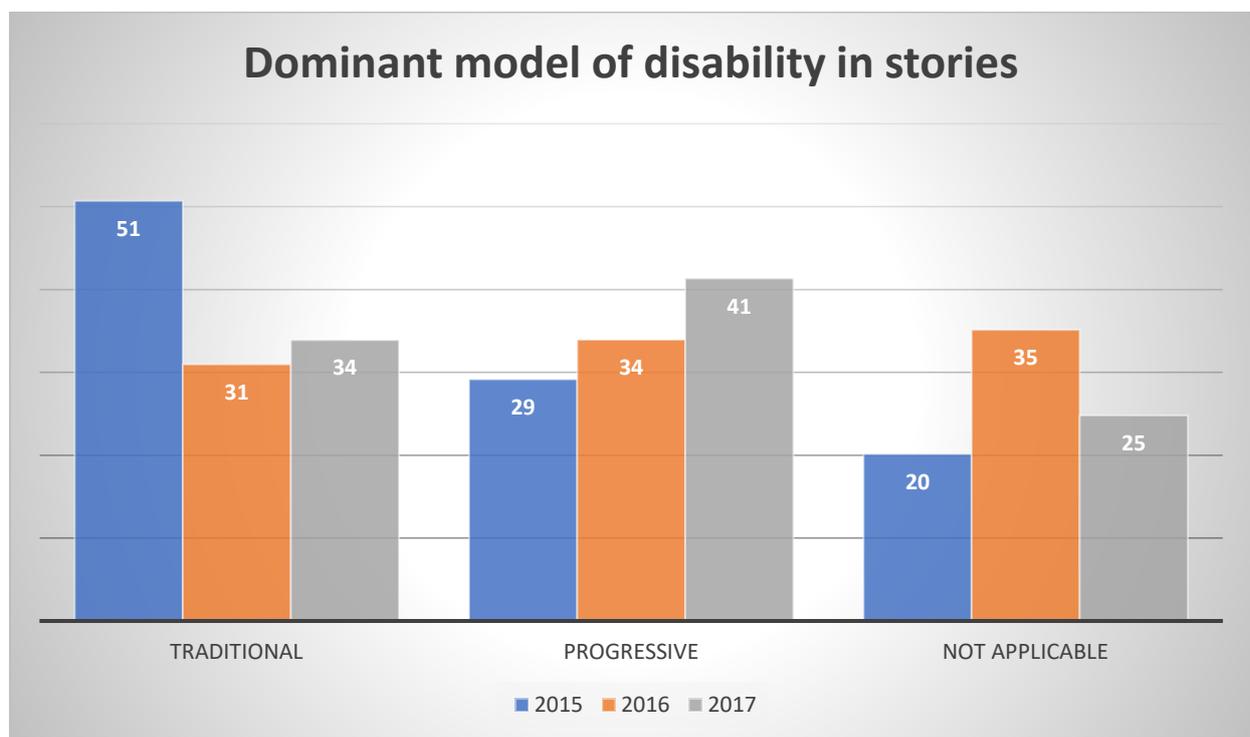


Figure 27: Dominant model of disability in stories

### **Place of occurrence of disability-related stories**

Over 40% of the stories were from Ahmedabad (local), whereas share of national stories was found to be between 20% to 31%. The stories from Gujarat except Ahmedabad rose from 19% of total to 36% or nearly double from 2015 to 2017. The share of international stories remained relatively low - the highest share during the three years under study was found to be in 2016

which could be attributed to Paralympics coverage. The share of local stories reported gradual decline from 47% in 2015 to 43% in 2016 to 41% in 2017.

Reason for the rise in Gujarat coverage in 2017 was found to have more breaking stories involving persons with disabilities including crime incidents, announcement of policies, sports events and achievements of sportspersons, and photo features/ features from centres such as Vadodara, Surat, and Rajkot. The stories included a woman from Vadodara with partial eyesight getting to IIM Ahmedabad and a youth from Narmada district found from Maharashtra based on Aadhar card details.

Out of total local stories, 33% or one-third were related to events, whereas another 32% were features and 23% breaking news.

*Table 25: Place of occurrence of disability-related stories*

Year	Local	State	National	International	Total
2015	68	27	40	9	144
2016	72	28	53	15	168
2017	50	44	24	3	121
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>433</b>

Among the international stories, 59% were breaking news and 22% were related to events. The disabilities mentioned in international stories included 37% related to locomotor disabilities and 15% related to mental illness. In 30% stories, no disability was specifically mentioned. Likewise, in national stories, 56% were breaking news, and 37% were features.

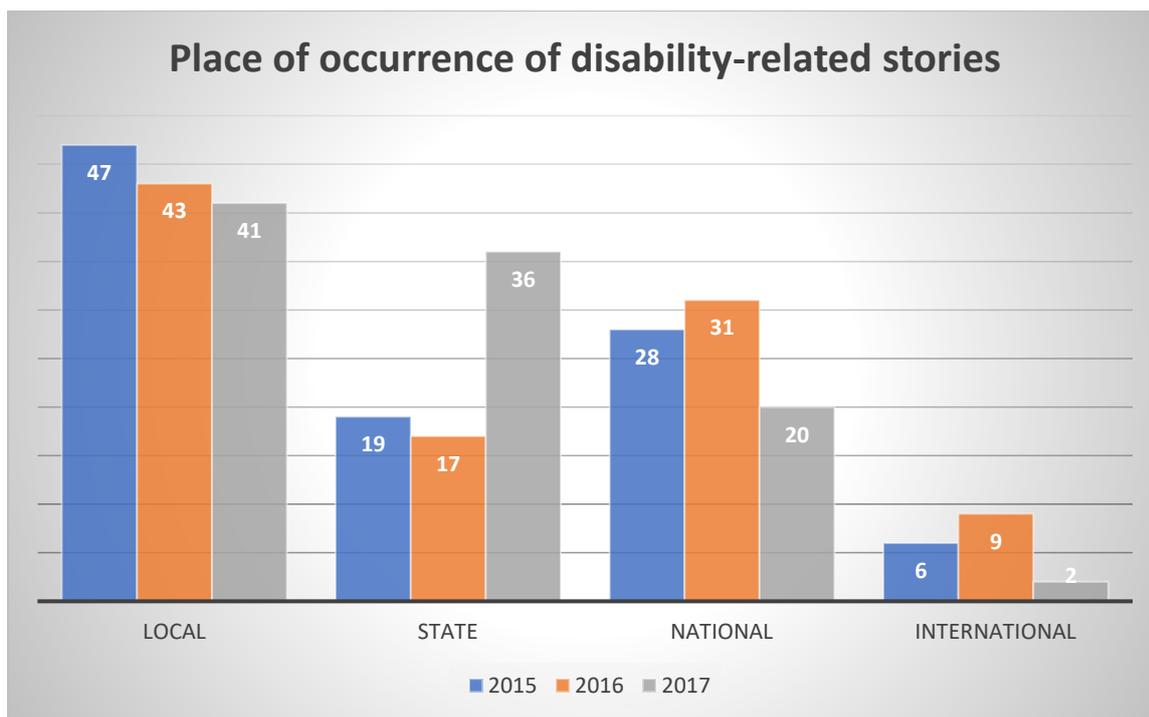


Figure 28: Place of occurrence of disability-related stories

### **Nature of disability-related stories**

Out of total stories over three years, breaking news (37%) was found to be the most recurring nature of stories, followed by feature (31%), and event (21%). The share of different categories however saw ups and downs over three years. Compared to 35% stories classified as breaking news in 2015, its share was 43% and 31% in 2016 and 2017.

The share of features increased from 30% in both 2015 and 2016 to 33% or one-third of stories in 2017. Events formed 24% of stories published in 2015, which decreased to 15% in 2016 and again rose to 26% in 2017. Follow-ups remained almost the same in the range of 6% to 9% of total stories, whereas editorial comments remained scarce with 3% or less of total stories during the years falling under this category.

Table 26: Nature of disability-related stories

Year	Breaking news	Feature	Event	Follow-up	Interview	Editorial comment	Total
2015	50	43	34	13	0	4	144
2016	72	50	26	10	6	4	168
2017	37	40	31	8	3	2	121
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>433</b>

The 10 editorials had mention of locomotor disability, speech and hearing impairment, blindness, and multiple disabilities. In breaking news, 26% or one-fourth stories had no

mention of specific disability, whereas 24% event and 7.5% of features had no mention of specific disabilities. One-third of the interviews were related to Paralympics. Among the disabilities covered in features, 28% were related to locomotor disabilities, 19% about blindness, and 11% about speech and hearing impairment. About 6% each were about autism spectrum disorder and mental illness.

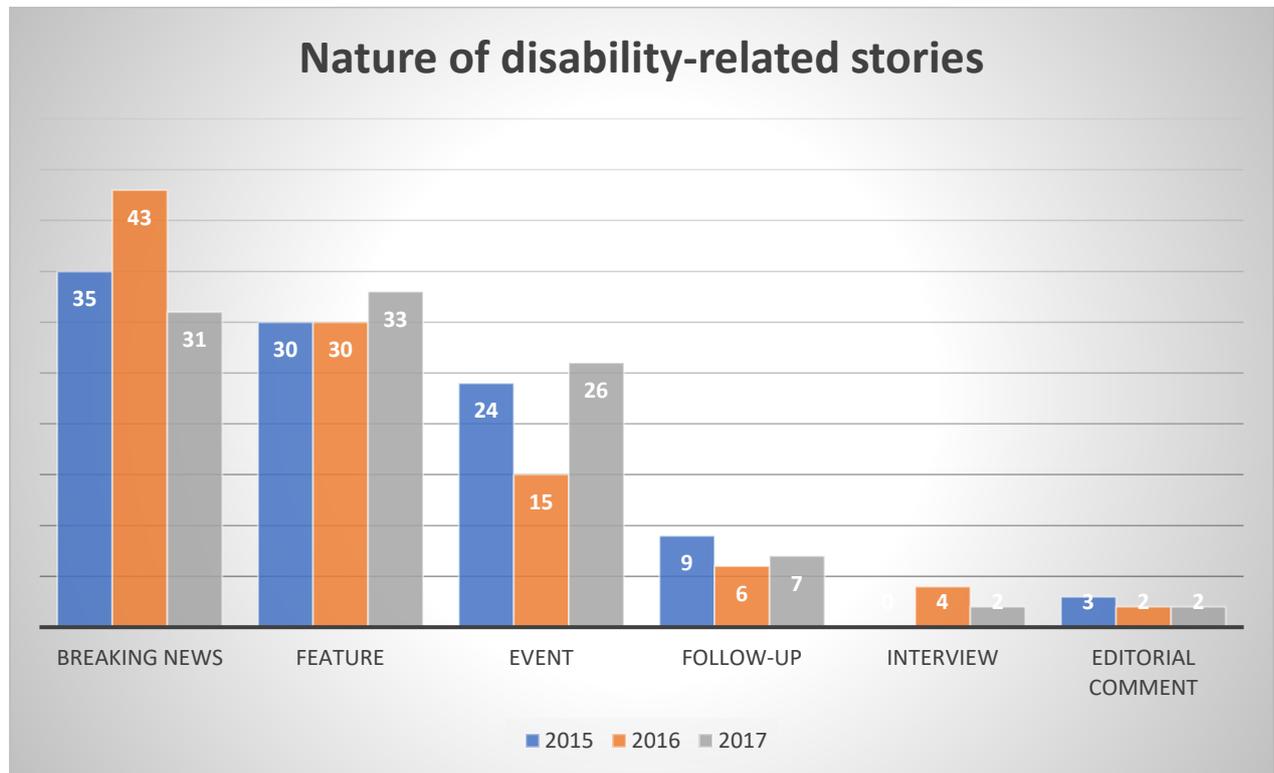


Figure 29: Nature of disability-related stories

### **Topics covered in disability-related stories**

About 17% of the total stories were related to crime or legal issues. Such stories often portrayed the persons with disabilities as either victims or perpetrators of crime. Several of the stories including rape on a woman with speech and hearing impairment at an observation home and a rape victim with mental illness stranded on road saw multiple follow-ups by the newspaper. The second most covered topic was human interest which accounted for about 15% of total stories. The share of crime and legal issues in overall coverage remained the same to 16%-18% over the three years, whereas human interest stories increased slightly from 15% to 17%.

Table 27: Topics covered in disability-related stories

Type	2015	2016	2017	Total
Crime/ legal	25	30	19	74

Human interest	21	22	21	64
Sports	20	25	15	60
Event	24	16	19	59
Medical	8	13	7	28
Policy announcement	6	14	4	24
Education	6	7	7	20
Column/ Editorial	5	7	4	16
Tech/ innovation	7	2	5	14
Employment	3	5	3	11
Charity	1	2	3	6
Award	3	1	2	6
Other	15	24	12	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>433</b>

About 8% of the stories in 2016 were related to policy announcement, whereas 6% in 2017 were related to education. Stories related to medical field in context of disability rose to 8% in 2016 compared to 6% in 2015, whereas sports also saw slight rise from 14% to 15% during the same period. Other topics covered by media included technology and innovations, employment, awards, and charity among others. These categories had less than 5% coverage throughout the three years under study.

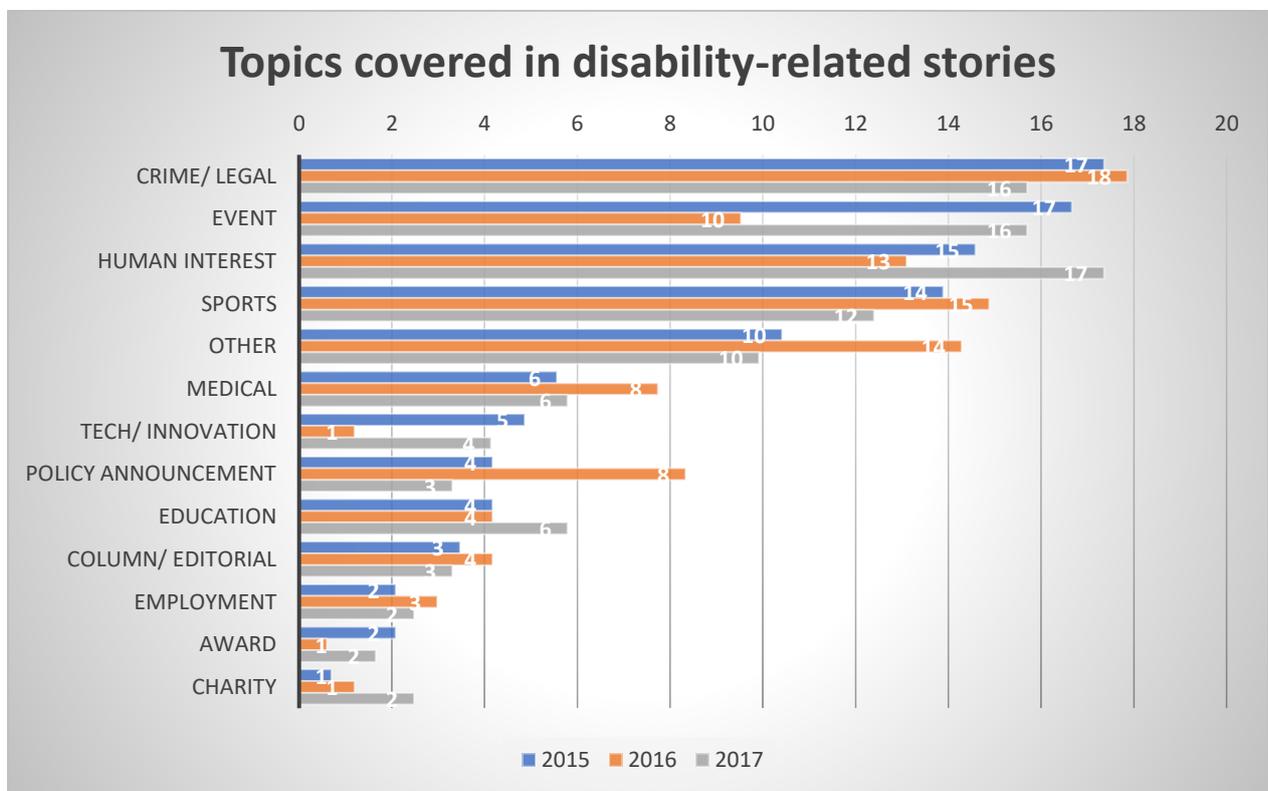


Figure 30: Topics covered in disability-related stories

### **Disabilities mentioned in stories**

A total of 465 disability mentions were found in 433 stories out of which 86 or 18% had no specific mention but were mentioned as ‘disability,’ ‘handicap,’ ‘differently-abled,’ etc. The two corporeal disabilities or those which can be seen or perceived easily including blindness and locomotor disabilities (19% each) recorded the highest coverage. Speech and hearing impairment was the third most covered disability at 11%, followed by mental illness (10%) and intellectual disability (5%). Autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, leprosy, thalassemia, and acid attack victim recorded less than 5% coverage each over three years.

*Table 28: Disabilities mentioned in stories*

Disability	2015	2016	2017	Total
Blindness	34	37	18	89
Mental illness	25	9	12	46
Locomotor	24	40	23	87
Speech and hearing impairment	16	26	11	53
Autism spectrum disorder	8	1	5	14
Intellectual disability	7	3	14	24
Multiple disabilities	7	6	9	22
Cerebral palsy	4	1	6	11
Leprosy	4	0	0	4
Thalassemia	3	8	2	13
Acid attack victim	3	5	3	11
Other	0	3	2	5
Not mentioned	22	40	24	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>465</b>

The year 2016 saw the highest number of articles with mention of no specific disabilities. The stories related to mental illness were mostly negative (74%), whereas nearly half the stories of speech and hearing impairment and thalassemia were found to be positive in tone. Half the articles related to blindness were local in nature, whereas 32% of the articles related to locomotor disabilities were local in nature. About 46% of stories related to intellectual disabilities were local, whereas 39% of stories related to mental illness were local.

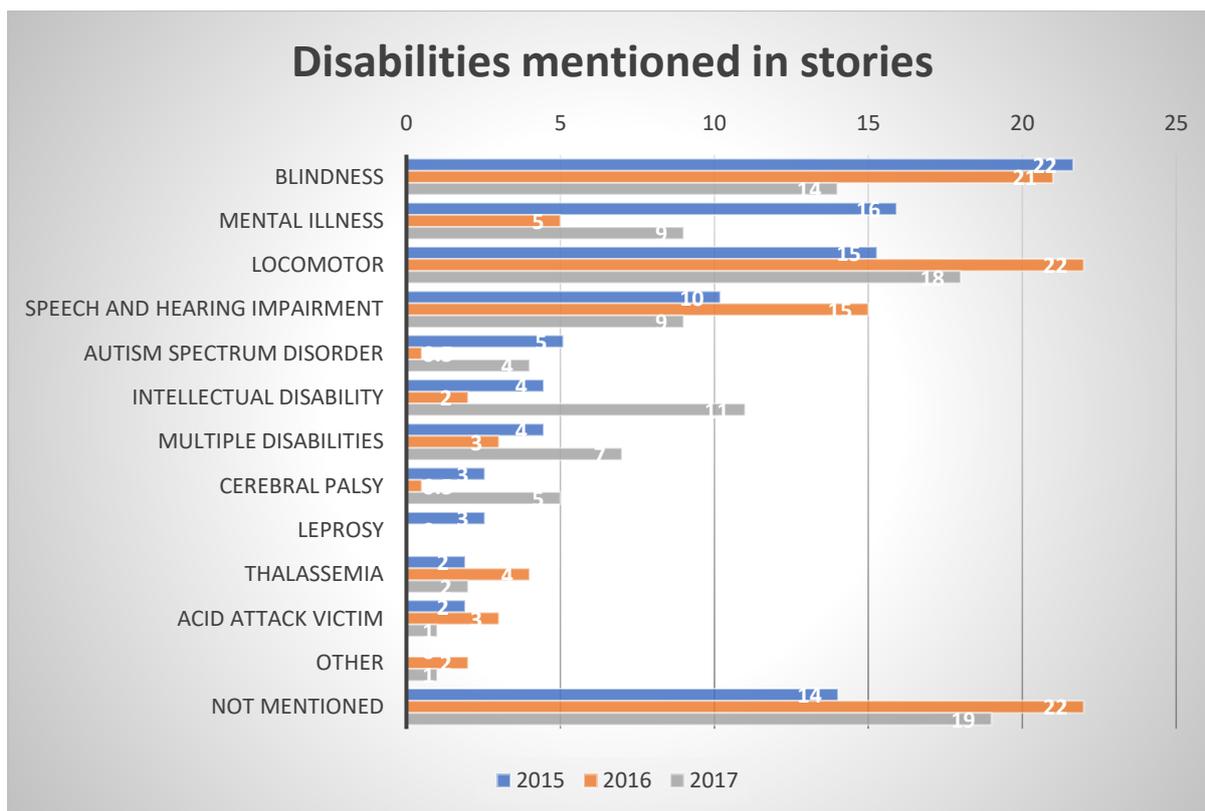


Figure 31: Disabilities mentioned in stories

### **Coverage of existing and new disabilities according to RPwD Act, 2016**

The coverage of three years indicated that existing disabilities saw a steady decline from 2015 to 2017 – from 55% to 48% to 41%. On the other hand, disabilities included in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 saw rise from 31% and 30% in 2015 and 2016 to 40% which could be seen as the impact of the act in terms of rise in awareness and coverage. The year 2016 had the highest share of articles that had no mention of the disabilities at 22%. The number however increased from 14% in 2015 to 19% in 2016.

Table 29: Coverage of existing and new disabilities in stories according to RPwD Act, 2016

Disabilities	2015	2016	2017	Total
Existing	87	86	53	226
New	48	53	52	153
Not mentioned	22	40	24	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>465</b>

Analysis of the 'new' disabilities after the passing of the Act in 2017 indicate that 62% of the mentions were in positive light, 37.5% each of these articles were local and national, it got coverage across the spectrums of breaking news, feature, and event. One-fourth of the stories were related to autism which got published on or after World Autism Awareness Day.

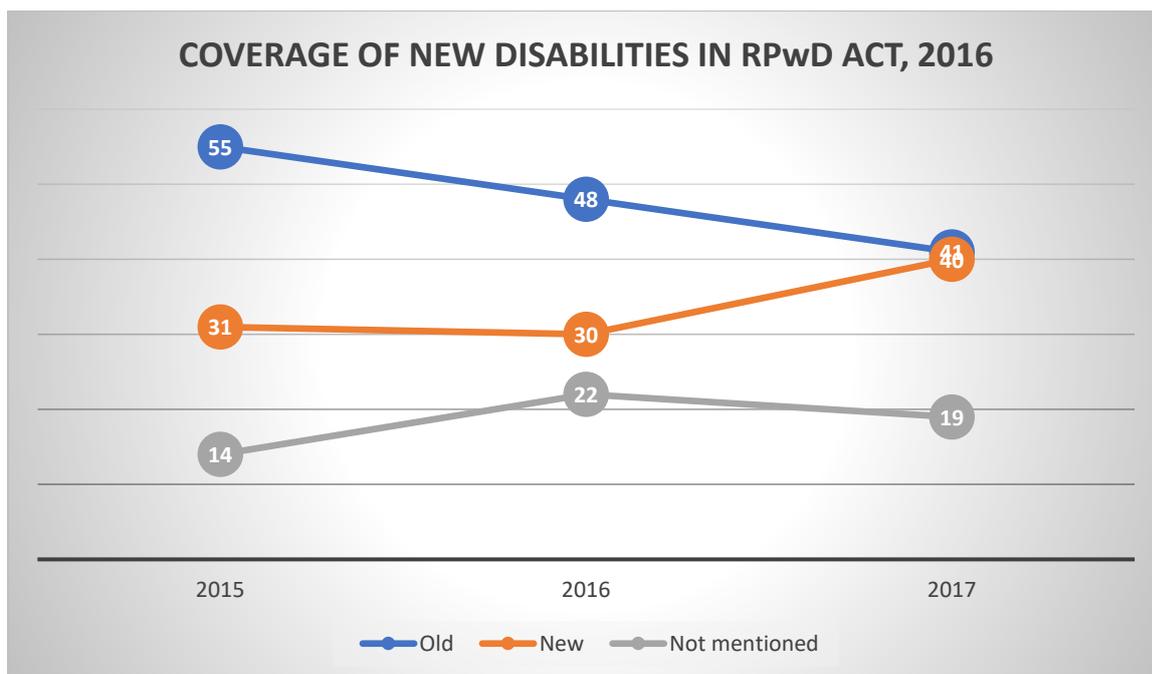


Figure 32: Coverage of existing and new disabilities

## **Use of words related to disability**

### **2015**

A total of 344 words were identified from the headlines and copy of the stories. ‘Blind’ was found to be the most recurrent word at 23 or about 7% of total words used. It was followed by ‘Disabled’ which was used 21 times or 6% of words, ‘Mentally ill’ used 17 times or 5% of words, and ‘Differently-abled’ used 11 times or 3% of words. Other words which were used five times or more included Mentally challenged, Autism, Disability, Wheelchair (user), and Deaf and Mute.

Several descriptive words were also found in context of disability including ‘difficulty in speaking and hearing,’ ‘who cannot see,’ ‘eyes going bad,’ and ‘drags self’ among others. Several archaic usages including lunacy and mental retardation were also observed. Along with specially-abled, one of the usages also mentioned ‘specially challenged.’ Several of the sports-related terminologies including para-athlete, Special Olympics, and Paralympian were also used in the stories.





Figure 34: Word cloud of disability terminology in 2016

## 2017

A total of 289 words were identified from the headlines and copy of the stories. The word ‘Disabled’ continued to be the most-used in context of disability at 19 or 7% of words. ‘Blind’ was also second-most used word at 14 or 5% of words, but ‘Persons with disabilities’ jumped significantly with 11 mentions or 4% of words used. Other words that had frequency of five times or more included Paralympics, Disability, Mentally ill, Wheelchair, and Cerebral Palsy. The word ‘Divyang/s’ was found five times.

With reference to a Bollywood movie released that year, one article used ‘Kaabil’ (able) in context of persons with disabilities. Usages such as accessible/ disabled-friendly were also noted. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act (2016) found mention four times (once as a ‘Disability Act’).

The terminologies included ‘physically and mentally challenged,’ ‘mentally unstable,’ ‘handicapped,’ ‘neither move nor speak,’ or descriptions such as ‘cannot stand owing to polio,’ ‘dragging feet,’ and ‘wielding pen with toes’ among others.



publications was 9.4 and 12 respectively. Both the publications reported spike in 2016 where per month story for DB was 10.7 and TOI was 14, both higher than average monthly stories. Thus, the newspapers responded to events such as Paralympics.

There was no uniformity in high-frequency coverage – while December 2015 saw highest 18 stories, followed by July 2015 with 17 in DB, for TOI the highest count was 27 in September 2016, followed by 25 in July 2015. While the high number of stories in DB in December 2015 were due to stories related to International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Paralympics coverage drove high number of stories in September 2016. The reason for high number of stories in July 2015 were due to two phenomenon – media attention on an ongoing case of abortion plea by a woman with mental illness in courts, and success of Ira Singhal, a woman with disabilities, as UPSC topper.

In terms of numbers, the coverage remained the same or got reduced in 2017. Thus, there was no direct influence of the RPwD Act found.

### **Front Page Stories**

Overall, DB had 11% of disability-related stories on front page, whereas the number was 10% for TOI. Both saw the highest representation on front page in 2016 with 13% and 11% respectively. DB had 54% of the stories on front page as features or human-interest stories, whereas front page stories in TOI consisted of 59% of breaking news and 26% of features among others.

The share of front-page stories remained high in DB in 2017 at 12% compared to 8% in 2015, whereas it went down from 10% to 7% in TOI. Front page stories in DB included 67% about locomotor disabilities and 65% about blindness. Out of total, 43% did not mention any specific disability. Front page stories in TOI also had locomotor (26%) and blindness (17%) as the top mentioned disabilities. About 21% of the stories did not have specific disability mentioned.

The RPwD Act did not greatly influence the rise in front page stories or inclusion of new disabilities in media discourse.

### **Word length of disability-related stories**

About 62% of the total stories in DB were between 100 to 300 words, and 5% were more than 300 words in length. Photo captions accounted for 21% of the total coverage. In TOI, 34% of stories were 200 to 300 words, whereas 25% were 100 to 200 words - thus, 59% of the stories

were between 100 to 300 words. However, 21% of the total stories were found to have more than 300 words, whereas share of photo captions was 7%. Thus, DB had more emphasis on visuals, whereas TOI had relatively lengthier stories related to disabilities.

Year-on-year comparison indicated that the share of 100-200 words stories increased significantly in DB from 24% in 2015 to 45% in 2017. On the other hand, stories with more than 200 words got reduced from 42% in 2015 to 24% in 2017. Share of photo captions also got reduced slightly from 22% in 2015 to 17% in 2017. In case to TOI, share of photo captions increased from 7% in 2015 to 9% in 2017. The share of 300-plus words stories increased slightly from 19% in 2015 to 21% in 2017. Share of 100-200 words and 200-300 words stories remained almost the same.

Overall, the figures indicated positive trend with rise in word count in disability-related stories in 2016 and 2017.

### **Position of disability-related stories on page**

The position of disability-related stories on page in DB indicated that percentage of lead stories increased from 28% in 2015 to 41% in 2016 and 32% in 2017. On the other hand, stories in both belly and anchor positions recorded dip. The stories in middle of the page (belly) got reduced from 39% in 2015 to 24% in 2017, whereas the stories in anchor position (bottom of the page) got reduced from 42% in 2015 to 28% in 2017.

In TOI, the share of lead stories remained the same at 27-28% in 2015 and 2017. The jump was seen in 2016 at 38%. It was also the same year where dip in anchor stories was recorded - in 2015 and 2017, the newspaper carried 33% and 24% of disability-related stories in anchor position. The share of stories in belly position recorded steady rise from 40% in 2015 to 45% in 2016 to 48% in 2017.

Thus, there was a positive trend in DB when it comes to giving prominence to the disability-related stories, whereas TOI did not record any major positive or negative trend in 2017.

### **Use of pictures with disability-related stories**

The stories accompanied by visuals recorded gradual rise in DB - 69% of the stories related to disabilities carried pictures, which increased to 79% in 2016 and 83% in 2017. Thus, it was a positive trend for representation of disability. In TOI, the share of articles with pictures was

52% in 2015, 47% in 2016, and 53% in 2017. Thus, there was no significant positive or negative trend in 2017 for the publication.

### **Disability stories with bylines**

Out of total disability-related stories published in DB in 2015, 26% carried byline, the number recorded slight dip at 21% in 2016, and again came up at 24% in 2017. In TOI, the disability-related stories had almost double share of byline stories - 2015 and 2016 had 44% of the articles with bylines, which got reduced to 40% in 2017. Thus, in both newspapers, there was no major positive or negative trend related to special stories.

### **Persons quoted in stories related to disabilities**

In DB, the persons with disabilities were quoted directly in 22% of stories in 2015, 29% stories in 2016, and 21% stories in 2017. Thus, it did not indicate any major positive or negative trend over three years. The share of stories where there were no direct quotes recorded slight rise from 37% in 2015 to 40% in 2017. The NGO officials' quotes got halved from 16% in 2015 to 7% each in 2016 and 2017. Government officials' share also got reduced from 12% in 2015 to 4% in 2016. The year 2017 saw rise in 'Other' category from 4% in 2015 to 18% in 2017.

In TOI, the share of stories with quotes of persons with disabilities was similar compared to DB - the direct quotes got reduced from 23% in 2015 to 19% in 2017. The stories where there were no direct quotes increased steadily from 17% in 2015 to 23% in 2017. Two other categories that saw rise in percentage included relatives and medical officials. The share of relatives' quotes increased from 7% in 2015 and 2016 to 10% in 2016, whereas medical officials' quotes increased from 1% in 2015 to 6% in 2017. NGO officials' share got halved in three years from 20% in 2015 to 10% in 2017. Share of government officials' quote increased slightly from 17% in 2015 to 20% in 2017.

Thus, both publications saw rise in stories with no quotes from 2015 to 2017, which did not impact the PwDs' direct quotes. There was no direct impact of factors such as the RPwD Act on the category.

### **Tone of disability-related stories**

DB recorded significant rise in disability-related stories that showed positive tone. The share of such stories was 38% in 2015, which increased to 63% in 2016, and 55% in 2017. While the

share of negative stories remained almost the same at 14%-15%, the share of neutral stories recorded drop from 49% in 2015 to 30% in 2016.

TOI did not record any major trends in any categories - the share of positive stories got reduced slightly from 52% in 2015 to 48% in 2016, whereas the share of neutral stories increased from 18% in 2015 to 21% in 2017. Share of negative stories remained the same at 30-31% during all three years.

Thus, DB showed positive trend in terms of representation of disability in 2017, where there were no major trends in TOI coverage.

### **Dominant model of disability in stories**

The stories related to disabilities in DB predominantly fell in 'traditional models' category - in 2015, the share of stories with traditional models was 62%, which increased to 69% in 2016, and got reduced to 55% in 2017. On the other hand, the share of stories with progressive models of disability remained almost the same in 2015 and 2017 at 34% and 35% respectively. The percentage had got reduced to 19% in 2016. The stories where no models were applicable got increased from 4% in 2015 to 10% in 2017.

TOI recorded steady rise in stories with progressive models of disability. The share was 29% in 2015, which increased to 34% in 2016, and 41% in 2017. The share of traditional models got reduced over the years from 51% in 2015 to 31% in 2016 and 34% in 2017.

The results indicated a positive change in representation of disability for both newspapers in 2017.

### **Place of occurrence of disability-related stories**

Majority of the disability-related stories remained local - the share of local stories was 58% in 2015, 44% in 2016, and 56% in 2017. The share of state-based stories increased slightly from 10% in 2015 to 13% in 2017. The only exception for international stories was 2016 where the number became more than double at 31% compared to 14% each in 2015 and 2017. The spike was due to Paralympics.

In TOI, the share of local stories got reduced gradually from 47% in 2015 to 41% in 2017, whereas the share of state-based stories got doubled from 19% in 2015 to 36% in 2017. The share of national stories went down from 28% in 2015 to 20% in 2017, whereas the share of international stories remained below 10% - the highest was recorded in 2016 at 9%.

In both newspapers, the share of state-based stories increased in 2017, which indicate broad-based coverage of disability outside of major cities, which can be seen as positive trend.

### **Nature of disability-related stories**

In DB, the coverage was predominantly around features and events. In 2015, 39% of total stories were features, which increased to 49% or nearly half in 2016, before coming back to 39%, whereas share of events from 37% in 2015 dipped to 29% in 2016 to again back at 39%. Share of breaking news, follow-ups and editorial comments almost remained the same.

The coverage in TOI saw share of features getting increased from 30% in 2015 and 2016 to 33% in 2017, whereas the share of breaking news saw rise from 35% in 2015 to 43% in 2016, to fall again at 31%. The coverage of events also regained the same numbers from 24% in 2015 to 26% in 2017 after a dip at 15% in 2016. Share of other categories remained the same.

The nature of stories did not record major change in 2017 for both newspapers.

### **Topics covered in disability-related stories**

Human interest-related stories recorded dip from 31% in 2015 to 25% in 2017 in Divya Bhaskar, whereas sports coverage got improved from 9% in 2015 to 15% in 2016 and 13% in 2017. Technology and innovation category saw rise from 5% to 7% in two years, whereas share of employment-related news got reduced from 7% in 2015 to 2% each in 2016 and 2017.

In TOI, crime and legal stories were the most covered - accounting for 17%, 18% and 16% of the stories in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively. The share of human-interest stories increased slightly from 15% to 17% in two years, whereas coverage of sports recorded slight dip from 14% to 12% in the same period. Medical and policy announcement-related stories recorded spike in 2016 but retained the same level in 2017. Education-related stories increased from 4% in 2015 and 2016 to 6% in 2017.

In 2017, human interest stories got reduced slightly in DB and increased slightly in TOI but retained its overall share whereas categories such as technology and innovation and education got more prominence. Thus, the stories became more diverse.

### **Disabilities mentioned in stories**

In DB, out of total stories locomotor disabilities were the most represented across the three years. The share was 33% in 2015 and 37% in 2017 - accounting for one-third or more of total stories - which got reduced slightly to 27% in 2017. Blindness was the second most covered

disability with 20%, 22% and 18% of the coverage over three years from 2015 to 2017. The two disabilities accounted for 48% or more coverage in all three years. The year 2017 saw higher coverage for intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, haemophilia and thalassemia compared to previous years. The share of stories where no specific disability was mentioned increased gradually to more than double from 10% in 2015 to 26% in 2017.

The coverage in TOI was more diverse. However, blindness and locomotor disabilities had 32% or more coverage or one-third of total stories. In 2015, blindness was most covered disability, whereas in 2016 and 2017 locomotor disability was the most covered disability. The share of blindness got reduced from 22% in 2015 to 14% in 2017, whereas locomotor disabilities' coverage got increased slightly from 15% in 2015 to 18% in 2017. The disabilities that saw rise in coverage in 2017 included intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, and cerebral palsy. Thalassaemia and acid attack victims recorded highest coverage in 2016 whereas autism spectrum disorder had highest coverage in 2015 at 5% of total stories, which remained almost the same at 4% in 2017. The share of stories where no specific disabilities were mentioned increased from 14% in 2015 to 22% in 2016 and 19% in 2017.

The analysis indicated a clear rise in disabilities which were included in the RPwD Act, 2016 in coverage of 2017. The 'corporeal' or visible disabilities such as locomotor and blindness were the most covered and featured in both newspapers.

### **Coverage of existing and new disabilities according to the RPwD Act, 2016**

The share of 'old' disabilities or those that got mentioned in The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 got reduced in DB from 57% in 2015 to 48% in 2017. On the other hand, the 'new' disabilities that became part of the law in the RPwD Act, 2016 recorded drop from 32% in 2015 to 20% in 2016 and again rise to 27% in 2017. The stories where no disabilities were mentioned increased steadily from 10% to 16% during the period.

In TOI, the 'old' disabilities got reduced gradually from 55% in 2015 to 48% in 2016 to 41% in 2017, whereas coverage of 'new' disabilities increased from 31% in 2015 and 30% in 2016 to 40% in 2017. The share of stories where no disabilities were mentioned increased from 14% in 2015 to 22% in 2016 and 19% in 2017.

Both the newspapers showed drop in coverage of old classification of disabilities even as their percentage remain higher. The new disabilities got coverage of 27% and 40% in DB and TOI respectively, which can be seen as an impact of the RPwD Act along with rise in stories where

no disabilities were mentioned, and disability as a sector was addressed from point of view of policies or initiatives.

### **Use of words related to disability**

DB had ‘Viklang’ (disabled) as the most-used word in 2015 with 23% of the mentions using the terminology, followed by ‘Pragnachakshu’ (one whose intellect is his/her eye). From 2016 onwards, ‘Divyang’ word found the currency with 21% in 2016 and 23% in 2017 of the total words used for disability had the mention. The rise in percentage showed higher acceptance for the word among media. However, at the same time, the words such as ‘Viklang,’ ‘Apang’ (both meaning disabled) and other words to describe PwDs such as ‘andh’ (blind) and ‘muk-badhir’ (deaf-mute) remained in use. ‘Pragnachakshu’ remained second-most used word in 2016 and 2017, too.

Word analysis for TOI indicate that there were not any words that had more than 10% recurrence across the three years - indicating higher diversity of terminology. ‘Blind’ was the most-used word related to disability with 7% usage of total words in 2015, followed by ‘Disabled’ with 6% usage, ‘Mentally ill’ with 5% usage, and ‘Differently-abled’ with 3% usage. In 2016, ‘Disabled’ was used the most at 8% - indicating slight rise from 2015 - followed by ‘Blind’ at 7%, ‘Paralympics’ at 3%, and ‘Disability’ at 2.5%. The year 2017 saw continuation of the trend with ‘Disabled’ used in 7% cases, followed by ‘blind’ in 5% cases, and ‘persons with disabilities’ in 4% cases. The word ‘Divyang/s’ was used nine times in 2016 and five times in 2017.

The analysis indicated that ‘Divyang’ became the primary word to describe disability over others in vernacular media, as the usage was not that common in English media. The English media, however, started using the word in direct quotes or in context of events that mentioned the word. The shift can be attributed to introduction of the word in 2015.

### **Coverage on special days/ commemorations**

The analysis indicated that Divya Bhaskar carried 10 stories in 2015, 12 stories in 2016, and 13 stories in 2017 on days such as International Day for Persons with Disabilities, Helen Keller Day, Louis Braille Day, World Sight Day, Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Thalassemia Day, and Rakshabandhan. In all, about 10% of the total stories of the year were carried on such occasions. For DB, it was an increasing trend.

In The Times of India, 18 stories in 2015, 13 stories in 2016, and 12 stories in 2017 were carried on such days. TOI carried stories on Women's Day, Autism Awareness Day, Yoga Day, Friendship Day, World Day of the Deaf, Thalassaemia Day, Helen Keller Day, and International Day of Persons with Disability among others. TOI showed decreasing trend, with only 2015 having 12.5% of the stories appearing on special days. Both 2016 and 2017 had less than 10% of total annual stories on the special days.

## 2.4 Summary of findings

- Divya Bhaskar showed increasing trend for disability-related stories. The average monthly coverage increased by 27% in 2016 and 8% in 2017 compared to 2015. For The Times of India, the monthly average coverage increased by 17% in 2016, and decreased by 17% in 2017. Both publications recorded much higher coverage in 2016 due to factors such as Paralympics.
- Divya Bhaskar showed increasing trend in front page stories with 125% rise in 2016 and 50% rise in 2017 compared to 2015. The Times of India showed rise in front page stories in 2016 at 20%, but recorded drop of 40% in 2017 compared to 2015.
- Analysis of placement of stories in main newspaper and supplement for Divya Bhaskar showed increasing trend of stories getting placed in supplement – 57% rise in two years. It indicated that the newspaper focused more on features or soft stories. Supplement for The Times of India was not considered for analysis.
- Divya Bhaskar showed decreasing trend in stories of more than 200 words - the stories with 200-300 words showed 33% drop in two years, whereas stories of 300-plus words showed drop of 88%. On the other hand, stories with word count 100-200 words rose by 87%. In The Times of India, the ratio remained almost the same at 32% in 200-300 words stories and 20% in 300-plus words stories. The 100-200 words stories also remained in 24-25% range.
- Lead stories increased by 14% and anchor stories got reduced by 33% in Divya Bhaskar in two years, whereas lead stories remained the same in 27-28% range in The Times of India, whereas anchor stories got reduced by 28%. In both cases, the disability-related stories gained prominence.
- Divya Bhaskar showed positive trend with articles with pictures increasing by 20% in two years, whereas in The Times of India, the ratio remained almost the same at 12-53%. But in both publications, more than half the articles were accompanied with pictures, which indicated positive trend

- There was no significant difference in stories with byline in both the publications over three years – the share remained around 24-26% in Divya Bhaskar, and 40-44% in The Times of India
- The share of persons with disabilities in direct quote in Divya Bhaskar remained the same at 21-22%, whereas articles with none quoted directly increased by 8% from 2015 to 2017. Similar trend was seen in The Times of India with 19-23% of the articles attributing quote directly to PwDs, whereas share of articles with none increased by 35% in two years. Both the publications however had above average quotes from PwDs in 2016
- Stories with positive tone increased by 44% in Divya Bhaskar, whereas it remained almost the same in 48-52% range in The Times of India. Share of neutral stories dropped in Divya Bhaskar and increased in The Times of India in three years.
- Stories following traditional models of disability fell by 12% and share of stories with progressive models remained the same in Divya Bhaskar at 34-35%, whereas The Times of India showed significant rise in stories with progressive models at 41% in two years, and reduction of 33% in traditional models. Both publications showed positive trends
- Majority of the stories remained local in nature. In Divya Bhaskar, the share was 56-58% with exception of 2016 when it went down to 44% due to Paralympics. In The Times of India, the share of local stories got reduced by 13% from 2015 to 2017. In both newspapers, state-based stories increased in 2017, a positive change with broad-based coverage.
- More than one-thirds (39%) of the stories were features in Divya Bhaskar in 2015 and 2017, whereas features increased slightly (10%) in 2017 for The Times of India. Events' coverage was 39% and 26% of total stories in 2017 for Divya Bhaskar and The Times of India respectively, indicating no major change in coverage pattern.
- Human interest stories got reduced by 20% in Divya Bhaskar, whereas it showed slight rise (13%) in The Times of India over three years. Sports coverage took 15% and 12% of the total share in 2017 in both publications respectively. The pattern however was different – Divya Bhaskar had human interest as primary nature of stories, whereas crime and legal stories were most prominent in The Times of India.
- Corporeal or visible disabilities got the maximum coverage – locomotor disabilities and blindness accounted for 48% of all coverage in three years in Divya Bhaskar, whereas

in The Times of India the share was 32%. There was clear rise in coverage of ‘new’ disabilities in both newspapers, indicating impact of the RPwD Act.

- Comparison of ‘old’ and ‘new’ disabilities included in the RPwD Act indicated that the old disabilities’ mention got reduced by 16% in Divya Bhaskar and 13% in The Times of India. In both newspapers, the share of stories with no direct mention of disabilities also increased.
- In Divya Bhaskar, ‘Divyang’ remained the most-used word to describe persons with disabilities in both 2016 and 2017, replacing ‘Viklang’ which was most-used in 2015. In The Times of India, ‘Divyang’ was used occasionally, with more traditional words such as ‘Disabled’ and ‘Blind’ used in article. However, use of person-first language increased, indicating positive trend.
- About 10% of the annual stories in Divya Bhaskar appeared on special days such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities, World Thalassaemia Day, Helen Keller Day, Louis Braille Day, etc. In The Times of India, only 2015 had 12.5% of the stories appearing on special days. For the rest of two years, the coverage on special days was less than 10%.

### 3. Questionnaire and Perception Scale

The questionnaire was administered to the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in majority of the disabilities such as blindness, locomotor disability, blood-related ailments, and so on, whereas for disabilities such as intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and mental illness, their immediate relatives such as father, mother, brother, son, and daughter were the respondents. All the forms were distributed and filled up in coordination with NGOs who ensured that the privacy of the respondents is maintained, and the rights of the PwDs are maintained.

Except basic details such as a person’s name, contact details and institution’s name (which were collected only for verification purposes), all the questions were in multiple-choice questions (MCQ) format for personal details and medial consumption habits for ease of filling up the form and getting quantitative data. For the third section related to perception of media coverage on disability, a five-point Likert scale was used. The results were correlated with the other details such as education and nature of disability with statistical tools.

### 3.1 Personal details

The current section provides demographic details of the respondents who participated in the questionnaire and perception scale. A total of 500 forms were distributed out of which 495 were received in both electronic and physical modes, 64 were rejected due to incomplete details, repetitive answers (same choice of answer for the whole form), or answers in non-standard format. After scrutiny, 431 forms were chosen for the final analysis.

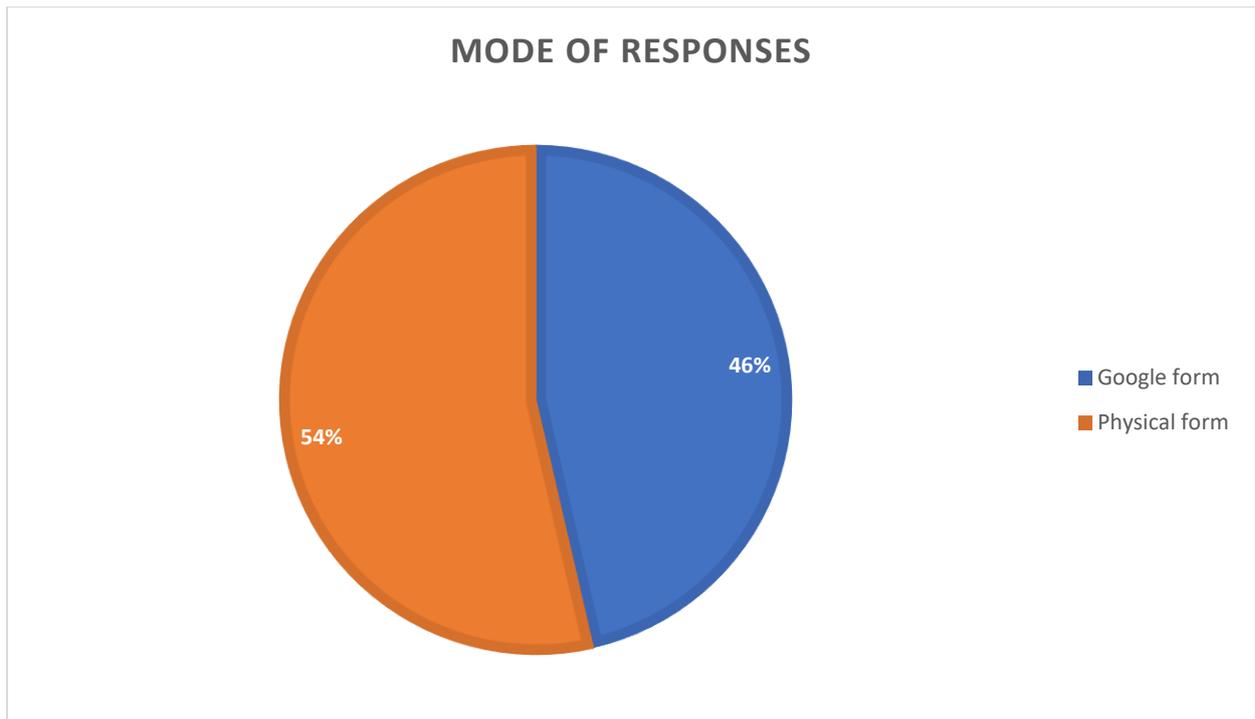
#### Mode of Responses

Due to Covid pandemic, both modes of data collection – through Google Forms online and physical forms distributed through non-government organizations (NGOs) – were employed. In all, about 300 physical forms were distributed, whereas 206 responses were received through online forms.

*Table 30: Mode of responses*

Category	Numbers	%
Google form	200	46
Physical form	231	54
Total	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of total, 46% of the responses were from online forms, whereas 231 responses were from physical forms.



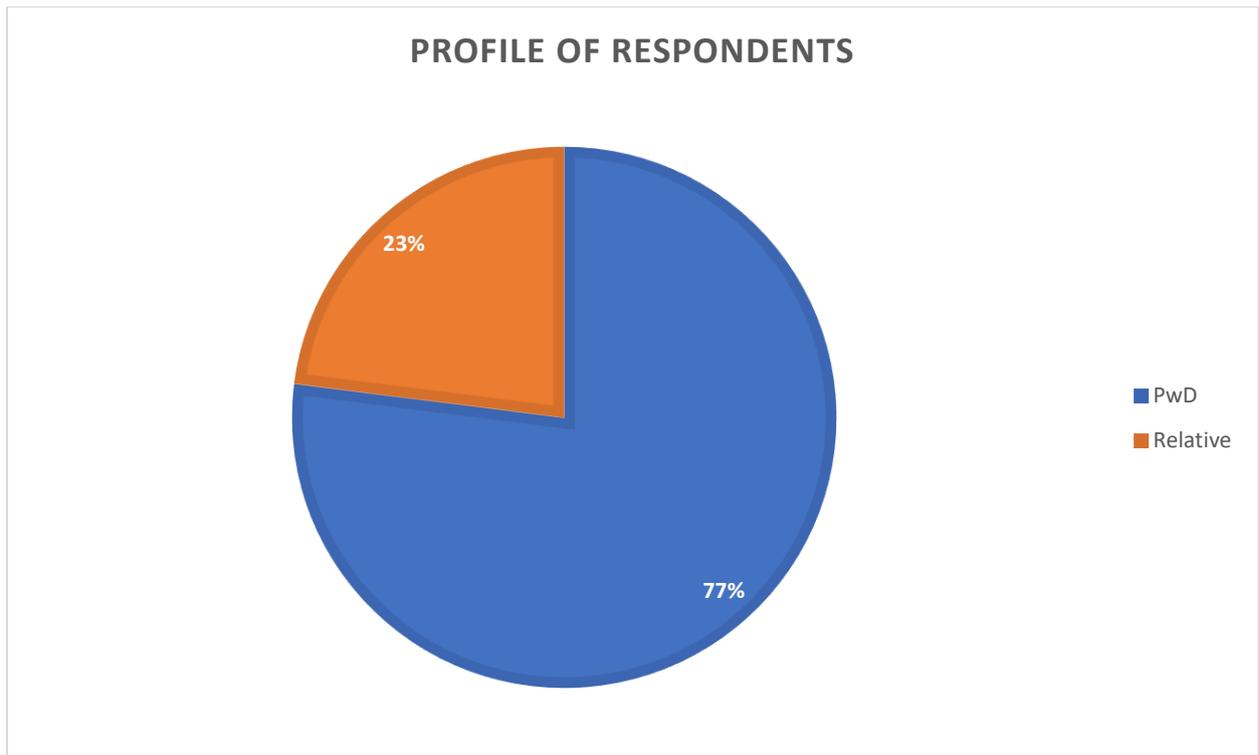
*Figure 36: Mode of Responses*

### **Profile of Respondents**

*Table 31: Profile of respondents*

Respondent	Numbers	%
PwD	333	77
Relative	98	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of total respondents, 333 or 77% were persons with disabilities (PwDs), whereas 98 or 23% were immediate relatives of the PwDs. The relatives were included in the questionnaire responses to ascertain difference between the PwDs and their relatives' media consumption habits and attitude towards media representation of disability. The respondents in 'relative' categories included parents, siblings, or children of persons with mental illness, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), neurological disorders, and in some cases children with hearing impairment who were taking treatment after Cochlear implants.



*Figure 37: Profile of respondents*

### Age Group of Respondents

Out of total respondents, maximum was between 21 to 40 years – accounting for 60% of the responses. The youngest were 16 years or class X students, whereas the oldest was 62 years of age.

*Table 32: Age group of respondents*

Age group	Number of respondents	%
16 to 20 years	62	14
21 to 30 years	119	28
31 to 40 years	138	32
41 to 50 years	78	18
51+ years	34	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

In terms of respondents, up to 20 years consisted of 14%, up to 40 years consisted of 74%, and up to 50 years accounted for 92% of the total.

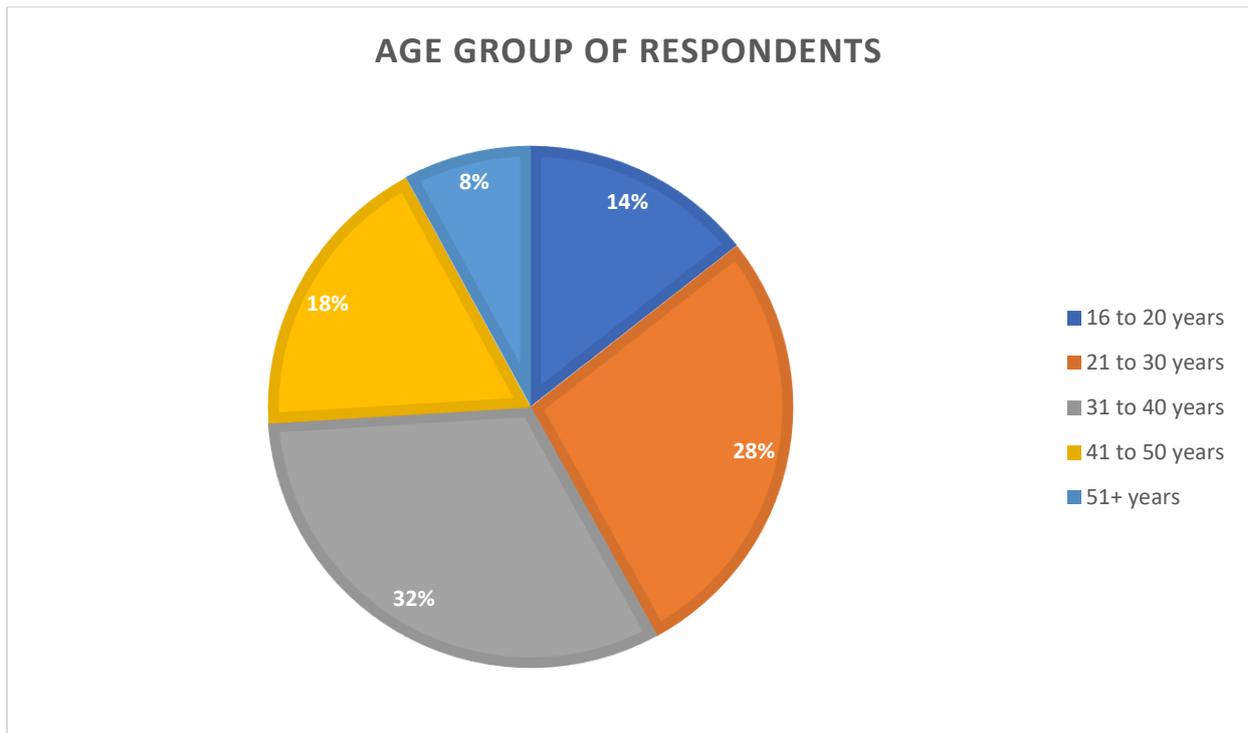


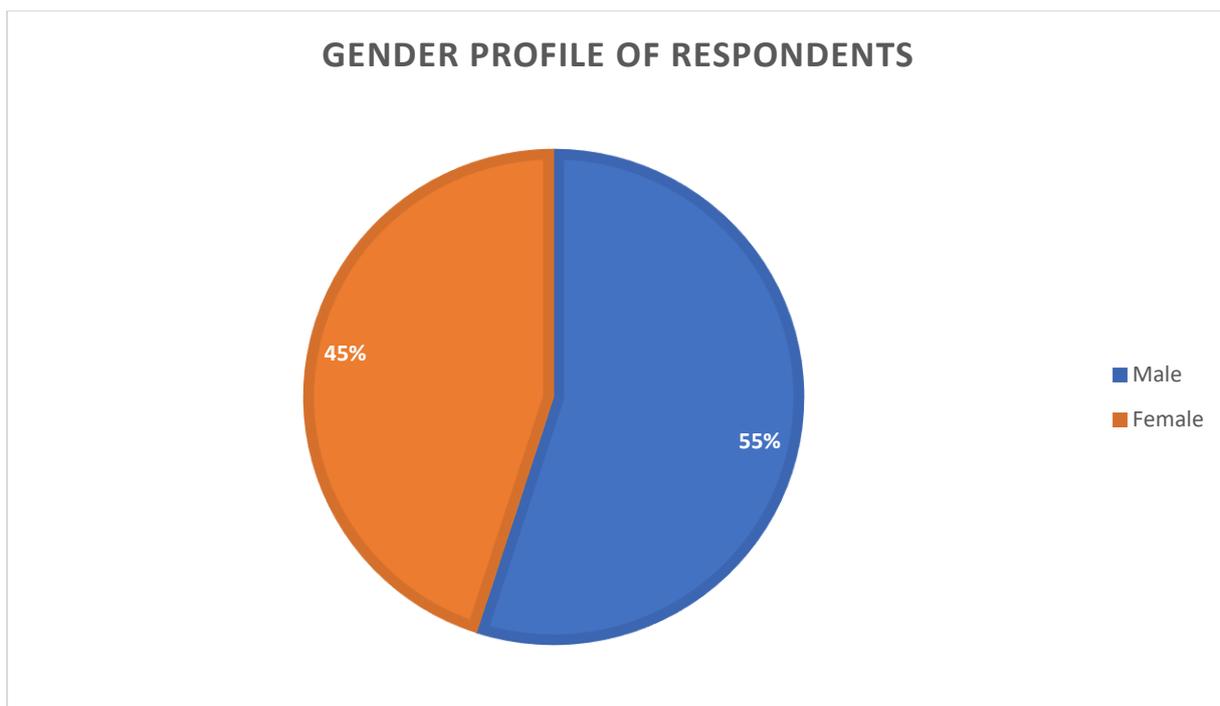
Figure 38: Age group of respondents

### Gender of respondents

Table 33: Gender profile of respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	%
Male	237	55
Female	194	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of total respondents, 55% were males and 45% were females.



*Figure 39: Gender profile of respondents*

### Educational profile of respondents

*Table 34: Educational profile of respondents*

Highest educational qualification	Number of respondents	%
Up to Class 10	93	22
Up to Class 12	148	34
Up to Graduate	125	29
Up to PG	49	11
More than PG	16	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of total respondents, majority (34%) had the highest educational qualification of class 12 pass, whereas those up to class 12 accounted for 56% of the respondents. The respondents included 29% with education up to graduate, and 15% who had education of more than graduate.

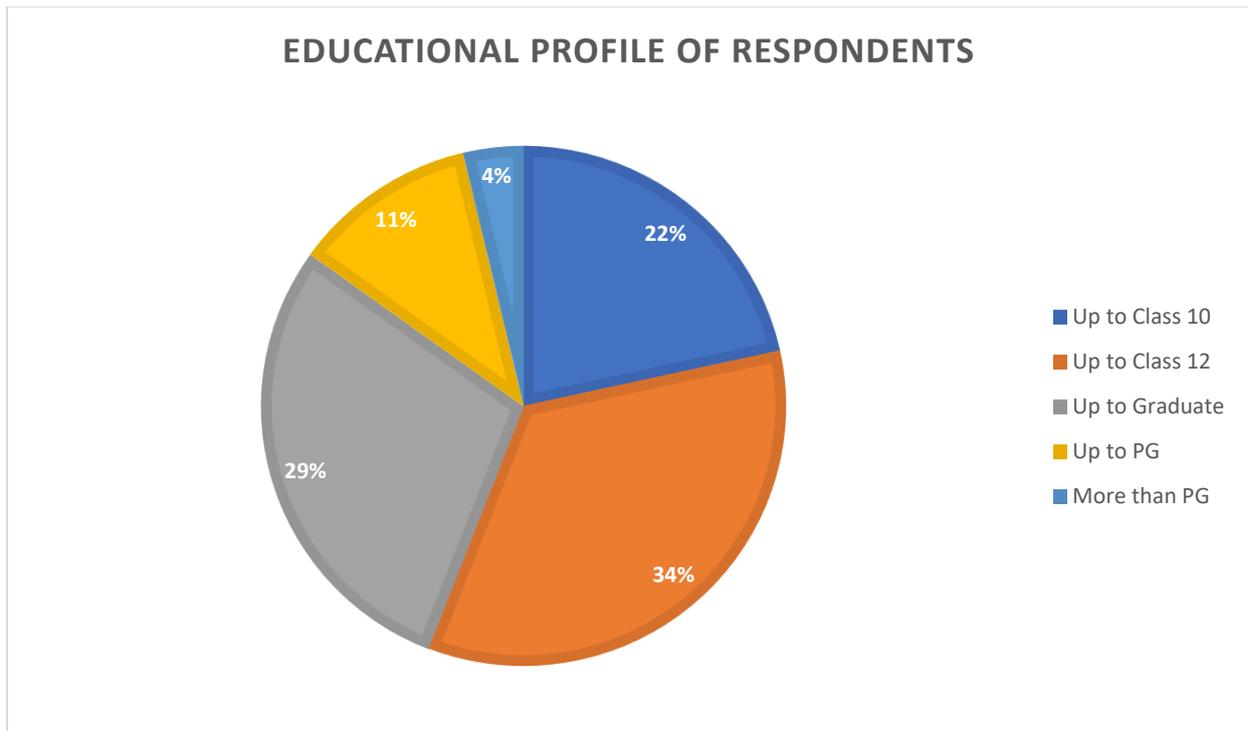


Figure 40: Educational profile of respondents

### Type of disability of respondents

It was a stratified purposive sampling where the respondents were chosen based on their disability's share in overall population to provide representation to almost all the disabilities mentioned in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016.

Table 35: Type of disability of respondents

Type of Disability	Number of respondents	%
Blindness/ low vision	96	22
Locomotor disability/ Muscular dystrophy	83	19
Hearing impairment	68	16
Speech and language disability	41	10
Intellectual disability/ autism spectrum disorder/ learning disabilities	23	5
Blood-related ailments (thalassemia/ haemophilia/ sickle cell disease)	22	5
Mental illness	16	4
Cerebral palsy/ muscular dystrophy	14	3
Neurological condition/ multiple sclerosis	13	3
Other / Multiple disabilities	55	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

The respondents included 22% with blindness or low vision, 19% with locomotor disability, and 26% with hearing impairment or speech and hearing impairment. The three disabilities cumulatively accounted for 67% of the respondents.

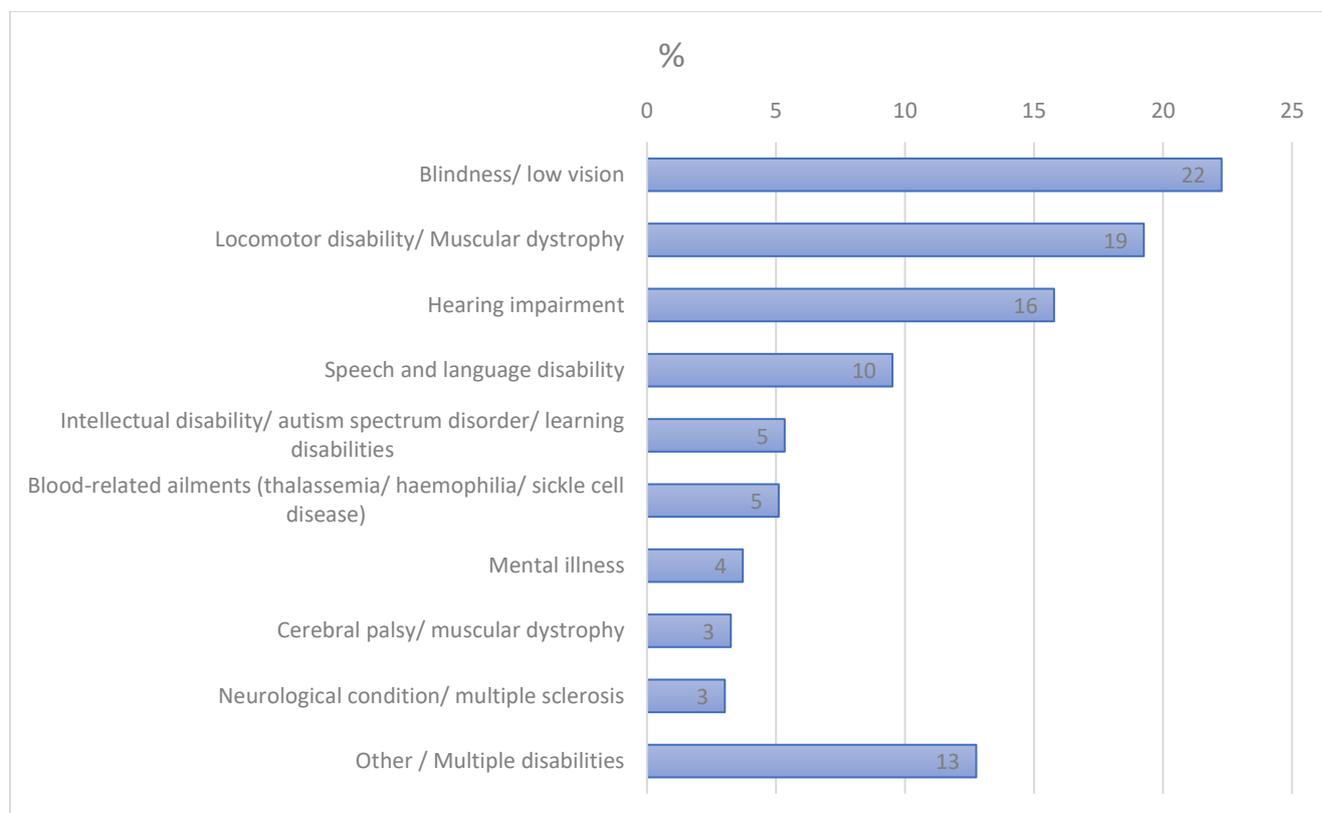


Figure 41: Type of disability of respondents

### Duration of disability of respondents

The respondents were asked whether they acquired the disability since birth (congenital), or afterwards. The question was asked to ascertain whether there was any difference between the attitude of the two groups.

Table 36: Duration of disability of respondents

Duration of disability	Number of respondents	%
Congenital	248	58
Since childhood	131	30
Since adulthood	29	7
Result of accident/ calamity	23	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of total respondents, over 50% had got the disability since birth, whereas 30% others were such who had acquired disability till they turned 18 years old. Only 12% of the respondents

had got disability after they turned 18 years of age or lost limb or developed conditions which were caused by an accident or calamity.

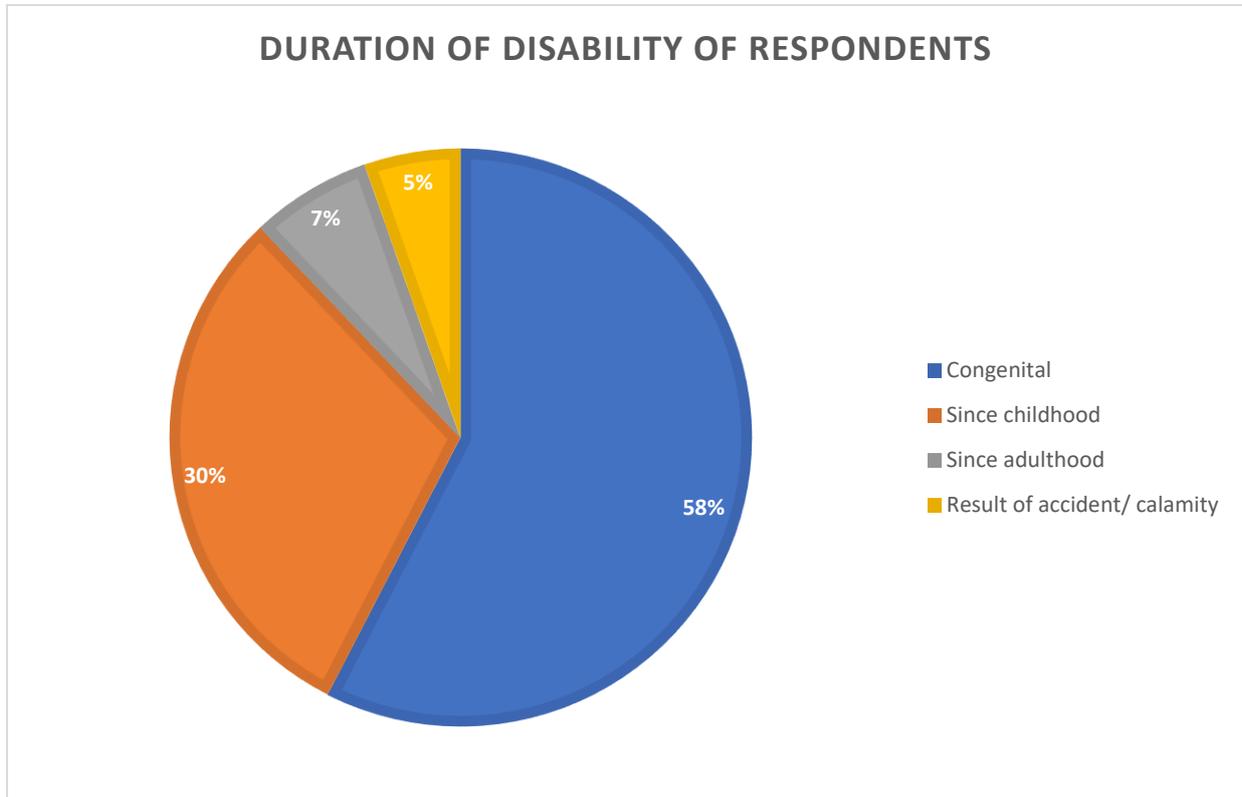


Figure 42: Duration of disability of respondents

### 3.2 Media consumption habits

The present section assessed how the persons with disabilities (PwDs) got news on daily or periodic basis and ascertain their media consumption habits such as time devoted to reading newspaper or watching TV and their observation of media representation of disability.

#### Primary source of news

Table 37: Primary source of news

Primary source of news	Number of respondents	%
Website/ app	253	30
Television	234	28
Newspaper	170	20
Social media	152	18
Radio	18	2
Other	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>100</b>

The responses indicated that 30% preferred website or news application on mobile phone as their primary source to receive news. It was followed by television (28%) and newspaper (20%). Collectively, these three categories accounted for 78% of the media consumption by PwDs and their relatives.

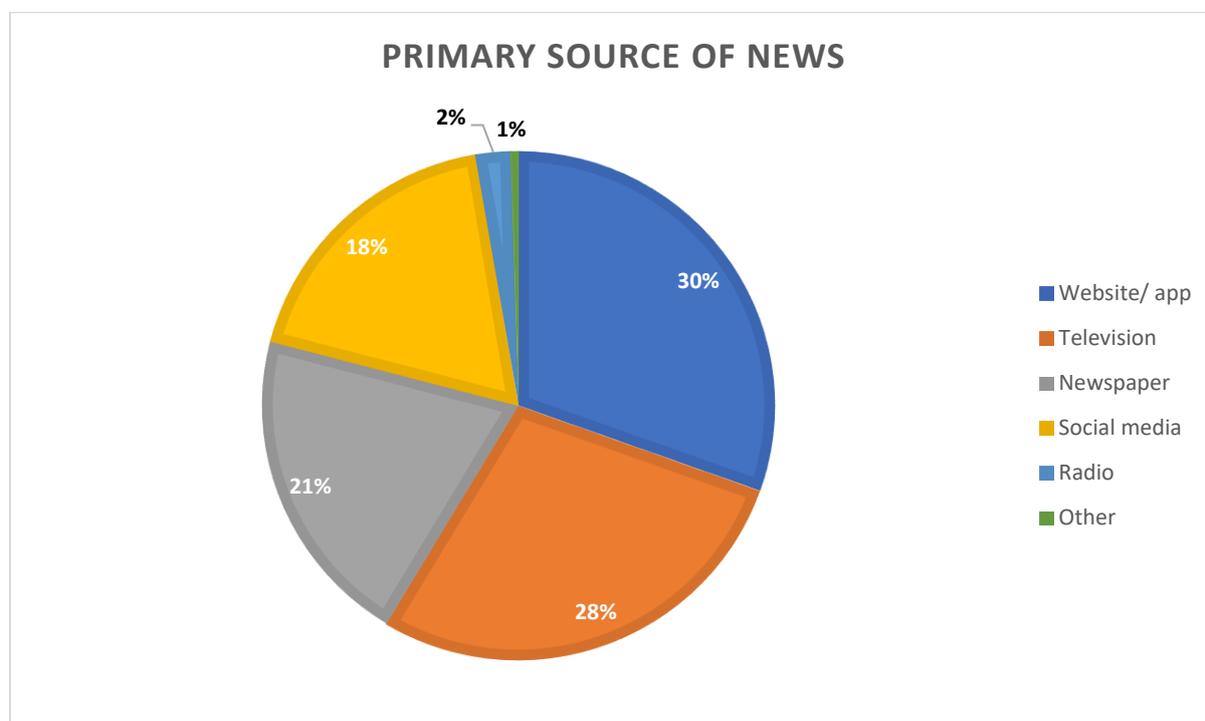


Figure 43: Primary source of news

### Frequency of newspaper reading

Table 38: Frequency of newspaper reading

Frequency of reading newspapers	Number of respondents	%
Daily	159	37
More than twice a week	71	16
More than five times a week	28	6
Weekly	29	7
Occasionally	94	22
Never	50	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

Out of total respondents, a little more than one-third (37%) said that they read newspapers daily. Among the respondents with visual impairment, they considered the ‘reading of newspaper’ at their schools during the daily assembly as the reading activity. Additional 16% said that they were reading the newspapers more than twice a week. About 12% of the respondents said that they never read the newspapers. A high share of respondents in this

category had visual impairment. About 22% of the respondents said that they occasionally read newspapers.

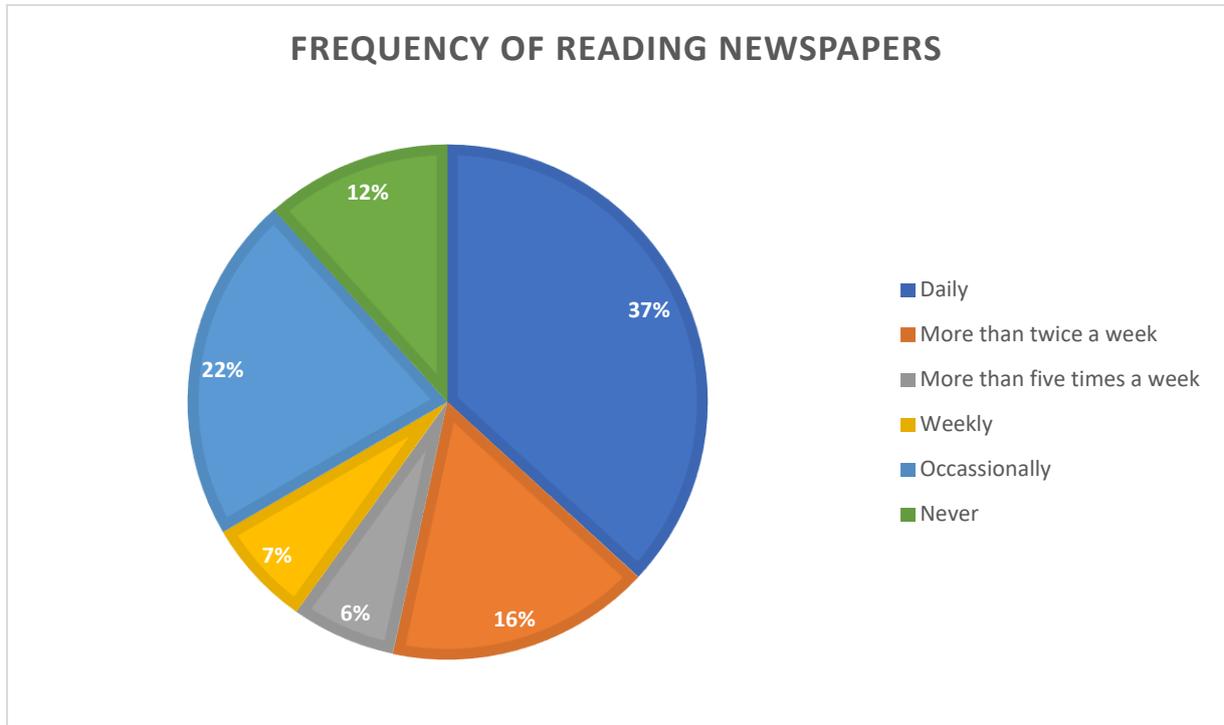


Figure 44: Frequency of reading newspapers

### Language of newspapers read by respondents

Table 39: Language of newspapers read by respondents

Languages of Newspapers	Number of respondents	%
Gujarati	275	64
English	5	1
Hindi	17	4
Gujarati & English	48	11
Gujarati & Hindi	18	4
English & Hindi	3	1
All	24	6
Other	41	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

Nearly two-third of the respondents said that they read Gujarati newspapers, followed by 11% who read both Gujarati and English newspapers. About 10% of the respondents or 41 said that they read newspapers in other languages including Marathi and Malayalam. The share of Gujarati could be seen as the effect of Ahmedabad as place of study and high population of students from different parts of Gujarat to the facilities run by the NGOs working in disability

sector. Only 1% read only English newspapers – the respondents primarily included relatives of the PwDs, whereas 4% read only Hindi newspapers.

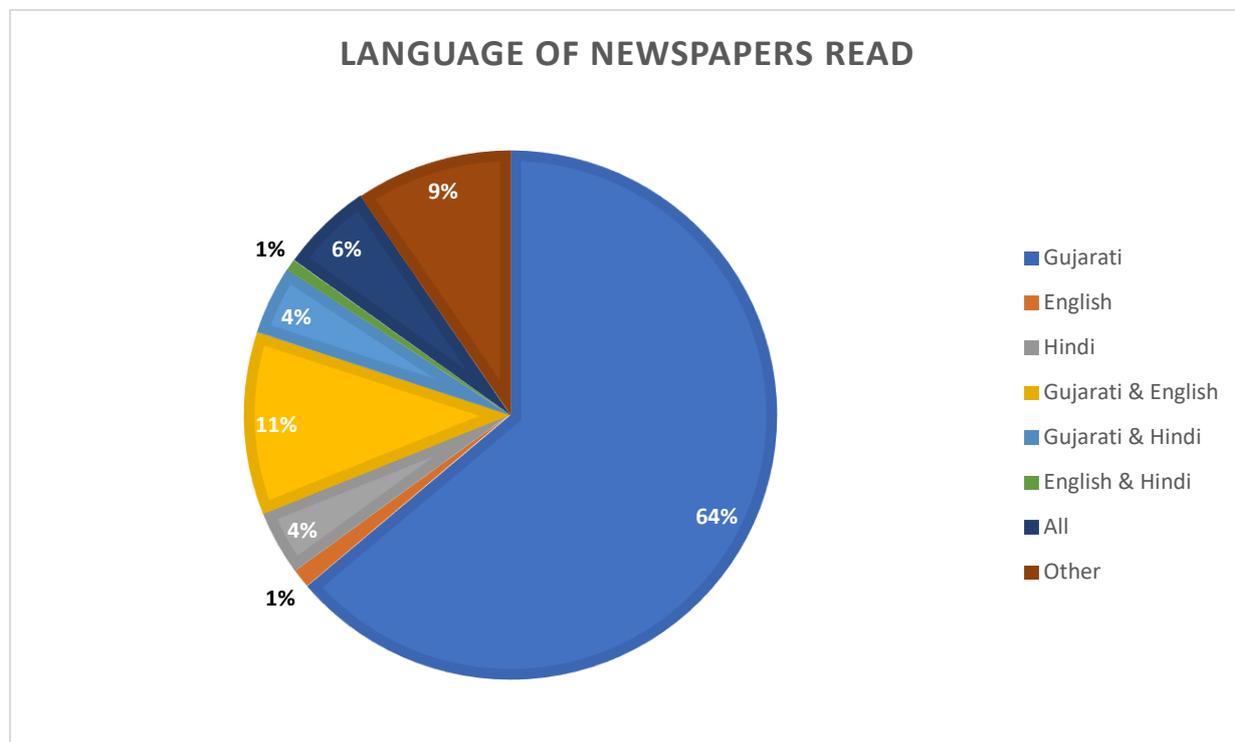


Figure 45: Language of newspapers read by respondents

### Time spent on reading newspapers

Table 40: Time spent on reading newspapers by respondents

Time spent on newspapers	Number of respondents	%
Less than 15 minutes	231	53
16-30 minutes	154	36
31-45 minutes	34	8
More than 45 minutes	12	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

More than half (54%) of the respondents said that they read newspapers for less than 15 minutes. As the time of reading newspapers increased, the number of respondents got decreased. About 90% of the respondents said that they read the newspapers for up to 30 minutes. Only 12 or 3% of the total respondents said that they read newspapers for more than 45 minutes. Majority of these respondents were relatives of PwDs and were found to be more than 41 years of age.

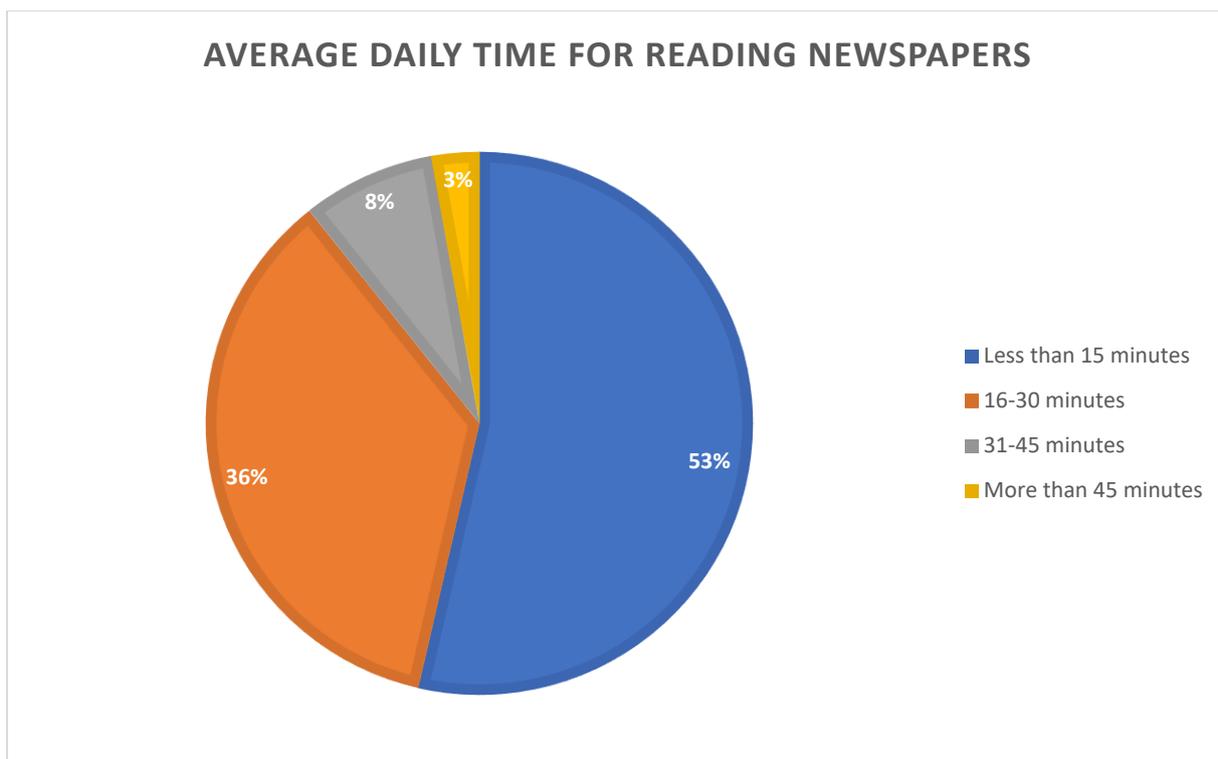


Figure 46: Time spent on reading newspapers by respondents

### Language of media other than newspapers consumed by respondents

Table 41: Language of media other than newspapers

Language of other media	Number of respondents	%
Gujarati	160	37
English	12	3
Hindi	39	9
Gujarati & English	20	5
Gujarati & Hindi	106	25
English & Hindi	18	4
All	70	16
Other	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

The analysis showed very different results than newspaper reading – against 64% preferring Gujarati as language for newspapers, only 37% said that they consume media other than newspapers in Gujarati. Additional 30% said that they see content in English and Hindi along with Gujarati, whereas 16% respondents said that they consume content in all three major languages – Gujarati, Hindi, and English. After Gujarati, the second highest consumption was Gujarati and Hindi at 25% of the total responses.

## LANGUAGE OF MEDIA OTHER THAN NEWSPAPERS

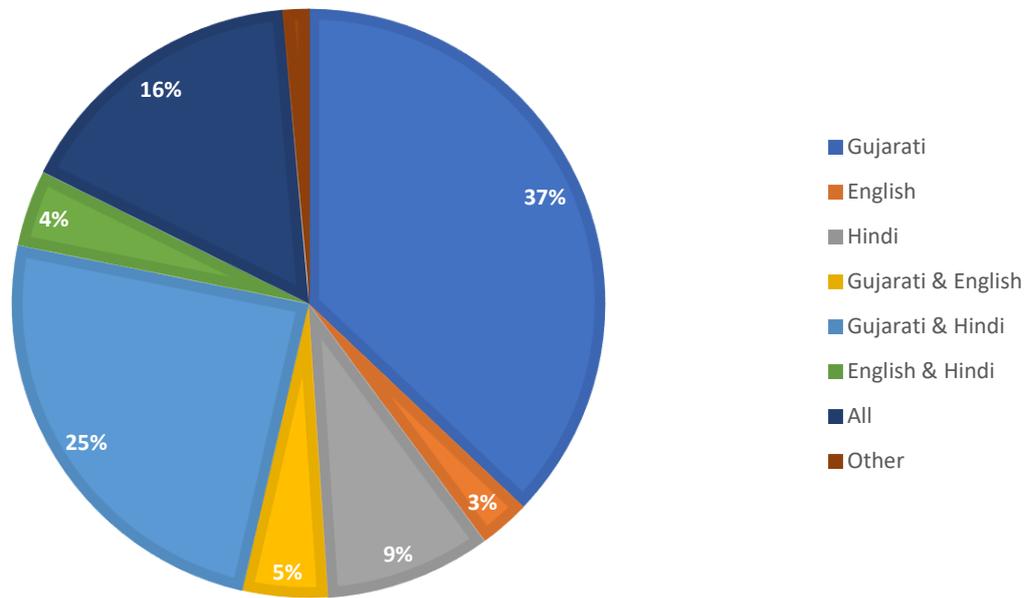


Figure 47: Language of media other than newspapers

## Average daily time for media consumption by respondents

Table 42: Average daily time for media consumption by respondents

Time spent on media	Number of respondents	%
Less than 15 minutes	84	19
16-30 minutes	161	37
31-45 minutes	87	20
More than 45 minutes	99	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

The pattern of media consumption also changed when other media including television and internet got added – 23% of the respondents said that they spend more than 45 minutes on media. Thus, share of other media increased with time of consumption increased. Only 19% of the respondents said that they spent less than 15 minutes for media consumption. Maximum 37% of the respondents said that they spend 16 to 30 minutes on media daily. Thus, it can be inferred that the share of newspapers decreased once the time spent on media increased.

### AVERAGE DAILY TIME FOR MEDIA CONSUMPTION

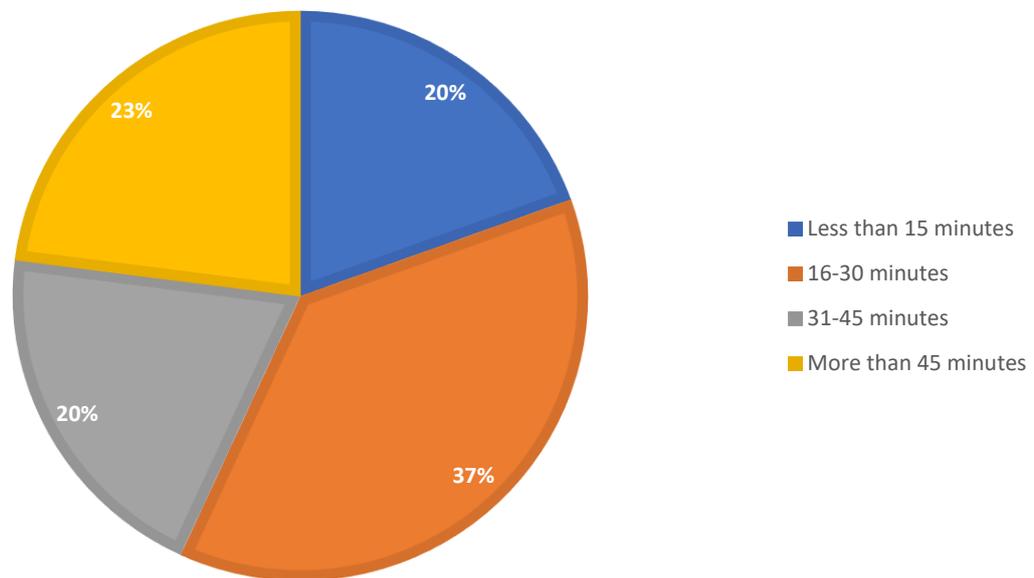


Figure 48: Average daily time for media consumption

### Primary source for news related to disability

Table 43: Primary source for news related to disability

Source for disability related news	Number of respondents	%
Social media	111	26
Newsletters by NGOs	90	21
Newspapers	77	18
Disability sector website	74	17
TV news segment	35	8
Publications by governments	33	8
Periodicals/ Magazines	11	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

The results indicated that more than one-quarter (26%) of the respondents relied on social media to get news on disability, followed by newsletters by NGOs (21%), and newspapers (18%). Together, these three categories accounted for 65% of the total news source. Periodicals or magazines came last at 3% of the total responses. As both the top answers did not feature in the most consumed media (newspapers and TV), the answers indicated that alternative sources of news were more preferred for consuming disability-related content. Moreover, the role of NGOs was also highlighted by the fact that the newsletters or communicate were seen as

reliable source of information for details on sector-specific news including announcement of schemes or employment or workshop for new skills.

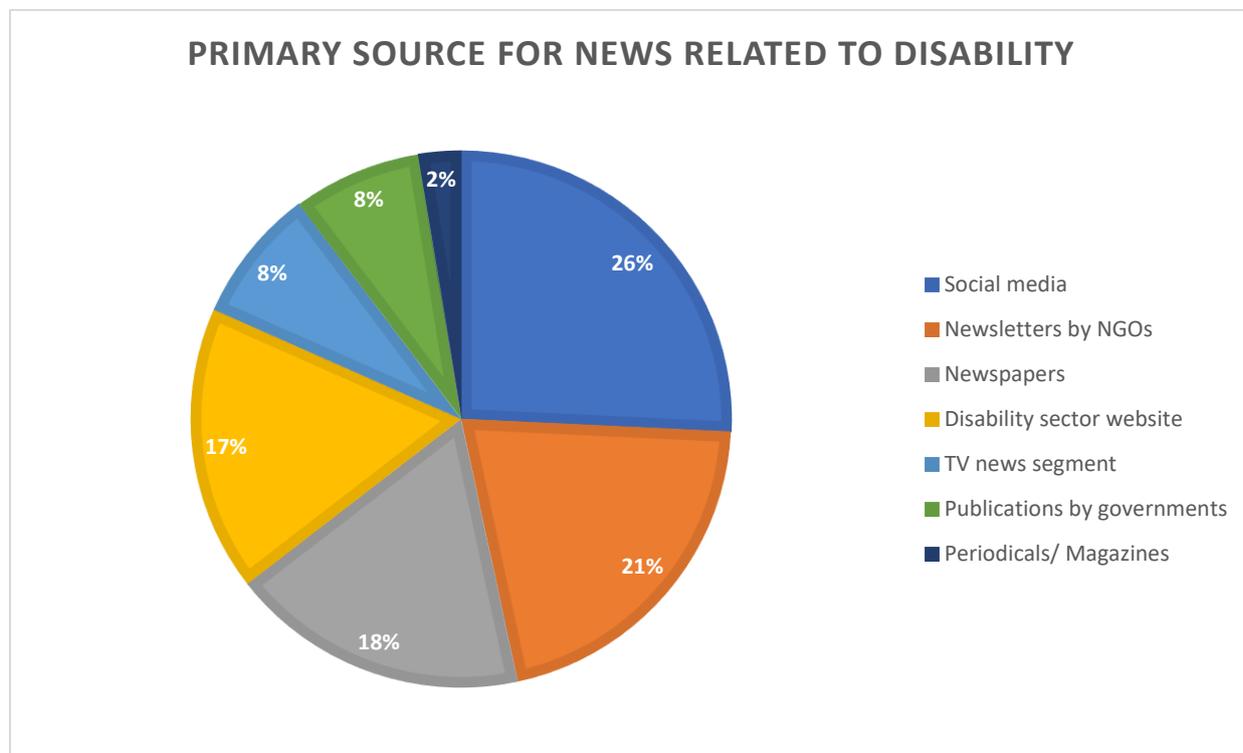


Figure 49: Primary source for news related to disability

### Frequency of disability-related news observed by respondents

Table 44: Frequency of disability-related news observed by respondents

Frequency of disability news	Number of respondents	%
Very frequently	65	15
Frequently	110	26
Occasionally	135	31
Rarely	99	23
Never	22	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

The perception of the respondents related to disability-related news observed in mainstream media indicated that only 15% said that they come across such news very frequently, whereas 26% said that they come across such news frequently. The highest number of respondents chose ‘occasionally’ at 31% or nearly one-third of total responses. About 5% of the respondents said that they never came across disability-related coverage in the media they consumed.

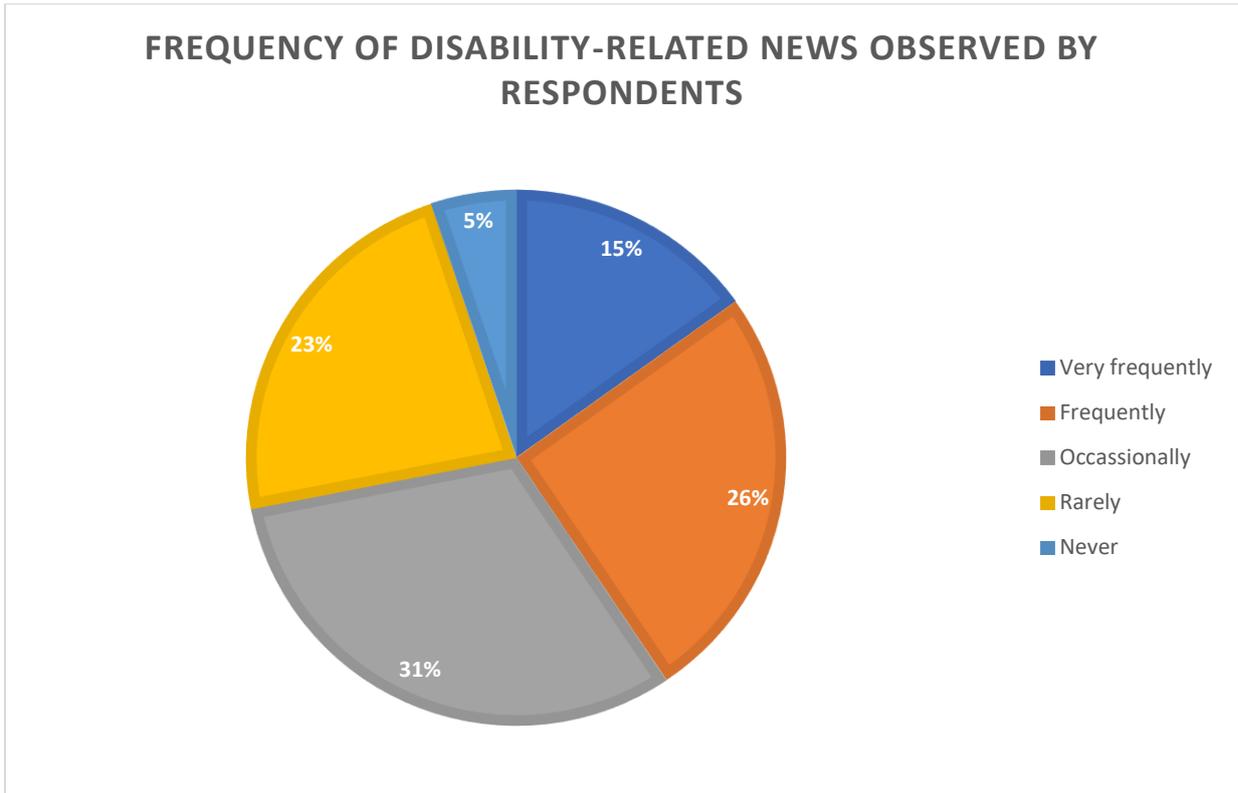


Figure 50: Frequency of disability-related news observed by respondents

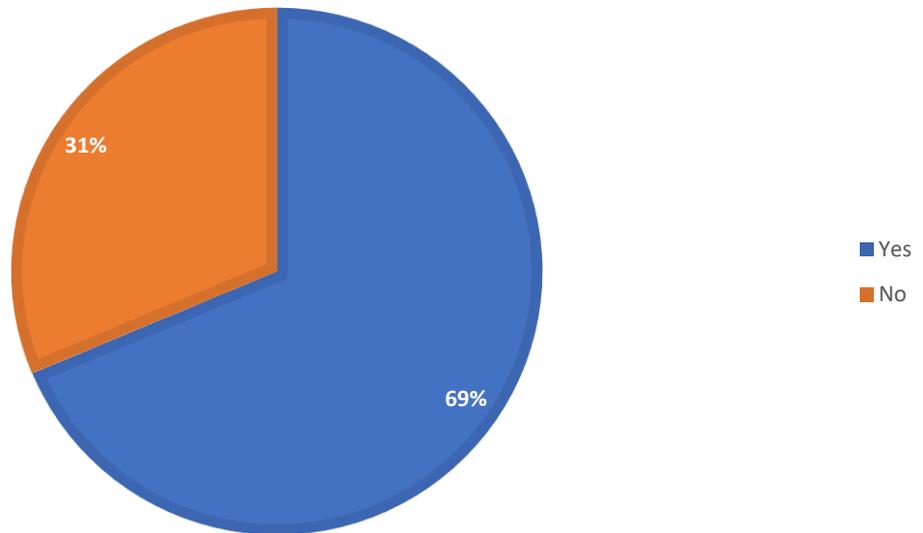
### Perception of coverage related to disability on special days by respondents

Table 45: Perception of coverage related to disability on special days

Disability news on special days	Number of respondents	%
Yes	296	69
No	135	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

More than two-thirds of the respondents (69%) said that they observed the coverage related to disability on ‘special days.’ Such days included International Day of Persons with Disability, Helen Keller Day, World Autism Awareness Day, and so on.

## COVERAGE OF DISABILITY-RELATED NEWS ON SPECIAL DAYS



*Figure 51: Perception of coverage related to disability on special days*

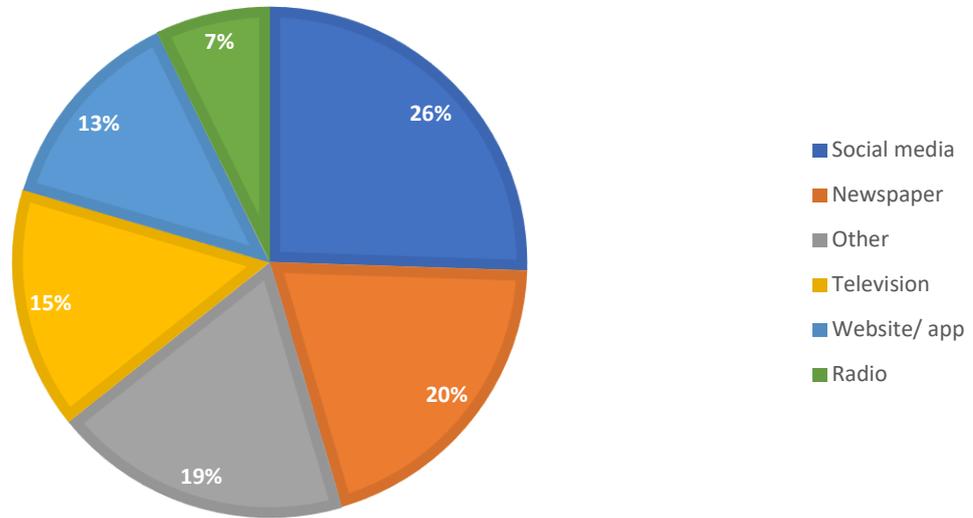
### Coverage of disability-related news on special days

*Table 46: Coverage of disability-related news in terms of media*

Where the news appears	Number of respondents	%
Social media	110	26
Newspaper	86	20
Other	81	19
Television	66	15
Website/ app	57	13
Radio	31	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100</b>

The respondents said that in terms of coverage on special days, they observed the highest number of articles or write-ups on social media (26%), followed by newspaper (20%) and television (15%).

### COVERAGE OF DISABILITY-RELATED NEWS ON SPECIAL DAYS IN TERMS OF MEDIA



*Figure 52: Coverage of disability-related news on special days in terms of media*

### 3.3 Perception of media coverage of disability

The Likert-scale based perception measurement was used for the segment. For ease of analysis and representation, the 20 questions are divided into group of five questions each. The mean of the answer was derived by weighted average. The options were assigned weightage (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5). After multiplying the answers to respective categories with the weightage, the answers were added and then divided with the number of total respondents. The mean thus indicated overall trend of the perception for the respondents on the issue.

For the purpose of the analysis, the mean score of below 3 was considered ‘disagree,’ score of 3 to 3.5 considered ‘neutral,’ and score above 3.5 considered ‘agree’ with the statement presented.

#### Questions 1 to 5

*Table 47: Questions 1 to 5 and percentage (%) of respondents*

No	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Representation of persons with disabilities in media is satisfactory	28	14	22	19	17

2	The images of persons with disabilities in media is closer to reality	11	23	25	23	18
3	Divyang' word/ term is appropriate for describing PwDs	17	12	25	24	23
4	The media now frequently uses 'Divyang' instead of other conventional terms to describe PwDs	13	6	19	32	29
5	Media gives motivational/ inspirational stories about persons with disabilities	11	13	29	25	22

**1. Representation of persons with disabilities in media is satisfactory | Mean 2.8**

Out of total respondents, 42% felt that the representation is not satisfactory, 36% felt that the representation is satisfactory, whereas 22% were neutral. Mean of the answers was 2.8, which indicated that majority disagreed with the statement.

**2. The image of persons with disabilities in media is closer to reality | Mean 3.1**

Out of total respondents, 34% felt that the image of persons with disabilities in media is not closer to reality, 41% felt that the image is closer to reality, whereas 25% were neutral. Mean of the answers was 3.1, which indicated that the majority was neutral about the statement.

**3. 'Divyang' word/ term is appropriate for describing PwDs | Mean 3.2**

Out of total respondents, 29% felt that the term 'Divyang' is not appropriate, 47% felt that the term is appropriate, and 25% were neutral on the term. Mean of the answers was 3.2, which indicated that the majority was neutral about the statement.

**4. The media now frequently uses 'Divyang' instead of other conventional terms to describe persons with disabilities | Mean 3.5**

Out of total respondents, 19% felt that the media is not using term 'Divyang' frequently in media coverage compared to other terms, 61% felt that the media is using the term, and 19% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.5, which indicated that the majority agreed with the statement.

**5. Media gives motivational/ inspirational stories about persons with disabilities | Mean 3.3**

Out of total respondents, 24% felt that media does not give motivational or inspirational stories about persons with disabilities, 47% felt that media gives such stories, and 29% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.3, which indicated that majority was neutral about the statement.

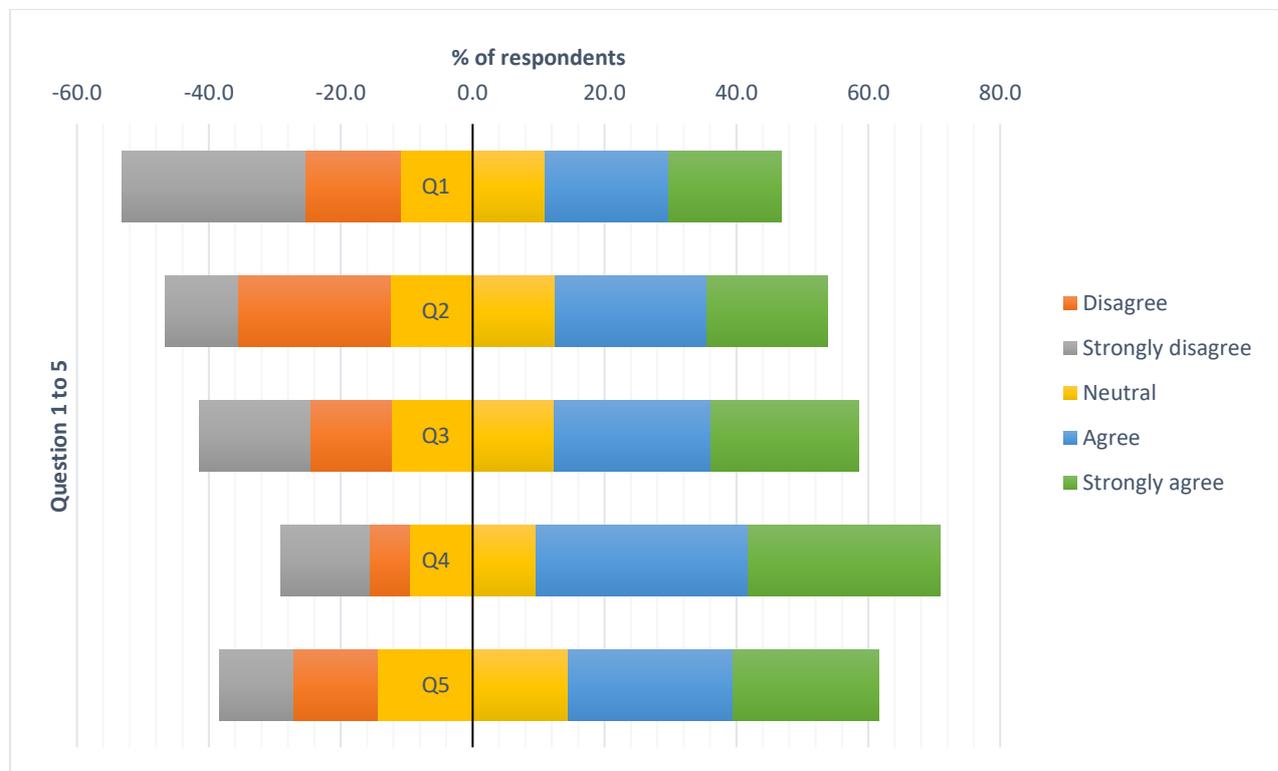


Figure 53: Percentage of Likert scale responses to Questions 1 to 5

## Questions 6 to 10

Table 48: Questions 6 to 10 and percentage (%) of respondents

	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
6	Images of disability in media is often only about visible disabilities (like blindness, locomotor disabilities)	15	4	29	33	18
7	Media gives information about various organizations and departments working for disability	12	19	31	21	16
8	Media gives information about various schemes, concessions, and entitlement for persons with disabilities	14	24	33	17	13
9	Media is often the only way in which the non-PwDs interact with PwDs	9	13	31	32	16
10	Media representation can have strong impact on the way society looks at PwDs	12	12	21	32	23

**6. Images of disability in media is often only about visible disabilities (like blindness, locomotor disabilities) | Mean 3.3**

Out of total respondents, 19% did not agree that the disability representation in media is often only about visible disabilities, 51% agreed that the representation is about visible disabilities, and 29% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.3, which indicated that majority was neutral about the statement.

**7. Media gives information about various organizations and departments working for disability | Mean 3.1**

Out of total respondents, 31% did not agree that media gives information about organizations and departments working for disability, 37% agreed that the media gives such information, whereas 31% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.1, which indicated that majority was neutral about the statement.

**8. Media gives information about various schemes, concessions, and entitlements for persons with disabilities | Mean 2.9**

Out of total respondents, 38% did not agree that media gives information about various schemes, concessions, and entitlements for persons with disabilities, 30% agreed that media gives such information, whereas 33% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 2.9, which indicated that majority disagreed with the statement.

**9. Media is often the only way in which the non-persons with disabilities interact with persons with disabilities | Mean 3.3**

Out of total respondents, 22% did not agree that media is the only way in which the society at large interacts with persons with disabilities, 48% agreed that media plays that role, whereas 31% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.3, which indicated that majority was neutral about the statement.

**10. Media representation can have strong impact on the way society looks at persons with disabilities | Mean 3.4**

Out of total respondents, 24% did not agree that media representation has strong impact on the way society looks at persons with disabilities, 55% agreed that media representation has strong impact on the issue, whereas 21% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.4, which indicated that majority was neutral about the statement.

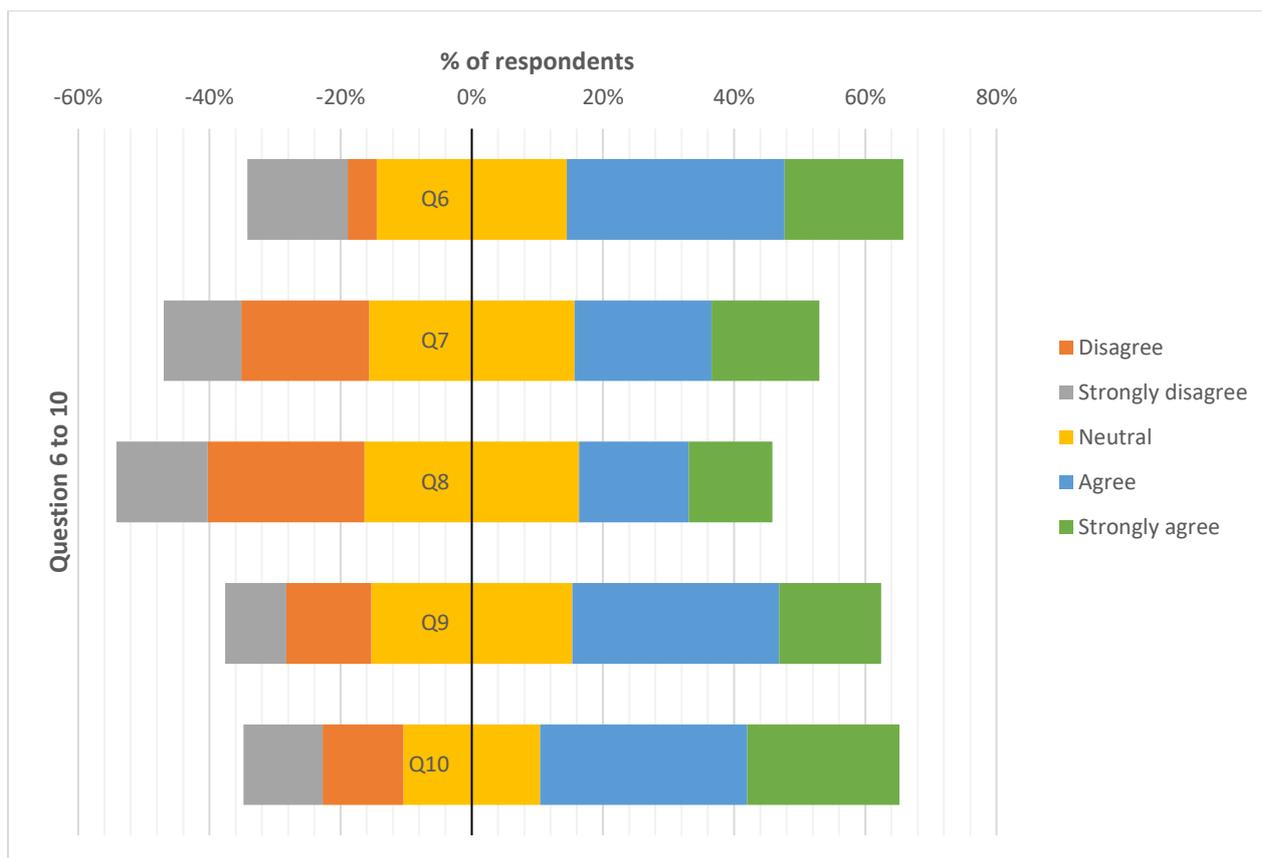


Figure 54: Percentage of Likert scale responses to Questions 6 to 10

## Questions 11 to 15

Table 49: Questions 11 to 15 and percentage of respondents

	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
11	Persons with disabilities get a chance to share their views with media	19	19	29	15	18
12	Media plays a significant role to raise issues such as accessibility, etc.	13	26	27	17	18
13	Media representation of PwDs is often stereotypical and should change	8	8	26	37	22
14	NGO newsletters/ special websites have more specific information about job/ education for PwDs than media	7	10	26	33	23
15	The language by media still uses words to describe PwDs which they should not use anymore	12	12	23	26	26

### 11. Persons with disabilities get a chance to share their views with media | Mean 2.9

Out of total respondents, 38% did not agree that persons with disabilities get a chance to share their views with media, 33% agreed that they get a chance to share their views, whereas 29%

were neutral. Mean of the answer was 2.9, which indicated that majority disagreed with the statement.

**12. Media plays a significant role to raise issues such as accessibility, etc. | Mean 2.9**

Out of total respondents, 39% did not agree that media plays a significant role in raising disability-related issues, 35% agreed that media raises such issues, whereas 27% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 2.9, which indicated that majority disagreed with the statement.

**13. Media representation of persons with disabilities is often stereotypical and should change | Mean 3.5**

Out of total respondents, 16% did not agree that the media representation of persons with disabilities is stereotypical, 59% agreed that the representation is stereotypical, whereas 26% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.5, which indicated that majority agreed with the statement.

**14. NGO newsletters/ special websites have more specific information about job/ education for persons with disabilities than mainstream media | Mean 3.5**

Out of total respondents, 17% did not agree that the NGO newsletters or special websites have more specific information related to issues such as jobs and education compared to mainstream media, 56% agreed that the newsletters and websites have specific information, whereas 26% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.5, which indicated that majority agreed with the statement.

**15. The language by media still uses words to describe persons with disabilities which they should not use anymore | Mean 3.4**

Out of total respondents, 24% did not agree that language by media uses words that should not be used anymore, 52% agreed that such language should not be used, whereas 23% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.4, which indicated that majority was neutral about the statement.

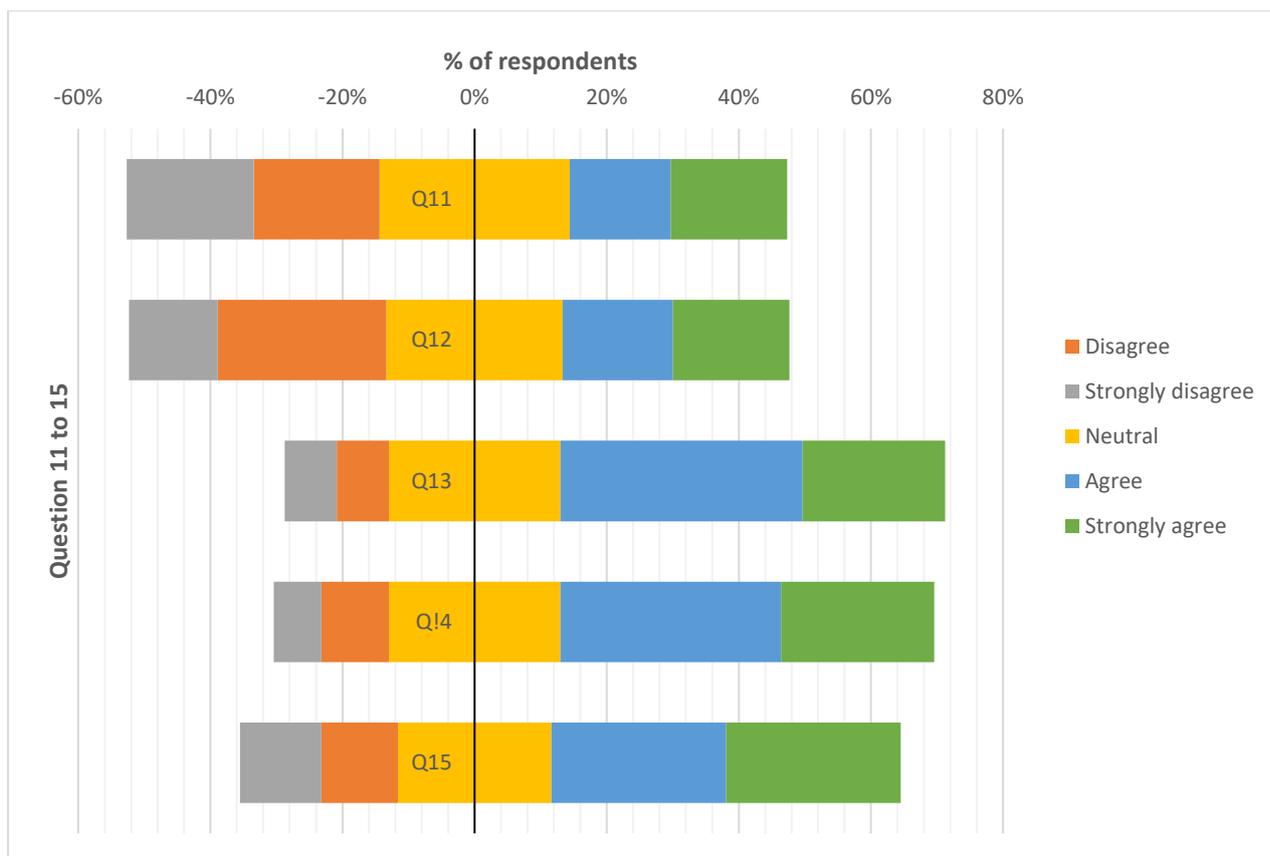


Figure 55: Percentage of Likert scale responses to Questions 11 to 15

## Questions 16 to 20

Table 50: Questions 16 to 20 and percentage of respondents

	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
16	Media only focuses on PwDs on commemorative days such as Disability Day, Louis Braille Day, Autism Day, etc.	6	13	20	29	32
17	Reporters/ editors should be sensitized about disability issues	6	5	24	28	38
18	A person with disability in media can help improve representation of disability issues	10	5	19	33	33
19	Social media has made it easy to take issues to society directly, bypassing classical/ mainstream media modes	6	8	21	31	33
20	Information on social media/groups about disabilities is more authentic and useful compared to mainstream media	11	9	20	30	31

### 16. Media only focuses on PwDs on commemorative days such as Disability Day, Louis Braille Day, Autism Day, etc. | Mean 3.6

Out of total respondents, 19% did not agree that media focuses on persons with disabilities on commemorative days, 61% agreed that the media focus on persons with disabilities is primarily on such days, whereas 20% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.6, which indicated that majority agreed with the statement.

**17. Reporters/ editors should be sensitized about disability issues | Mean 3.8**

Out of total respondents, 11% did not agree that reporters and editors should be sensitized about disability issues, 66% agreed that the reporters and editors should be sensitized, whereas 24% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.8, which indicated that majority agreed with the statement.

**18. A person with disability in media can help improve representation of disability issues | Mean 3.7**

Out of total respondents, 15% did not agree that a person with disability in media can help improve the representation of disability issues, 66% agreed that a person with disability can help improve it, whereas 19% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.7, which indicated that majority agreed with the statement.

**19. Social media has made it easy to take issues to society directly, bypassing classical/ mainstream media modes | Mean 3.7**

Out of total respondents, 14% did not agree that social media has made it easy to take up issue by bypassing the mainstream media, 64% agreed that social media has made it easy, whereas 21% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.7, which indicated that majority agreed with the statement.

**20. Information on social media/groups about disabilities is more authentic and useful compared to mainstream media | Mean 3.6**

Out of total respondents, 20% did not agree that information on social media or groups about disabilities is more authentic and useful compared to mainstream media, 61% agreed that such information is more authentic and useful, whereas 20% were neutral. Mean of the answer was 3.6, which indicated that majority agreed with the statement.

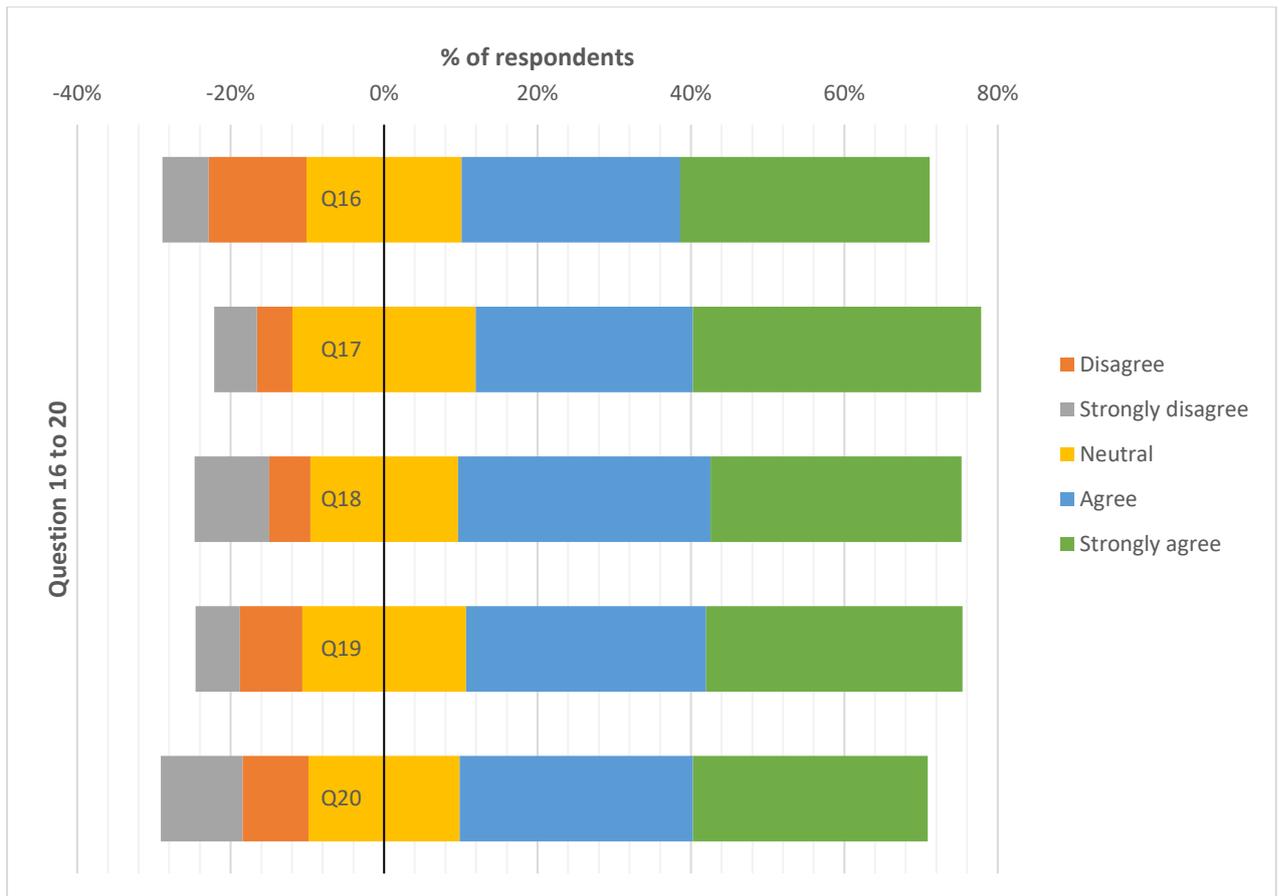


Figure 56: Percentage of Likert scale responses to Questions 16 to 20

### 3.4 Statistical analysis of Likert scale

The reliability of the scale (attitude towards the media representation of people with disabilities) is 0.903. It means the scale seems highly reliable.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.903	20

### Intensity index for the perception scale

Table 51: Intensity index for perception scale: Mean and Standard deviation

Gist of the question	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reporters should be sensitized	431	3.877	1.1356
Social media is easier to take up issues	431	3.784	1.1623
PwD in media should be there	431	3.735	1.2425
Media focus on specific days	431	3.687	1.2188

Info on social media more useful	431	3.617	1.2902
Media uses Divyang	431	3.573	1.3255
Media representation is stereotypical	431	3.561	1.1454
NGO have more information	431	3.552	1.1620
Language used should 2t be used	431	3.432	1.3222
Media representation can have strong impact	431	3.415	1.2964
Often only about visible disabilities	431	3.343	1.2642
Media gives motivational stories	431	3.341	1.2620
Only way in which non-PwDs interact	431	3.311	1.1597
Divyang is appropriate	431	3.230	1.3710
Image is closer to reality	431	3.146	1.2702
Gives information on organizations	431	3.107	1.2362
Media raises issues	431	2.995	1.2922
PWDs share views with media	431	2.930	1.3485
Gives information on schemes	431	2.905	1.2115
Representation is satisfactory	431	2.826	1.4483

The result indicated that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that the reporters or editors should be made aware of the importance of media representation of persons with disabilities. The second concern according to the intensity index was convenience of social media to express their issues directly to the society bypassing conventional media. The majority of the respondents also agreed that the presence of a person with disability in media can improve representation of disability issues in media.

On the other end of the spectrum, majority of the respondents did not agree that the representation of disability is satisfactory in media, followed by the statement that mainstream media gives information about schemes that are beneficial to the persons with disabilities, and persons with disabilities get chance to share their views with media.

#### T-test and ANOVA

T-test was carried out to find out difference of attitude between genders (male and female), and respondents (persons with disabilities and relatives of persons with disabilities). T in the t-test stands for the calculated difference represented in the units of standard error.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out for parameters including time spent on reading newspapers, age of respondents, type of disabilities, type of media preferred for disability news, language of media, and educational qualification.

For the segment, t refers to T value, df refers to degrees of freedom, sig. refers to statistical significance of p-value associated with correlation, and F refers to ratio of two variances in ANOVA.

### T-test for Gender

Table 52: t-test for Gender

Dimension	Profile	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Media representation of people with disability	Male	67.61	15.08	0.373	429	0.710
	Female	67.07	14.78			

No significant difference was found between the male and female respondents in terms of their attitude towards media representation of disability ( $t=0.37$ ,  $p<0.71$ ).

### T-test for PwDs and relatives

Table 53: t-test for PwDs and Relatives

Dimension	Profile	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Media representation of people with disability	Persons with disabilities	65.97	14.5	3.61	429	0.001
	Relatives	72.1	15.47			

A significant difference was found between the attitude of persons with disabilities and their relatives towards media representation of disabilities ( $t=3.61$ ,  $p>0.001$ ). Relatives of the persons with disabilities were found to have a more positive attitude towards the media than the persons with disabilities themselves.

### Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for time spent on reading newspapers

Table 54: ANOVA for Time spent on reading newspapers

Time spent on reading	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig.
Less than 15 minutes	84	61.70 <sup>a</sup>	16.87	3, 427	5.27	0.001
16-30 minutes	161	69.25 <sup>b</sup>	15.75			
31-45 minutes	87	68.30 <sup>b</sup>	14.74			
More than 45 minutes	99	68.29 <sup>b</sup>	10.32			

<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>67.37</b>	<b>14.93</b>			
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According to the result, there was a significant difference between respondents who spent less than 15 minutes in reading and participants who spend 16-30 minutes, 31-45 minutes, and more than 45 minutes in reading in terms of their attitude towards the media representation of persons with disabilities.

The results indicated that respondents who spent more time in reading, which is more than 15 minutes, had significantly more positive outlook towards media representation of disability issues.

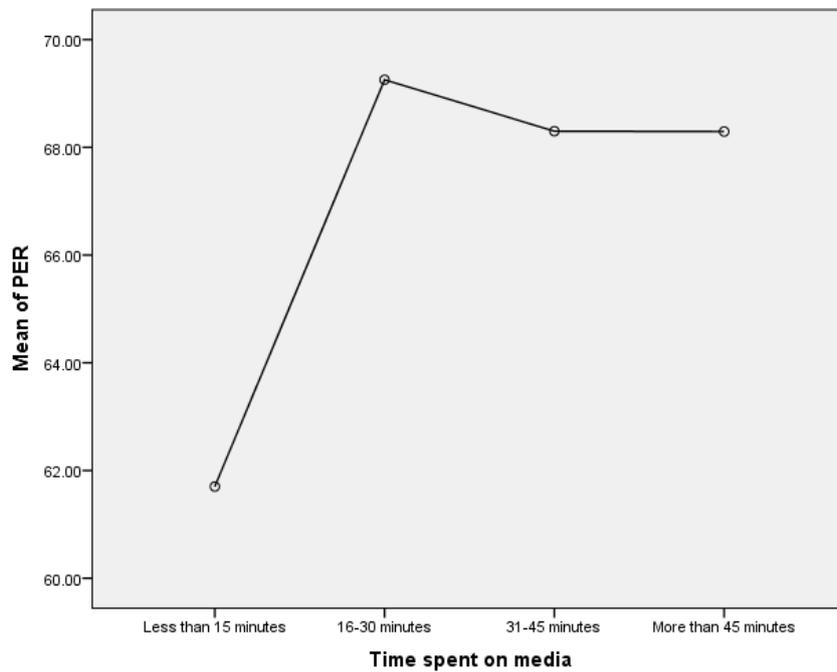


Figure 57: ANOVA for Time spent on media

### ANOVA for Age of respondents

Table 55: ANOVA for Age of respondents

Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig
16-20 years	62	69.0000	12.39381	4, 426	0.58	0.68
21-30 years	119	67.2521	15.33591			
31-40 years	138	67.0870	17.47844			

41-50 years	78	65.8205	12.98525			
51+ years	34	69.5000	10.24621			
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>67.3689</b>	<b>14.93726</b>			

There was no significant difference between the respondents' age ranging from 16-20 years, 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, and 51 years and above in terms of attitude towards media representation of persons with disabilities. According to the findings, all the respondents representing different age groups had similar attitude towards media representation of persons with disabilities.

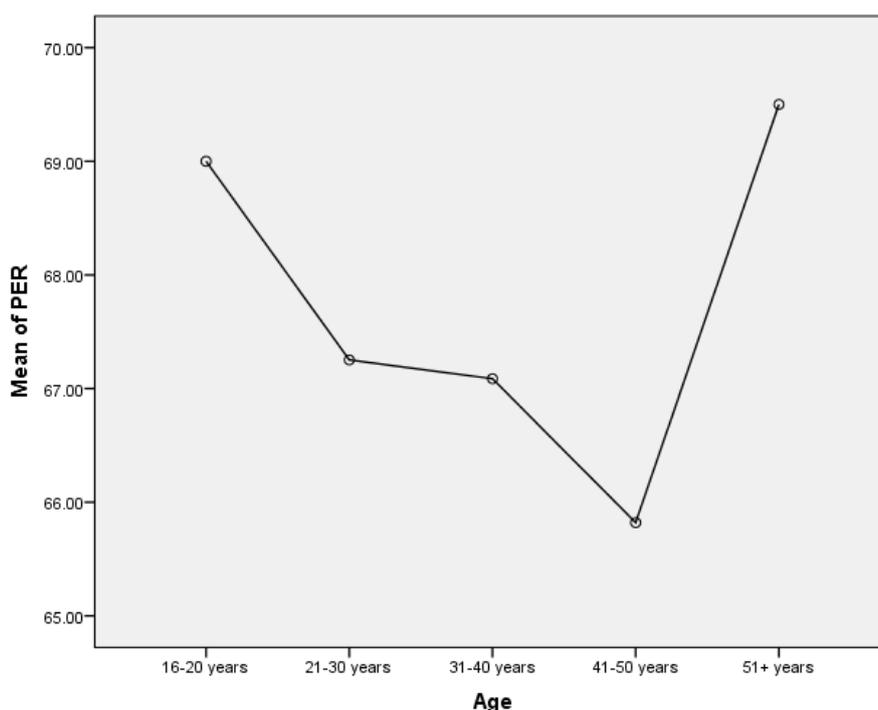


Figure 58: ANOVA for Age of respondents

### ANOVA for Type of disability of respondents

Table 56: ANOVA for Type of disability of respondents

Type of Disability	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig
Blindness/ low vision	96	68.14 <sup>a</sup>	14.28	9, 421	4.75	0.00
Hearing impairment	68	71.53 <sup>c</sup>	19.54			
Locomotor disability/ Muscular dystrophy	83	67.61	12.82			

Intellectual disability/ autism spectrum disorder/ learning disabilities	23	65.57	10.21			
Mental illness	16	75.00 <sup>f</sup>	9.45			
Speech and language disability	41	60.95 <sup>d</sup>	15.00			
Cerebral palsy/ muscular dystrophy	14	54.71 <sup>b</sup>	14.62			
Neurological condition/ multiple sclerosis	13	60.15 <sup>h</sup>	10.46			
Blood-related disorders (thalassemia/ haemophilia/ sickle cell disease)	22	76.27 <sup>g</sup>	14.78			
Other / Multiple disabilities	55	65.20	11.66			
Total	431	67.37	14.94			

A significant difference was found between the respondents with blindness and low vision, and those with cerebral palsy and muscular disability in terms of perception of media representation of disability issues. The respondents with blindness and low vision were found to have relatively more negative attitude towards the media representation compared to those who had cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy.

A significant difference was also found between those who had hearing impairment and cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy. The respondents with hearing impairment had relatively more positive attitude towards media representation compared to those with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy. The findings also showed significant differences between respondents with hearing impairment and speech and language disabilities. Those with hearing impairment had a more positive attitude compared to those with speech and language disabilities.

There was no significant difference between the respondents with locomotor disabilities and those with other disabilities such as blindness, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, etc. in terms of perception of media representation.

There was no significant difference between the respondents with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder or learning disabilities, and respondents with other disabilities in terms of perception of media representation.

A significant difference was found between the respondents (their relatives) with mental illness, and respondents with speech and language disabilities and respondents with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy. The respondents (their relatives) with mental illness had relatively more positive attitude towards media representation compared to other disabilities mentioned above.

A significant difference was also found between the respondents with speech and language disabilities and those with blood-related disorders such as thalassemia, hemophilia, and sickle cell diseases – those with blood-related disorders were found to have relatively more positive attitude towards media representation of persons with disabilities than the other disabilities mentioned above.

A significant difference was found between respondents with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy and those with blood-related disorders – those with blood-related disorders were found to have relatively positive attitude towards media representation compared to those with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy.

Those with blood-related disorders were also found to have relatively more positive attitude towards media representation compared to those with neurological disorders or multiple sclerosis.

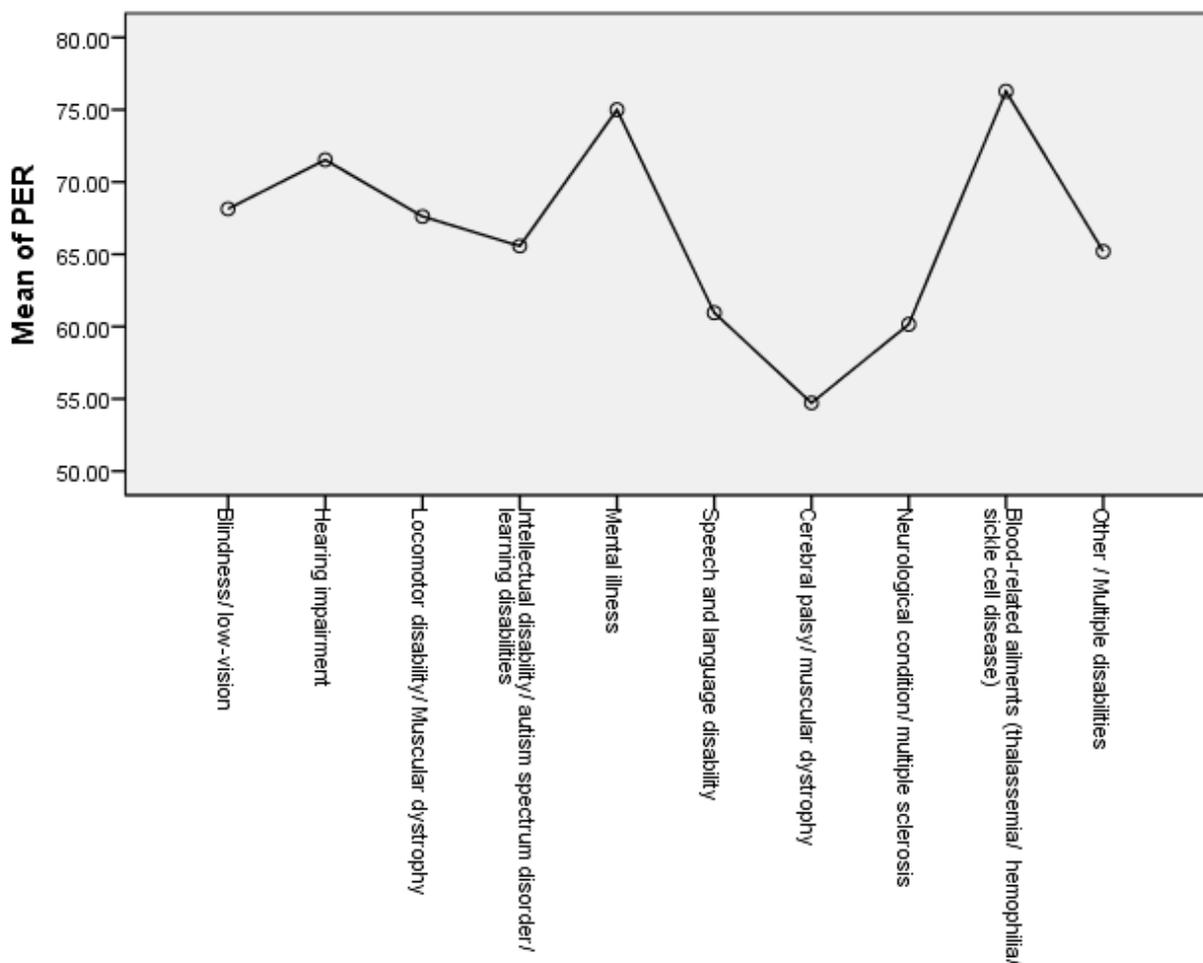


Figure 59: ANOVA for Type of disability

#### ANOVA for Type of media

Table 57: ANOVA for Type of media preferred for disability-related news

Media	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig
Newspaper	169	66.53	16.29	5, 425	1.76	0.11
Television	7	71.71	1.89			
News applications on mobile phone	135	67.04	13.34			
Websites	19	61.32	14.80			
Radio	99	69.82	14.60			
Other (newsletters/ bulletins, etc.)	2	81.50	26.16			
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>67.37</b>	<b>14.94</b>			

No significant difference was found between the respondents who chose Newspapers, Television, Application on Mobile phone, or Websites as their preferred media to get disability-related news in terms of attitude towards media representation of persons with disabilities. The result indicated that they all had similar attitude towards the issue.

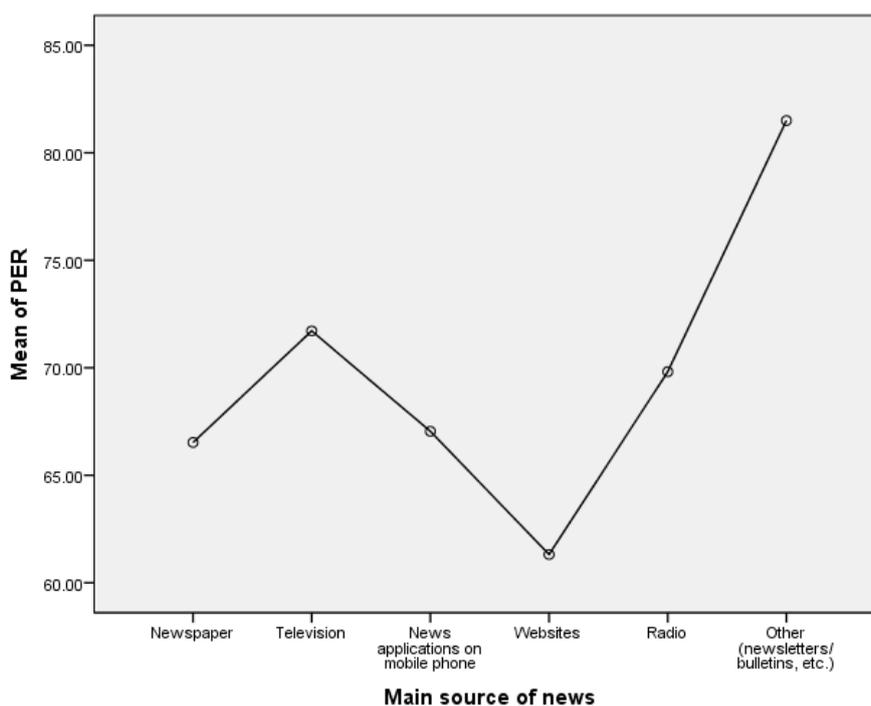


Figure 60: ANOVA for Type of media preferred for disability-related news

## ANOVA for Language of media

Table 58: ANOVA for Language of media

Language of Media	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig
Gujarati	160	64.41	14.86 <sup>a</sup>	6, 424	3.29	0.004
English	39	68.49	15.39			
Hindi	12	69.75	20.08			
Gujarati & English	20	76.55	11.06			
Gujarati & Hindi	106	68.33	12.40			
All	18	74.72	12.25			
Other	76	67.14	17.18			
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>67.37</b>	<b>14.94</b>			

A significant difference was found between the respondents who preferred Gujarati as language of media consumption and those who referred to both Gujarati and English in terms of their attitude towards media representation. Respondents who referred to only Gujarati media exhibited relatively negative attitude towards the subject compared to those who referred to both Gujarati and English newspapers. There was no significant difference between the respondents who preferred other media languages such as English, Hindi, Gujarati and Hindi in terms of their attitude towards media representation.

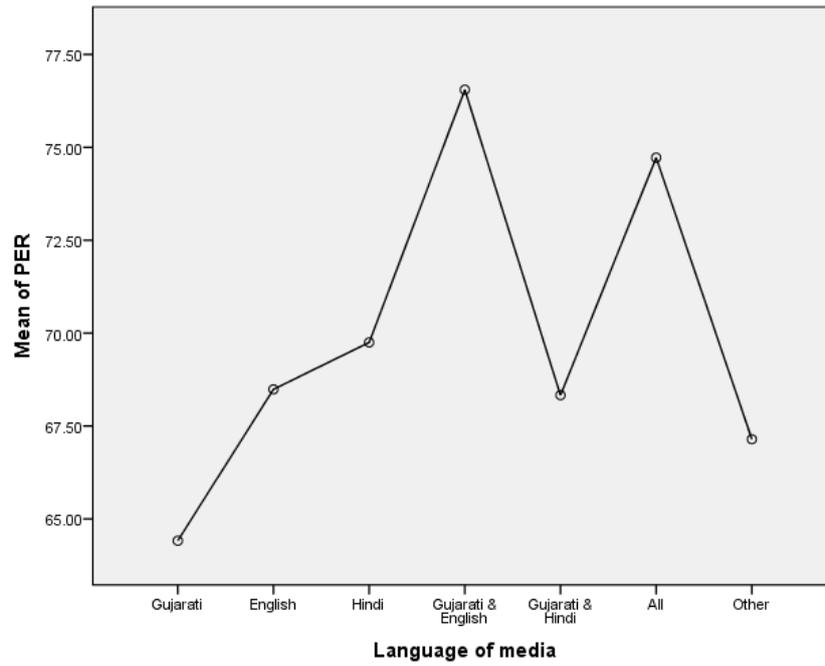


Figure 61: ANOVA for Language of media

### ANOVA for Educational qualification

Table 59: ANOVA for Educational qualification

Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig
Up to class 10	93	67.4	15.19	4, 426	2.53	0.067
Up to class 12 / Diploma	148	65.6	15.50			
Up to graduation	125	66.9	14.06			
Up to post-graduation	49	71.5	14.68			
More than post-graduation	16	75.0	12.37			
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>14.94</b>			

There was no significant difference between the respondents ranging from Class 10, Class 12, Graduation, Post-Graduation, and More than post-graduation as their highest educational qualification. According to the findings, all the respondents representing different qualifications exhibited similar attitude towards media representation of persons with

disabilities.

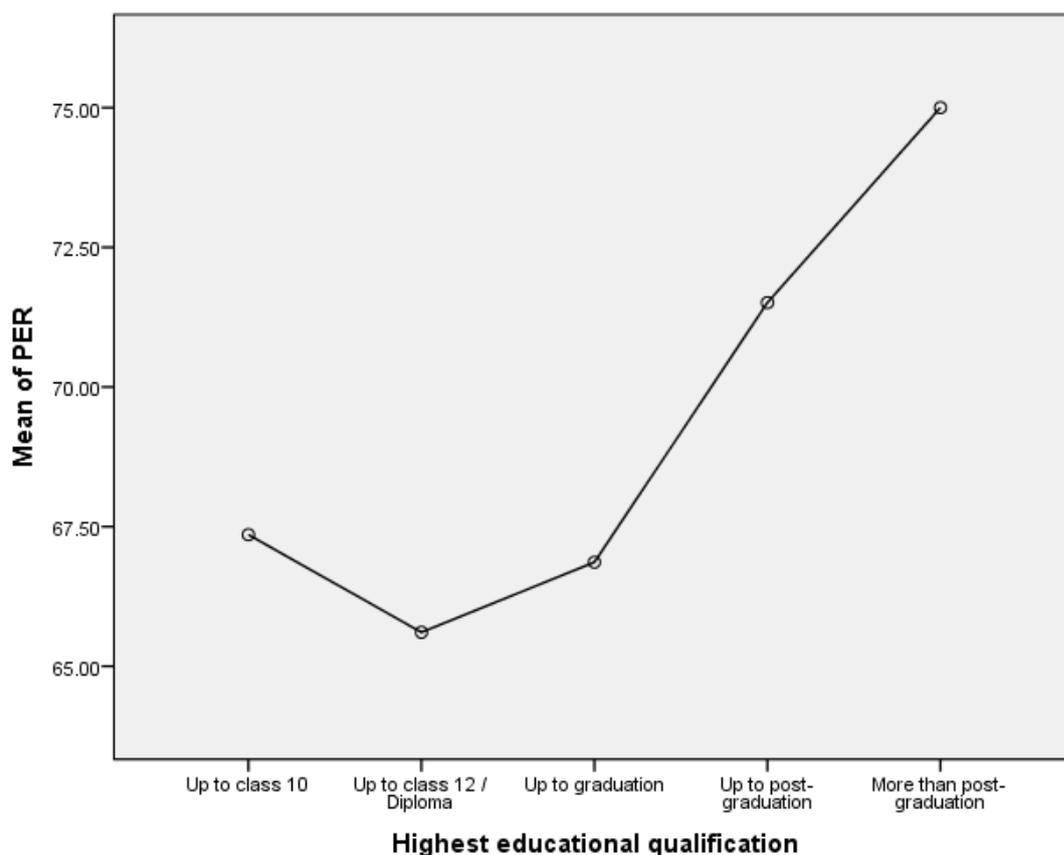


Figure 62: ANOVA for Educational qualification

### Attitude towards Portrayal of persons with disabilities in media

Table 60: Attitude towards Portrayal of persons with disabilities in media

Attitude	Frequency	%
Positive	155	36.0
Negative	145	33.6
Neutral	131	30.4
Total	431	100.0

The overall results indicated that out of total respondents, 36% indicated positive attitude towards representation of disability-related issues in mainstream media, 34% indicated negative attitude towards the representation, whereas the rest 30% were neutral towards the

representation. Thus, about two-thirds of the respondents were either positive or neutral towards the representation.

## Conclusion

The statistical analysis identified the most significant issues according to the respondents – reporters or editors should be made aware of the disability-related issues, their ease with social media over conventional media to voice their concerns and issues with the society, and need for persons with disabilities in media for improving the representation of disability-related issues.

The t-test results indicated that there was no major gender angle to the perception – both male and female respondents showed similar attitude towards the representation. However, there was a significant difference between persons with disabilities and relatives of persons with disabilities – the relatives showed relatively positive outlook towards the representation compared to the persons with disabilities.

The ANOVA test results indicated that there was a direct relationship with the time spent on reading newspapers and attitude towards media representation – those who spent more time were found to have relatively positive attitude towards the topic compared to those who were reading the newspapers for less than 15 minutes. A significant difference was found between those who only read Gujarati newspapers and those who read Gujarati and English newspapers – those who read multiple newspapers were found to have relatively more positive attitude towards media representation.

No significant difference was found between the respondents of different age groups in terms of their attitude towards media representation of disability. No significant difference was found for the preferred media for disability-related news for the respondents and their attitude towards media representation. Likewise, there was no significant difference found between the respondents with different educational qualifications.

A statistically significant difference was found between the participants with different disabilities. Those with blindness and low vision were found to have relatively negative attitude towards media compared to those with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy or those with hearing impairment. Those with blood-related disorders were also found to have relatively positive attitude towards media representation compared to other conditions.

## 4. In-depth Interviews

The interviews were carried out in semi-structured fashion to elicit answers on representation of persons with disabilities (PwDs) and overall disability sector in mainstream media. The respondents included senior journalists, representatives of NGOs working in disability sector, educators, activists, scholars, and achievers. The cross-section of experts was chosen for diverse views on the theme of the present study and to reflect on the findings of the document analysis, questionnaire and perception scale.

Thus, the interviews took place in 2022 after completion of data collection and primary data analysis for the two methods. Informed consent was taken from all the participants with outline of the research, objectives, and broad questions. For the purpose of safeguarding privacy, the respondents are identified in the analysis through codes assigned to them.

### Profile of Interviewees

A total of 16 interviews were conducted. Out of total, 10 were females and 6 were males. The youngest interviewee was 28 years old, and the oldest interviewee was 64 years old. Out of total, nine or 56% of the interviewees had got featured in the news articles that had appeared in the newspapers which were analysed as part of the present study.

### Educational qualification

*Table 61: Educational qualification of interviewees*

Educational qualification	No. of interviewees	% of interviewees
PhD	3	19%
Post-graduation	7	44%
Graduation	6	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

Out of total interviewees, 10 or more than 62% were having educational qualification of post-graduation or more. One of the interviewees had the PhD degree in disability studies, whereas another two had degrees in rehabilitation and education of children with disabilities. Three of the four journalists held masters' degrees, whereas three of the four NGO representatives held masters' degrees.

## Professional experience

*Table 62: Professional experience of interviewees*

Experience in years	No. of interviewees	% of interviewees
40+ years	1	6%
30-40 years	2	13%
20-30 years	6	37%
10-20 years	7	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

Out of total interviewees, 9 or more than 55% were having professional experience of more than 20 years. One of the interviewees was associated with an NGO working in the field of disability for more than 40 years, whereas two others were associated with two other NGOs for over 30 years. The interviewees also included two young professionals including a sportsperson with more than 10 years of experience. Average experience for the interviewees was more than 20 years.

Along with the reasons cited in section 3.3.3 in Chapter 3, the professional and educational qualifications of the interviewees make them competent for answering questions related to disability and media in context of this study based on their vast personal and professional experiences.

### **Method of interviews**

The interviews were carried out at mutually agreed locations where the subject was discussed along with primary findings of the two other methods. After answering queries raised by the interviewees, a permission was sought to record audio of the conversation. An average interview lasted for about 40-50 minutes with over 10 primary and secondary (that emerged from the primary) questions. Explanation was sought on points related to data or opinions when necessary.

The interviews were transcribed with help of online software. As some of the interviews were carried out in Gujarati or Hindi, they were translated into English for uniformity of analysis. The transcripts – both original and translated – were shared with the interviewees to seek their permission to use it for further analysis. The transcripts of 16 interviews became basis of identifying codes.

## 4.1 Thematic Analysis

A total of 306 codes were identified from the text of the interviews. Descriptive codes were employed for the purpose of the present study. The codes were then further analysed to arrive at cohesive themes and categories. It was inductive coding with down to up approach with identification of all possible codes from the text and then categories emerging from the codes. In all, four overarching themes – Role of Media; Role of NGOs and PwDs; Accessible India, RPwD Act and Disability Terminology; and Use of Social Media – were devised with 12 categories. The description of themes and categories is described below.

The codes that did not fit in any of the four themes have been discussed in a separate section.

Research Objective - To identify key issues related to representation of disability sector and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in mainstream media

*Table 63: Themes and Categories derived from Analysis of Codes*

<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Theme 4</b>
Role of Media	Role of NGOs	Accessible India, RPwD Act, and Disability terminology	Use of Social Media
Category 1	Category 1	Category 1	Category 1
Advocacy, Awareness and Dispelling myths	Role of NGOs	Accessible India	Positives: Accessible, Flexible, Ease of use
<u>Codes for Category 1</u> Advocating opportunities, Highlighting achievements, Creating/ spreading awareness, Change perceptions, Take cause forward, Dispelling myths/ misconceptions	<u>Codes for Category 1</u> NGO agenda, Need for strategy, Quality improvement, Focus on charity/ donations, Fragmented sector, Representation for PwDs	<u>Codes for Category 1</u> Poor implementation, Limited scope, Physical accessibility, Need for multipronged approach, Impact on infrastructure, Well-meaning, Failure, Rise in awareness	<u>Codes for Category 1</u> Bypassing conventional media, Control over content, Ease of use, Direct reach, Immediacy, Wider audience, Flexible applications, Array of platforms, Amplification of message
Category 2	Category 2	Category 2	Category 2
Positives: Improved coverage, depiction	Media relations	The RPwD Act	Negatives: No fact-check, Opinionated

<u>Codes for Category 2</u> Positive story impact, Diversity, Support and encouragement, Success stories, Wider reach	<u>Codes for Category 2</u> Issues with representation, Need for talking points, Stereotypes, Expectations, Limited issues, Negative approach	<u>Codes for Category 2</u> Improved media focus, Awareness, Need for campaign, Huge scope, Poor implementation, Sensitivity, Collaborative	<u>Codes for Category 2</u> No fact-check, No filter, No writers, Limited point of view, One-sided, Biased, Shorter shelf-life
Category 3		Category 3	
Negatives: Narrow focus, Stereotypes		Divyang and Disability terminology	
<u>Codes for Category 3</u> Media stereotypes, Lack of technical knowledge, Limited focus, Day specific, Non-representative		<u>Codes for Category 3</u> Good word, All- encompassing, Respect, Awareness, Change in approach, Fast acceptance, PM impact	
Category 4		Category 4	
Suggestions		Notions of Disability	
<u>Codes for Category 4</u> Opportunities to engage, Special segment for PwDs, Training journalists, PwD in media		<u>Codes for Category 4</u> Inspiration, Role model, Curse, Self- perception, Small segment, Stigma, Special	

To protect privacy of the respondents, codes were assigned to each of the interviewees. In the following analysis, these labels are used to attribute thoughts or direct quotes (in italics).

*Table 64: Labels for interviewees*

Category	Labels
Journalists	J 1 to 4
NGO representatives	N 1 to 4
Experts	E 1 to 4
Achievers	A 1 to 4

#### 4.1.1 Role of Media: Multifaceted and necessary element with positives and negatives

Out of 306 codes that emerged from the text, 150 or nearly half of them were related to the role of media in context of disability discourse. The theme explores the complex relationship media shares with the disability sector and varied roles it plays right from creating awareness about disabilities and highlighting success stories on one end of the spectrum to strengthening stereotypes on the other. Based on codes' classification, four major categories emerged as follows –

##### **Advocacy, Awareness and Dispelling myths**

Majority of the interviewees agreed that one of the primary roles for the media in context of disability sector is to create awareness. Some of the words used to describe the functioning of the media include 'bridge between society and disability,' 'voice for this (disability) group,' and 'a spokesperson for those who are marginalized.' Some other roles included highlighting issues related to the sector (advocacy) and reducing stigma attached to the sector by portrayal closer to reality (dispelling myths).

As interviewee A1 put it, "*Media works as a bridge between the society and disability. My problems or my achievements remain confined to me if I do not put it in the media. And media is the only thing that can be a bridge with the society (for the persons with disabilities).*"

Another interviewee E4 said, "*The media basically plays role of a spokesperson for those who are marginalized and downtrodden, or media can give them a big impetus.*"

The role of amplification of message was also highlighted by interviewees. "*This group does not have a voice and you (media) are the voice for this group. If you speak one little sentence, it will reach thousands of people in one stroke,*" said interviewee N1.

The journalists believed that the primary role for media is to highlight issues related to the sector. J3 said, "*The role of media is to highlight what unequal opportunities are given to the disabled, and what they are achieving. If we do these two, our job would be done.*" Another journalist J4 said that the stories by media have 'a heart,' and thus when it gets published, '*it reaches directly to the heart of the readers with its purity.*'

The NGO representatives emphasized on the media's role in context of dispelling myths and portraying 'positive image of disability.' The interviewee N2 said, "*The role of media is very*

*vital, particularly for the people with disabilities because there are so many myths, so many misconceptions about disability and the media will be able to break those myths.”*

Interviewee A2 said that even when a rule or regulation is in place, media can hammer in the message. *“Media is a very powerful platform for creating awareness. It can make citizens responsible about rules and laws and can also create accessibility. If the articles regularly talk about it, people will keep it in mind and would act upon it when they have to carry out a project. If I do not know about it, how am I going to implement it? The architects/ builders do not know about it, so how many projects actually have accessibility features?”* said A2.

Interviewee N4 said that the media can bring in awareness among population as even today several of the superstition about disability are prevalent. Interviewee A2 also mentioned that one of the major roles for media is ‘to change the perception (of the society) of the persons with disabilities.’

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was changing perception about disability and right framing of disability. As put forth by N1, the media’s job is ‘to remove wrong notions, dispel myths.’

The interviewees also talked about gradual change in media coverage. For instance, interviewee N1 said, *‘In the past 40 years I have been associated with the disability sector, I do see a change in people’s attitude towards disability including media... (T)he hardcore image of the recipient of charity is changing. We still see the coverage of the distribution programmes and praising the person who is giving, but it is not demeaning the persons with disabilities (who are at the receiving end).’*

Interviewee E4 said that media can voice the concerns of the persons with disabilities, tell the world what they (persons with disabilities) are looking for, and promote sensitive, positive image through right information. Thus, in the interviewee’s words, ‘it’s one of the most powerful tools for such group of people.’

Highlighting dissemination of information role of media, the interviewees said that the media coverage puts work of NGOs, individuals and smaller groups working for disability under spotlight. Once such details are out in public domain, it can inspire or motivate larger communities that involve persons with disabilities. Interviewee A4, a Paralympian, said that media has evolved over years, and has shown that ‘the persons with disabilities can also achieve

in life, can live on their own.’ The interviewee credited media for the buzz around the last two Paralympics where India fared well.

Interviewee A2, who was featured multiple times in media for her condition and her marriage to a ‘normal’ person, said, *“After my stories started appearing, I came in contact with many persons with similar conditions. There are so many experiences to share – due to my story of marrying an able-bodied person, we now have about 4-5 couples where one partner has disability. In their cases, their parents were not ready to accept that it was possible. Thus, they showed my stories or even got them talk to me. If we can do it, why can’t they? So, such stories bring in lot of positive changes.”*

Similarly, for interviewee A1, the right framing of his achievement in a car rally using modified car for the disability brought the issue to notice of a much larger audience. *“When I got the third rank in the 1994 car rally, I got lots of calls on the media coverage. Some parents would come to me and request if I can modify their vehicles – they would reason that if not by some interventions like that, the PwDs would end up in a corner of the house. Till that time, I had never prepared myself to take up work for mobility of the PwDs. If not for media (coverage), I might have reached to 5 or 25 persons in Ahmedabad. But the coverage took me across India,”* said the interviewee.

Media is also acknowledged for making the details about disability accessible. The interviewees highlighted ‘epoch-making changes’ such as Accessible India and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 covered by media. *“The law itself is a dry, very boring subject, but a lot of media persons made it interesting by focusing on potential of people with disabilities and how the law would enable them to achieve their potential,”* said interviewee N1.

Another interviewee said that while fundraising by good image is often the target for the media interaction for some Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), the media platform helps the cause to reach a larger audience to talk about issues. Such discourse in mainstream media can help change mindset of the youths, said the interviewee.

Interviewee E1 said that media is reflection of how society looks at a specific issue. Thus, it is media’s responsibility to bring the right issues such as disability in context of human rights and equal opportunities to public notice.

When the achievements of a person with disability (PwD) are highlighted, it often serves as a positive role model for the disability community and improves the perception of PwDs for other stakeholders in the society, they added. For example, journalist J2 said, *“It is important when it comes to the disability coverage – we have developed pre-conceived notions about the persons with disabilities. We tend to believe that if a person does not have hands, they lead a specific life. If they do not have eyes, these are their issues, so on and so forth... We should highlight their abilities, rather than disabilities.”*

In context of advocacy and activism, several of the interviewees gave examples where issues raised by media got immediate action from the authorities.

One such issue was of mobility where a road was not available for the women with disabilities living in a hostel and they had to face all sorts of problems from uneven roads during monsoon to advances of anti-social elements. A story in a prominent Gujarati newspaper evoked emotions from the judiciary as a Gujarat High Court judge took suo motu cognizance of the matter and got the women a motorable road. Another issue was of concession for the persons with disabilities in Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) which was resolved after media highlighted the plight of the large number of PwDs as public transport users.

One of the interviewees mentioned in context of some recent web series tackling issues such as mental health that when media is often the only way in which the larger society interacts with media, media depiction of disability gets much more important.

### **Positives: Improved coverage, depiction**

Several of the interviewees were positive about rise in media coverage and diversity related to disability issues. They also mentioned several of the success stories and impact of media coverage. Some of the themes included impact of stories carried out in right context, support, and encouragement for the PwDs, and wider reach through mainstream media.

To highlight the change in coverage, interviewee A1 said, *“Instead of 2-3 types of stories such as pity, charity, or achievement, now there are topics such as accessibility, their issues, and problems. Many topics have got added. We also see articles on assistive technology and information important for PwDs.”*

Interviewee N2 attributed the rise in coverage to rise in awareness about disability overall in the community which includes media. Likewise, interviewee N3 said that there has been a definite rise in coverage that focuses on the skills and capabilities of persons with disabilities.

N3 added, “*Earlier we were happy with two articles a year, but now we are getting about 5-7 articles. The awareness in the government and society at large also impacts the coverage – the stories that we see are mostly positive in nature. Success stories, life-changing stories, empowerment stories...*”

Interviewees pointed out that that earlier focus of media coverage was on charity, which over the past few years has shifted to rights-based approach. “*I feel reporting and story and feature on such people is better than before. Certain words and terminology have changed, even if people are not aware of it all the time,*” said E2.

Three of the interviewees brought up the issue of Paralympics coverage of both 2016 and 2021. A journalist interviewee said that majority of Indians did not know about Paralympic sports, leave alone the Paralympians from India. But the sustained and positive coverage of the issue not only put the issue under limelight, but also motivated a new generation of sportspersons with disabilities to take up sports seriously and ensured government support.

“*I am a Paralympian today, but I have seen the times where people were not even aware that there is a para-Table Tennis. So, media talked about it to the larger audiences,*” said A4.

While two journalist interviewees said that the rise in coverage is due to special segments that provide news for the persons with disabilities in sign language and focus on positive stories that often featured ‘success-against-all-odds’ examples from disability community, one of the journalist interviewees said that the coverage has taken place even on days which were not specifically associated with disabilities.

“*We have covered them (PwDs) on Valentine’s Day, Father’s Day, Mother’s Day... A story on Valentine’s Day talked about how an able-bodied person fell in love with a paraplegic woman and how he is living a fulfilling life with her. Another was a story of mothers who cook, sell their food, and become each other’s strength. I also remember a story of a father who had gone to great lengths for his visually challenged boy because his mother had deserted him,*” said J3. “*I still remember very vividly an autistic child’s mother... she felt so ecstatic because her son had completed graduation. Now for someone it was just a degree, but for the parents, it showed how their new techniques and teaching bore fruit... And when that success is celebrated, I do not see any inferiority in that.*”

Four of the interviewees said that direct intervention of media in an issue helped resolve it. While N1 talked about how the scholarships for the students with disabilities was restored after

media coverage, E4 talked about construction of a road for the women with disabilities which was pending for a long time. J2 talked about stopping harassment of a couple with visual impairment, whereas N3 talked about a woman with visual impairment getting business and recognition.

J4 said that story of a board topper in Maharashtra with speech and hearing impairment caused several other parents of children with similar conditions to approach the topper's parents and understand how they got the success even when the girl was not going into a special school but a 'normal' one.

Other positive roles discussed by the interviewees include motivator for the persons with disabilities with right portrayal (A2), fact-checking and putting facts in perspective (A1 and A2), going beyond success stories or feel-good stories to address right issues (N1), encouraging other members of the society to participate in disability issues (N1), taking initiatives in finding issues and addressing them (E4), and highlighting judgements, new rules and regulations about disability (E4).

#### **Negatives: Narrow focus, Stereotypes**

The interviewees highlighted several issues with media portrayal and media approach towards disability. Some of the criticisms included stereotypes promoted by the coverage, selective or non-representative coverage, superlatives, day-specific coverage, and lack of technical knowledge.

Interviewee N1 said that stereotypical images of disability portrayed in media are about them at the receiving end of the charity, involved in physical labour/ vocation or activities such as singing if a person has visual impairment. *"They (PwDs) are not seen as respondents or people who can do charity themselves or who can give to society. The giver part of the disability is subsumed by the recipient part... We have the image of a blind person associated with physical labour or singing,"* said N1.

The interviewees pointed at historic depictions ranging from Shakuni and Manthara in Indian context to literary characters such as the hunchback of Notre Dame in the western context to show PwDs in poor light. Interviewee N4 said that the stereotype is often *bechara* (helpless) in need of help. N4 said that media can create awareness and help PwDs get inclusion and equality. Interviewee E2 said that the construction of disability in other popular media such as cinema has also been stereotypical.

Two interviewees in Achievers category said that they have a regular media interaction, and they have found the themes and questions to be the same, as media had pre-conceived notions of what they needed, and ‘story angle.’ A2 said, *“Same things, same kind of questions (from media). That is what I want to say – No doubt there were so many struggles, ups and downs in my life, and I feel that is a great achievement for me and my family. It is a passion for me. But apart from all that, please highlight something else, too. Feature the story as a woman’s story, a simple woman’s story and not with a disability.”*

A2 said that she worked in an area like Jammu and Kashmir with Indian Army to create awareness about identification and remedy for disability issues. While there are fewer women to achieve the feat, she got featured as a woman with disabilities.

*“There has not been a major change – they (journalists) are asking the same questions to me which they were asking me earlier. There is no novelty. Media is also perhaps afraid that if we write something new, something out of the box, perhaps the readers might not accept it,”* said A3.

Another issue that came up was day-specific coverage. Journalist J1 agreed that the media focus is ‘day-specific, event-specific.’ *“We ran success stories, and it is done. I would not say that it is wrong – as journalists, we need talking points. If there is no event, no issue, how would we be able to cover the issue? But it is also true that over the time, it has got stereotyped. It needs change,”* said J1.

Interviewee E2 said that some of the typical days on which one can see disability-related coverage include disability Day (International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3) and events such as Paralympics. A2 said that one can see disability-related stories on December 3, and that also primarily about motivational cases. Issues related to disability are seldom highlighted, said A2. Interviewee N3 said that media approaches the NGO for coverage on days such as Disability Day, Braille Day, or Sign Language Day. *“Not all disabilities get attention on such days, too. Visible disabilities get it more,”* said N3.

N4 added that in past few years, occasions such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday, Raksha Bandhan, Independence Day, etc. also see media coverage.

Many of the interviewees criticized media’s approach of focusing on ‘inspirational’ or ‘positive’ stories. *“There would be coverage when a person with disability achieves something – which just shows one side of the story. Show our failures, our issues, too... It is limited, and*

*that also happens when we scream at the top of our voices to be heard. I am sorry to say it but treat us as human beings,”* said A2.

N2 added that there are hardly any ‘regular or normal persons with disabilities’ visible in media coverage. *“You cannot imagine the fun they have in our DJ nights. People were surprised that do they also want to dance? It is like the question we used to face several years ago, why do they want to marry? I want to ask in return, is he an asexual person? These are kind of issues that do not get highlighted,”* said N2.

Interviewee N1 said that issues such as lack of employment opportunities or social lives of PwDs is hardly covered. *“Most of the times we concentrate on the superlatives, the person with disability as a superhuman... We highlight a disabled person climbing the Mount Everest, but that’s superheroism. It is not there in 99.9% of our stories – they are like you and me,”* said N1.

Lack of awareness about finer details of disability sector were also discussed by the interviewees in context of media portrayal. *“I believe media is very sympathetic, but not very aware – very knowledgeable in technical aspects of disability. The disability field itself is very diverse and has its own finesse. Sometimes media does not differentiate between disabilities, and mistake one for the other. For example, mental illness and intellectual disability. People get confused and it gives a totally wrong picture about the illness,”* said N1.

Journalist interviewees said that one way to bridge the gap is creating awareness through workshops or increased interaction. *“There is a limited knowledge currently about disability issues. If we will improve it, we would be able to create interest. We can arrange for discussion with experts on the issue – not for the sake of coverage. We will have to work towards creating a conducive environment, creating ecosystem where we can share thoughts freely or develop new ideas,”* said J1. J2 said that such support should come from NGOs as it is difficult for media to know everything about all the sectors they cover. *“As a media person, I am not very proud of it, but I did not know that a lot many disabilities – which do not look like disabilities but medical conditions – are now included in the new act (RPwD Act),”* said J3.

The interviewees also highlighted more focus on corporeal or visible disabilities such as blindness and locomotor disabilities compared to other classes such as speech and hearing impairment, learning disabilities or blood-related disorders.

*“Even amongst the seven disabling types earlier, intellectual and mental disabilities were the most discriminated, vulnerable, and affected. Just because they are having limitation in their cognition and the mental abilities, they are not able to advocate for them,”* said E1. *“From my personal experience, I can say that the media attention coverage visual or hearing impairment persons gets, it is not portrayed from this category of disability (mental/intellectual).”*

Other issues highlighted by the interviewees included selected focus – they suggested that issues such as dearth of experts in disability field are not discussed for the sake of human-interest stories.

Likewise, media covers the issues once the person achieves the success, and not at the time when the person might need media attention. Interviewee E4 said that when Bhavina Patel got silver medal in Tokyo Paralympics 2020, every media came and covered her achievement. *“But when Bhavina struggles, seeks help from sponsors to go and play qualifying games, media would not cover it. Because for media, it is not a newsworthy story,”* said E4.

### **Suggestions**

The suggestions to improve media-disability sector engagement came from all quarters. While the journalist interviewees underlined the meaning of news and what criteria could be applied to the stories emerging from disability sector along with creating opportunities by those involved with the disability sector to engage, those in the sector suggested remedies such as training journalists, employing persons with disabilities in media, and starting a special segment for the persons with disabilities to improve quality and quantity of coverage.

Explaining why certain type of stories are more recurring when it comes to disability sector, journalist interviewee J3 said, *“What makes news in the first place? There has to be a certain element... What makes news is, there has to be a struggle, a story. If everything is okay, everything is fine and if you are achieving something, it is your personal achievement. People would not be really interested in it – They would be interested if you have worked against some odds, if it is not supposed to happen or perceived to be not supposed to happen...”*

Likewise, J1 said that the stakeholders should present opportunities to media for interaction. As there are mostly no specific persons assigned to cover the area – identified as a ‘beat’ in journalistic parlance – someone must feed the developments regularly and point to issues pertaining to the sector.

J4 highlighted that if there are no major achievements or issues, media generally does not cover it. E4 said, *“Media goes purely by the news value, but not news impact.”*

Several of the interviewees said that a special segment for PwDs can help improving frequency of disability coverage. Interviewee J4 said that on the lines of special magazines for education, crime, food, etc., there should be a publication for the PwDs and disability. *“It should have voice to address issues, it should have achievements highlighted and activities covered. Such a magazine is required as a medium (for the community),”* said J4.

Interviewee A3 said that such a publication can show ‘actual condition, actual photos, and actual information (about disability).’ *“The (RPwD) act of 2016 has included 21 disabilities. When we see the launch of laws related to disability or campaigns such as Accessible India, such supplement should be introduced by the newspapers. It is media’s duty,”* said A3. A3 said that such a move would be required as media’s portrayal has remained stereotypical and confined to a few days.

Three of the interviewees said that presence of a person with disability in the newsroom can make a difference. *“If you look at the recruitment, persons with special needs are not placed in media companies. It is famously said that those who get hurt feel the pain. Those who have raised the issues (in media) are also affected by it in some way or the other. Be it close or distant relationship, someone in their neighbourhood or other issues, they have remained the reason why the issues get covered,”* said E1.

Interviewees from both journalism and NGO backgrounds said that training to media can be one way to improve coverage. J1 said that journalistic organizations can join hands with NGOs for the same and impart training about technical issues related to disability.

Some other suggestions were related to covering not-so-prominent disabilities (N3) for identification by larger audience, using direct quotes of the persons with disabilities and their family members (E1, E2), putting across issues sensitively and in right perspective (E3) instead of sensational coverage, and diversifying media coverage on disability to include persons from small villages and tribal areas (E4).

#### 4.1.2 Role of NGOs and Media Relations

The theme emerged from the codes related to suggestions from the interviewees on what NGOs are expected to do and how media support on a theme such as disability can be ensured. Interviewees said that NGOs play a very crucial role as representatives of the persons with

disabilities and often the first contact point for the society. Media relations sub-theme encompasses various contours of engagement and how it could be improved.

### **Role of NGOs**

Some of the major themes that emerged in this sub-category included agenda of NGOs, need for strategy, quality improvement, focus on charity or donations, fragmentation of NGOs working in disability sector, and their role in representation for PwDs.

One of the themes was core work of NGOs working in disability sector. Interviewee J1 said that the primary role is 'providing facilities' in terms of creating support system for PwDs. J1 identified reservation for the PwDs as the biggest achievement by NGOs. J3 attributed the awareness around disability sector to the work of NGOs.

E1 said that NGOs work and should work for 'empowerment, advocacy and bridging gap.' Likewise, A2 said that the expectation from the NGOs is 'to work responsibly, highlight issues and problems of the people, of the society.'

Interviewee N3 said, *"Our role is to create awareness, provide right information with context. We remain in touch, and we expand our reach. We organize events so that we can do it, we can remove barriers and can reach out to all. If there is a barrier in terms of lack of awareness, or those who do not know 100% about disabilities, it can definitely be there. They (society) are not dealing with disabilities 24X7, we do,"* said N3.

A1 said that it is the triangle of NGOs, government and leaders of society that can bring in change in the disability sector.

Some interviewees said that due to numerous factors, this role is not getting fulfilled. J1 said that NGOs have not been able to create voice, branding for disability as a sector. J1 added that NGOs have failed to change the societal attitude towards disability with their influence. Likewise, J3 said that NGOs along with the government agencies have not been able to create awareness about disability issues, citing example of the rules and regulations of the RPwD Act.

J3 suggested that NGOs should balance the positive and negative story, and bring to notice issues such as acid victim not getting compensation the Supreme Court has entitled them for or the PwDs not getting their rights. *"I feel that it is only when you look through certain negativity, something positive happens. There has to be a good sharing of both positive and negative if you really want to make an impact,"* said J3.

Interviewee N2 said that due to diverse disabilities, the NGOs working in the sector are fragmented. *“We as the NGO sector are so fragmented that there is no unity. We look at our sector at one point of time. When it comes to disability, all institutions working for the blindness would go in one direction, working for the deaf with go in another... We do not come in unison. So, it is quite easy to break us,”* said N2. J3 also asked the NGOs to bring out inclusive picture of disability sector.

*“The NGOs would work in their own specific fields – as I deal with the physical disabilities, I would do so about physical disabilities, and the Blind People’s Association (BPA) about blindness,”* said N3.

N2 also identified self-image and projection as an issue. N2 said that while media is free to cover stories, what stories are being told can be decided by the NGOs with right approach. N2 added that need of the hour is to shun the conventional image of PwDs in poor light or recipients of charity and bring in more positivity.

A2 also suggested that the NGOs’ interest in portrayal should not be limited to fundraising. *“I feel that even as the NGOs work for the right purpose, I have problems with their approach and perspective unfortunately. They have to garner funding, and thus they will also sometimes do stereotypical thing and represent it or say it in certain manner,”* said E2.

*“Do not limit the relationship (with media) to the news – try to take a step more. If the approach is changed, the portrayal (of disability sector) would surely improve,”* said J4, suggesting meets and arranging meets of journalists to NGOs working in the sector to create awareness.

Interviewee N1 said, *“If the NGOs engage with media with some understanding, approach them with a particular message tailor-made for a specific platform, it would be more successful.”* N1 added that NGOs have pushed legislations, and confronted governments if the rights of PwDs are hampered.

### **Media relations**

Some of the major themes in this sub-category included issues with representation, need for talking points, expectations, limited issues, and negative approach. *“They (NGOs) can add flavour to their narrative when they are interacting with media. Why media often turns negative or reluctant is the inherent question that why we should publicize a specific NGO – they must present the cause by connecting it with the core issues,”* said J1.

J1 added that NGOs only media connect often is about a specific event and its coverage, but it does not work. *“The biggest thing to keep in mind is, media also needs talking points which the leadership of the country or NGOs must provide,”* said J1. *“It is perhaps the reason that the segments such as disability have largely remained untouched. The NGOs are not able to give stories when they present the issues.”*

Interviewees said that the NGOs can keep the momentum going after a major event that has garnered media attention such as Paralympics. They added that NGOs often fail to take advantage of such talking points by limiting themselves to core issues. J2 said that not all things can be covered by media, and thus NGOs can play the role of information givers about ‘really good work, really good initiatives.’ J2 also suggested that NGOs understand functioning of media. For example, the electronic media would require visuals.

J4 criticised that NGOs are often report-oriented and press releases sent by them only talks about events and beneficiaries. J4 added that if the quality of interaction is improved, there would be a better traction in media. *“Reduce the number of releases but improve the quality,”* said J4. *“It becomes routine with mention of someone’s felicitation, some inauguration, some sports event or some charity.”*

Another issue that emerged from the discussion was lack of media strategy or fear of media. N1 and E4 said that majority of the NGOs do not have media strategy. The NGOs do not know how media functions, which media is present and what role they play. A2 said that the team had to learn how to write press releases as an essential part of working for NGOs.

*“Every NGO that works with persons with disabilities need to have someone. I am not saying you need to be a mass media or communication person, no. (It should be) someone who understand life of persons with disabilities. And dissemination should not be biased dissemination keeping only funding in mind. The dignity of persons with disabilities also needs to be counted in,”* said N2. *“We also need to have policy of what we need to communicate – hope or despair.”*

Interviewee E4 said that NGOs are often afraid of media and do not engage with them. *“They do not have orientation how to reach out to media, how to handle media. Most of the people I know in NGO sector are a bit scared that media would expose them. They do not know how to face media with proper information... Very rarely I have come across NGOs who have media strategy, media planning or a dedicated person who can handle media, issue a proper press note,”* said E4.

Interviewees also suggested NGOs to ‘sensitize media, inform media, motivate media’ and keep highlighting important aspects about disability sector. *“They think that media is only about nonsense stories, which is not true. Media can be positive and very supportive... They (the NGOs) do not think beyond their four walls. They are happy with whatever is happening in these four walls,”* said E4. *“I tell my people that you keep feeding interesting news to the media – do not expect that it will be covered, do not feel bad if it does not appear. You should send them photos, write-ups, relevant details. It is what the NGOs can do.”*

N4 said that NGOs can collaborate with media to run awareness campaigns and even teach the right vocabulary to media so that media ‘doesn’t offend anyone intentionally.’

Interviewee E3 suggested NGOs to innovate and think out of the box and not succumb to stereotypes. *“They keep on doing something that helps them to be in media. But if most NGOs do stereotypical things, there is no news value. They should not only be critics, but also think what they can do differently. I am yet to see such NGOs,”* said E3.

#### 4.1.3 Accessible India, RPwD Act, Disability terminology

The theme looks at three major aspects of disability sector that underwent change in the period in 2015 and 2016.

On December 3 in 2015, the Government of India launched Sugamya Bharat or Accessible India campaign to promote accessibility in both physical and virtual realms, whereas in his last Mann ki Baat radio show of 2015 on December 27 Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the listeners to use ‘Divyang’ to describe persons with disabilities instead of a gamut of other expressions.

Likewise, in December 2016, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act was passed in Indian Parliament, making it a law with far-reaching implications on sectors such as reservations in job and education, entitlements, and accessibility as a right.

All the interviewees discussed the themes of Accessible India campaign, RPwD Act and Divyang (along with other terms) in context of media representation. The theme also encompasses notions of disability with a wide range of beliefs from it being a curse on one end of spectrum to ‘super achievers’ who overcome all odds on the other.

#### **Accessible India**

While majority of the interviewees agreed that it was an important landmark for the disability sector, Accessible India was described in terms of ‘marketing campaign,’ ‘hogwash,’ ‘launched with good intentions but not much work on ground,’ and ‘very less implementation’ by different stakeholders.

Interviewee N2 said that the concept of the campaign was brilliant, but the idea just got stuck with physical disability and remedies such as constructing ramps, lifts, and accessible toilets. Interviewee E1 said that there is some impact of the campaign even as there is a long way to go. *“There is a lot of work required, but the direction is right,”* said E1.

The criticism from E2 about the concept stemmed from the fact that it was a promising idea with bad execution. *“A lot of well-meaning people like architects, planners, etc. came together and worked towards it. But nothing much came out of it. Making a building accessible is one of the most basic things, making public transport accessible is essential – the person using wheelchair must be able to use the transport. But I see that after the launch I do not see any radical results,”* said E2.

Some interviewees saw the collective impact of Accessible India, RPwD Act and introduction of Divyang as a term as far-reaching. *“First Accessible India or Sugamya Bharat came as a campaign. Then with The RPwD Act in 2016, it gained momentum... A Divyang was not able to reach media. But after the two, there is more media focus on disability issues,”* said A1.

Likewise, interviewee A2 said that there was a change after the launch of Accessible India and implementation of RPwD Act. But it is just a beginning, and it may take some time to seep in. A2 said that the importance of the two initiatives is the efforts and focus on the right direction.

Interviewee N4 felt that the lack of proper implementation is to do with lack of proper communication with stakeholders including media. *“The law alone does not result in improvement in issues such as accessibility. The law has passed a long back, and the ramps should be everywhere (by now). The lift should be accessible, washrooms should be accessible... But it is not communicated properly,”* said N4.

Interviewee E3 also felt that it was not just the impact of the law that should be assessed – the disability community was not vocal about it. *“The laws alone cannot. That is the failure of Accessible India campaign, which is the failure of RPwD Act... So far things have not become accessible... The way activism is there in America, people make money out of non-compliance*

*of the rules related to accessibility. Has any person with disability or a lawyer done anything on similar lines?” he asked.*

Interviewees such as E4 however felt that there are positives – the movement brought accessibility as an issue and as a right to sharp public focus discourse and forced the stakeholders to address it. E3 felt that all good companies would follow the rules for their image, even as accessibility in majority of the offices, including government ones, is not achieved even as the campaign was launched over five years ago.

Some of the interviewees shared their experiences for advocacy and awareness for accessibility in the light of the campaign. They reported that majority of the places – even those boasting of the accessible infrastructure – have remained inaccessible for PwDs. The issue is more acute in non-urban areas, they added. The stakeholders asked media to cover it regularly to ensure that the innovative idea also translates into a good implementation.

### **The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016**

The interviewees said that inclusion of more disabilities and making the rights-based approach to the disability field through the RPwD Act has made a change in media and societal perception of disability. However, as mentioned for Accessible India campaign, the impact is not felt across the sections on the ground. *“The law in isolation cannot do anything – even before 2015, there were laws and legislations related to disabilities, but it was going on in isolation. Giving voice to the issue is very important,”* said J1.

*“There’s surely some more coverage than before – sometimes you may also have good articles or editorials when the (RPwD) Act was passed. In 2016, there was some media coverage (about it). But still, it is quite less than what it should be. It is a very important act. In 1995’s act, only seven bodily conditions were considered disabilities, whereas in 2016, 21 were included. So, there was a huge leap, a lot more bodily conditions are now considered in the spectrum of disability. It can have impact on people’s lives – legally and in other ways,”* said interviewee E2.

The experts said that at the time of the passing of the law – or the entire process of formulating one – the activists ‘based in Delhi and NCR’ created media buzz. *“They managed to use their contacts to write things in the media – articles of the act and its merits and demerits. But barring that, not much has been there,”* said E3.

Interviewee E4 saw 5% reservation for the disability sector as the biggest takeaway of the Act but said that it has not resulted in sustained media coverage. *“Media can work hand in hand with them (NGOs) and take a collaborative approach to strengthen it (RPwD Act). They should work towards changing the way in which the (disability) issues are seen,”* said E1.

E1 added that the law brought in hope for a better and more sensitive portrayal of disability with ‘huge scope.’ However, not much is seen on the ground or in terms of implementation. *“Much can be done, authorities have a lot of power, and awareness is increasing among the citizens. Media should support some... media is sensitive now towards these issues, and am happy for this, I am grateful for this, but I expect a little more,”* said E1.

Interviewees like A3 said that the only tangible outcome was, *“People now know that the disabled are called ‘divyangjan’ if you think that is the result.”* A few others such as N1 were positive, saying that it has been a relatively less time since the passing of the act. *“In a country like us, the things take time to come to fruition,”* said N1.

### **Divyang and Disability Terminology**

The interviewees were divided over usage of ‘Divyang’ as a word to describe PwDs. While some pointed that it has brought in a sense of positive identity to PwDs instead of derogatory descriptions, others said that the change of labels would not make much of a difference in attitude of the society if it were not rooted in rights-based action. Four of the interviewees mentioned impact of Prime Minister Narendra Modi endorsing and using the word for faster spread and acceptance of the terminology.

Two journalist interviewees said that the word has now gained currency due to the call from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. *“If we talk about Divyang, it is not a new word – it did not come in existence in 2015-16 as it is an old Sanskrit word. But what changed was the approach,”* said J1. *“Since the leadership of the country was also determined to carry it forward, its impact can be seen on media coverage also. The words related to disabilities did not matter, and thus the word ‘Divyang’ was coined. The leadership brought the word in common parlance. It was positioned in such a way that media had to take notice. I have not seen any word gaining currency so fast in public imagination and common usage.”*

Another journalist J2 said that the word ‘Divyang’ amplified the impact of Accessible India and RPwD Act. *“Ever since the PM used the word ‘Divyang’ to describe the persons with disabilities and the campaign for them has been initiated, the way the media looked at the*

*sector has changed, the perspective towards persons with disabilities has changed. We as media look at them as role models and there is less depiction now that shows them as 'bechara' (helpless),"* said J2. *"The word 'Divyang' is often used in good faith for the persons with disabilities. In general course, we would say 'the person doesn't have hands or legs' but when it comes to reporting, we need to be more sensitive."*

Interviewee J4 said that Divyang reflects the right spirit, whereas J3 said that reiteration of the word has made it popular and acceptable. *"The word Divyang is used extensively today, but it did not happen in a day. I am sure that when the PM first used the word, it was like a new thing has come up. It is repeated over and over – it is repeated by the government, repeated by the NGOs and it is used by the vernacular media. We as English newsmen do not use Hindi words as we always must give an English equivalent. But even we started using it. So, the importance of reiteration needs to be understood,"* said J3.

Interviewee A4 said that when they returned from the Tokyo Paralympics 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the team and said that they were not 'Viklang' but 'Divyang.' *"It's very good and it's said in the sense that we are not disabled – if we believe, we can do many things despite our shortcomings,"* said A4. *"The current generation can understand it and uses 'Divyang' (to describe persons with disabilities). But for others, it is difficult to explain and expect an overnight change."*

Several interviewees however felt that the word does not change connotation of disability. *"A few people also do not like the euphemism of divyangjan as it is just changing a word and not connotations. You feel good about such words as it appeases your conscience, but it does not for the persons with disabilities. The society gives epithets to feel less guilty, sometimes even media does that,"* said N1.

Likewise, interviewees felt that 'euphemisms' such as 'drashti divyang' for the blind does not help the community. *"Instead, media – particularly English – can do very well using 'person with...' and then disability. It will slowly and gradually help,"* said N2. The interviewee added that the word should not take away the right to agitate. *"What is happening is, by calling them Divyang, we do not allow them to come to the terms that my demands are these... You are putting me on a pedestal by calling me Divyang, closer to God. But I am a human, I have my needs. I will complain. I will raise voice."*

Interviewee E2 said that the term 'Divyang' is seen more in regional media. *"Certain words and terminology have changed, even if people are not aware of it all the time,"* said E2.

Terminology related to disability has evolved, but other words are also in use along with Divyang, said interviewees. *“I am identifying someone as ‘Divyang,’ but I also use words such as netraheen (the one without eyes) or ‘pag nathi’ (a person with no leg/s). It is a small example that the language and perception does not change overnight – the actual things would take a long time to reach to the last of the persons,”* said J2.

Interviewee N2 said that the usage such as ‘person with blindness’ instead of ‘netraheen’ is much more acceptable. *“If you look 30-40 years ago, we used to say loola (lame), langda (cripple), kaana (one-eyed) all those kinds of things. Surdas is another example. Now we are not using them. In majority, we are talking about ‘low vision,’ ‘person with visual impairment’ or (euphemisms like) ‘can’t see properly,’ ‘leg not working,’ ‘cannot walk.’ You do not say loola-langda now,”* said N2.

Interviewees pointed that occasionally one can still see words such as mandbuddhi (mentally challenged), behera-munga (speech and hearing impaired), lula-langda (those with locomotor disabilities such as lack of hand or leg) which should not be used. Interviewee E1 said that media alone should not be blamed for it, as the role of NGOs and disability community at large is also important to assert the right usages.

### **Notions of Disability**

The category looked at the notions or perceptions of disability in the light of the developments such as Accessible India, the RPwD Act, and introduction of Divyang. The responses from the interviewees showed that the popular discourse remained closer to inspiration for the larger society and ‘supercrip’ where the PwDs are portrayed for achieving feats with descriptions such as ‘despite...’ to juxtapose their mental or physical conditions and their achievements – be it in the field of sports or academics.

Journalist J2 said, *“We should show them (PwDs) in right light, in inspirational tone. They can also provide inspiration to the ‘normal’ persons, too. If they can achieve so much despite all their hardships, why can’t the others?”*

Giving example of a person with no hands and no legs working with a prominent public-sector unit (PSU), J2 said that the person was travelling on his own and doing all his work including cooking. *“So, whoever meets him is in awe – how could a person who has no hands or legs can do so much! It can even give a sort of inspiration for those who might not have one or more limbs. Stories like these can surely give anyone a booster to fight any negative thoughts with*

positivity,” said J2. *“In the past few years, we have seen many success stories – be it Bhavina (Patel) or Mansi (Joshi). In fact, I motivated my daughter to take up Badminton seriously after watching Mansi play.”*

Another journalist J3 said that there is nothing wrong with identifying the PwDs as ‘special.’ *“If we do not want people to look at the disabled as disabled, we will have to change the very eyes of the society. Let us accept disabled people as special – for every class they pass, they are putting in 100 times more effort than a normal person,”* said J3. Talking about ‘despite that’ part, J3 said that Sudha Chandran (a prominent dancer and actor with disability) cannot be compared to any other dancer. *“She cannot be – she is 100 times more special. If you feel bad about this coverage, it should not be so – we should feel proud.”*

Interviewee N3 said that inspirational stories can help people in dire need of hope. *“I do not call it a stereotype. A person may be thinking that he may not be able to bear (the pain) anymore, but when he sees one such positive story (about a PwD), it can be a life-changing moment,”* said N3.

Another theme that emerged from the codes was stereotypes around the disability discourse. Interviewee E2 said that the common stereotypes include ‘inspirational, brave, and courageous’ on one hand, and ‘bitterness, hostility, anger, aggression’ on the other. The interviewee said that none of the extremes rightly portray the disability community. It thus left no ‘role models’ for the society at large.

*“In any way, either benevolent approach or hostile approach, it left no space for the disabled persons to look at himself or herself in a different way. The same happened to me – the tragic sister of a hero in a wheelchair as I identify with her when he says ‘Main nahi dekh sakta tujhe rote hue’ (I cannot see you cry, a song from 1974 film Majboor),”* said E2. E2 also mentioned movies such as Nache Mayuri (1986 Hindi film starring Sudha Chandran) for the depiction of disability for the popular audience.

Interviewee A4 also mentioned that while growing up, they hardly had any role models that they saw in media portrayal of disability.

The ‘inspirational’ stories often create a stereotype that a disability can automatically make a person better at one craft. *“The coverage in media works as a huge inspiration. It can also bring positivity in society – if a person with disability can do it, what stops other persons? But let us bring common person stories, not the superman stories. Because then it gives the*

*impression that that person is blessed – if you are a Ravindra Jain, you are a good musician despite blindness because it is a God's gift. We want to be away from such tropes,”* said E3.

But several of the interviewees defended such stories, saying that cases such as Bhavina Patel (Paralympics medal winner from Gujarat) can inspire other persons with disabilities to pursue their dreams. Interviewee N4 said that coverage of a teacher from the school for the speech and hearing-impaired students and success of her daughter in a bank exam elicited a lot of response, many of the persons with similar conditions wanted to emulate the girl's success.

Interviewee J1 said that disability is considered to be 'dry subject,' whereas E3 termed it 'perceived boring' by the media. One of the reasons for less coverage was considered to be less population of PwDs.

One of the themes discussed was stigma attached to the topic. Interviewee A3 said that many stay away from the topic as they do not want to 'confront' disability or do not want to imagine something happening to themselves. Interviewee N4 said that many students with hearing impairment do not wear hearing aids due to fear of getting identified as 'someone different.'

*“Major media houses can tie up with NGOs to organize awareness campaigns/ sensitization programmes at schools, educational institutes, and other places. They might not have even seen disability,”* said N4 while discussing ways to bridge the gap between the society and disability community.

#### 4.1.4 Use of Social Media

Social media emerged as one of the talking points in almost all the interviews in context of its impact on conventional reporting of disability sector and its emergence as a reliable alternative to the mainstream media. The interviewees however were not in consensus about its far-reaching impact, and said that it has both pros and cons. For the context of the study, social media encompasses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube as mentioned by the interviewees.

##### **Positives: Accessible, Flexible, Ease of use**

Some of the themes that emerged from the interviews included bypassing conventional media, control over content, ease of use, direct reach, immediacy, and flexibility of use. Several of the interviewees said that while it gets difficult to talk to media, social media can be an alternative.

Interviewee N3 said that if they approach media such as newspapers, they might get a small mention as a ‘courtesy,’ whereas advertisement could be expensive for an NGO of that size. *“Whereas in social media you can put it (content) for free, your supporters can make it viral, and I can easily reach the target audience. If you are putting it on Facebook page, 100 persons may ask for more details on their own and can ask whether they can be of any help. So, I would say that there is much difference and there is surely a major impact of social media for NGOs like us,”* said N3.

Social media platforms have provided an alternative to NGOs to disseminate information about their activities. *“I am handling the social media of my organization. I am not desperate to go to the newspapers. I am already reaching to 5,000 persons online by just posting one picture or video or reel. For posting videos on Facebook, we have apps like Canva or Animoto. I can do it on my own. I do not need to tell anyone that please come and cover it,”* said N4.

Interviewee A3 said that it is possible to run all the operations of an NGO on social media. *“I connect to people for both donations and activities through these platforms. I work for donations on WhatsApp and use Facebook and Instagram to highlight the activities,”* said A3. Likewise, E3 said that social media is more effective in context of disability compared to newspapers or TV channels.

Several of the interviewees highlighted the immediacy and reach of social media platforms. Interviewee A1 said that ‘new and social media’ are much faster in dissemination of information. *“Earlier it would take 1-2 days for the traditional media to know the issue and address it with finding the gist and framing it. But social media has given us the platform to put our ‘Mann ki Baat’ (issues close to heart). The new media is very powerful...”*

Interviewee N1 said that social media platforms are also good to catch attention of the target audience. *“Whatever you post it on social media, it would have a short shelf-life, but it has a good mechanism to get attention. Be it Instagram or social media, or if some youths write on Facebook, they get attention of the young people. What we fail to do is building upon it and retain that attention,”* said N1.

Giving an example of reach of social media platforms, E3 said that they organized an art competition where they could reach 2 million persons in 52 countries. *“About 4,200 artists were inspired to participate just because of social media. The message is getting out very effectively on social media,”* said E3. Interviewees E1 and E2 also said that social media is fast, ‘powerful’ in dissemination of information, and reaching out to specific groups. *“I feel social*

*media is much faster in reaching out to people compared to conventional methods. Whatever you put on platforms like Twitter, it reaches the world,”* said N4.

Journalist interviewees said that social media has also impacted conventional/ mainstream media. J1 said that Tokyo Paralympics caused a lot of discussion on social media that got reflected in coverage of the issue. *“If we revisit (Paralympics), we will realize that when the PM of the country is cheering them up, mentioning them on Twitter, talking about them on available mediums such as social media and blogs – these may be small gestures, but people join with you,”* said J1.

J2 said that if the social media content goes viral, the mainstream media must take note even when the same issue may not have got attention in conventional way.

Some of the interviewees said that both social media and conventional media have their own strengths, and thus they balance between the two. A1 said, *“I am approaching press along with putting the issues online. If I have 1.5 lakh followers, major media outlets may have 30-40 lakh users. It is like buy one get one free – the social media can amplify the message of conventional media.”*

Similarly, N2 said that they use social media for crowdfunding events because of the faster spread. However, if they want to discuss pros and cons of any policy or law, conventional media has the needed seriousness and perspective.

Several of the interviewees highlighted that they see the social media as alternative to conventional media or to overcome conventional media’s limitations. *“We often feel that we may send about 20-sentence content to the print media, but they have their limitations. Whatever content you send, it may not go as it is – the editors’ views decide how much is edited out. On the other hand, the new media, social media allows you to decide how much content can go. You can create it on your own, you and others can share it,”* said N3.

Similarly, E1 said that they use social media as conventional media ‘has its limitations.’ *“If implementation or application is done positively, constructively, it (social media) can bring in a lot of changes. It can connect the beneficiaries to the outside world in an effective manner,”* said E1.

Discussing impact of social media, A2 said that even the conferring of national award for persons with disabilities was not covered widely by mainstream media. When the same matter

was shared on social media, it caught attention of Indian Army after which the work on disability in Jammu and Kashmir started.

In other issues discussed, N1 said that sometimes even journalists are not able to write what they want to, and thus many use social media and blogs to talk about issues they feel deeply about. N4 said that social media has distinct strength such as use of pictures, emojis that give very visual nature of narrative and make it interactive through mechanisms such as likes and shares.

### **Negatives: No fact-check, Opinionated**

Some of the negative aspects of social media highlighted by interviewees included lack of fact-check mechanism or filtering of content, one-sided or opinionated content, user bias and shorter shelf-life.

*“Media professionals are experts compared to commentators on social media. Whatever would be done would be done with conviction and efficacy ... So, if an issue is raised by media, the reporter is a professional and with experience. They have background, they know how the government works, how different departments work. Those on social media have limited knowledge – perhaps about one aspect,”* said J4. *“All can write on social media, but we gather facts with all hard work and put them in perspective.”*

Interviewee A1 said that if a story makes it to mainstream media, it has ‘a heart, and thus reaches directly to heart (of the recipient).’ *“Even if there are only 1-2 lines taken by conventional media, they would take up fact-checking and reaching out to all stakeholders. Social media posts are often one-sided and biased,”* said A1.

Interviewee J3 said that the advent of social media has created a new class of content creators and consumers where dissemination has become ‘a little myopic.’ J3 gave example of very few social media posts or forwards where the salient points of Accessible India or the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act were discussed or explained such as 5% quota for persons with disabilities.

Interviewees said that fact-checking and filtering the content is what differentiates the mechanisms of social media and conventional media. E1 said that while it is easier to approach people on social media, caution is also required which is generally exercised by conventional media. *“The issue of disability needs to be taken to people in a sensitive manner. If not done right, it can do more harm than good,”* said E1.

*“If I approach you (media), the facts would be checked by editors. The photos, facts, figures, etc. would be verified and a high-level discussion would take place. There would also be a rational thinking on its impact. These checks and balances are missing in the social media,”* said A2. *“Social media is a powerful tool and puts power in hands of common persons. But it does not mean that if there is no accessibility, I click a picture and start blaming authorities. I also need to understand the situation.”*

Interviewees E3 and E4 elaborated on the functioning of social media in context of disability – they said that when a matter requires a person to sit down and understand an issue, social media does not work well due to its limited shelf life. *“A story on importance of job reservation (for the persons with disabilities) will not work well on social media with some images and a few words. It can be covered better by mainstream media... You cannot have a detailed news on social media – there is a girl who has won the medal. It can come on social media, but how she has won, what were her struggles, what is the importance of her achievement, what exactly is Paralympics, etc. is not covered by the social media,”* said E4.

#### 4.1.5 Other points/ issues

It was found that even among the journalists, the beliefs that PwDs having lack of one sense have other senses heightened was found. Two journalist interviewees highlighted the point, defending the ‘supercrip’ portrayal. *“They (persons with visual impairment) are more sensitive and have power of a superior sense (than the non-blind person),”* said J2.

The role of government-run media was discussed by two interviewees J1 and E3. They said that the government-run media such as Doordarshan or All India Radio have mandate to promote such classes, and thus the representation is relatively more compared to other media. *“We never take these issues in a sustained way in the same way as government-run media such as All India Radio or Doordarshan where there are relatively more programs for the persons with disabilities. Somewhere it might be the pressure on the government-run media, but it is also required that all media take note of it and does not differentiate between stakeholders,”* said J1.

The comparison or mention of LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual and others), another marginalized community, was made by two interviewees on three instances. Interviewee E2 said, *“You do not have to bang on thalis and say that despite being people with disabilities, see what they have done with their lives. Their profile itself shows that this person has moved beyond that. A lot of disabled people actually*

*feel that... It is not about acceptance, but they also feel a sense of community and a sense of pride, just as the LGBTQ community,”* said E2.

E2 also gave example of relatively less enthusiasm for the courses related to disability studies compared to LGBTQIA+ related courses. *“If I have to offer two electives about the queer and disability, I know there might be 100 for the first and five for the second. People find it unpleasant topic, they find it uncomfortable discussing about disability or generally in presence of disabled persons whom they may not know – sometimes it is fear, you fear disability,”* said E2.

Interviewee E3 said that policy at the government and institutional levels matter a lot. Several of the multinational corporates adhere to the local norms. *“All good companies will have a very high percentage of compliance of local laws. If we have equal opportunity policy for the persons with disabilities or LGBTQ, we will follow it. But I cannot say the same for the local companies,”* said E3.

## 4.2 Summary of Findings

- All stakeholders – be it journalists, NGO officials, achievers, or experts – agreed that media has a key role to play in context of disability. Media coverage shapes perception about disability, and with right framing of the sector, media can dispel myths and misconceptions
- Majority of the stakeholders could give examples from their own experiences of media intervention and positive impact of media coverage that ranged from constructing a road to continuation of a scholarship for the children with disabilities
- The criticism for media role stemmed from factors such as lack of adequate technical knowledge, limited focus on disability issues – especially around the days such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3 – along with more focus on corporeal or visible disabilities, and promoting stereotypes such as ‘supercrip’ where the PwDs are portrayed as succeeding against all odds
- Experts suggested improved media interaction, conducting workshops or seminars, and advocating use of right terminology as some of the ways to improve the representation. Four of the interviewees also agreed that if a PwD becomes part of media organization, it can improve representation and depth of coverage
- Majority of the interviewees agreed that NGOs working in disability sector have a significant role to play as representatives of PwDs and influencing policies, laws and

regulations related to the sector. They said that along with advocacy and working as support system for PwDs, NGOs also need to engage with stakeholders like media to improve representation

- Interviewees also said that majority of the NGOs do not have media strategy or designated person to interact with media. With a major focus on fundraising, charity or donations, the stories emerging from the NGOs becomes predictable and monotonous. The NGOs should also understand the media perspective and facilitate it
- Due to vast spectrum of disabilities, there are no all-encompassing representative organizations that can take forward the advocacy collectively or raise voice. Those with higher reach get more coverage
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's use of word 'Divyang' in December 2015 gained currency and had resonance across representations within disability sector and in media. While interviewees were divided over whether the word truly represents the PwDs, they all agreed that its usage has increased significantly over the years and other terminology is reduced – even as several other words are still being used by media and society at large
- The interviewees felt that both Accessible India and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 started off on a good intention, but due to lack of proper dissemination of information, it never got popularized enough among those who were not direct stakeholders. With lack of enthusiasm from PwDs themselves, the implementation never reached its potential
- While the period after RPwD Act saw better representation of not-so-prominent disabilities, issues such as accessibility and equal standing for education and employment have remained issues. Media can highlight the lacunae
- Almost all the interviewees agreed that social media has emerged as an important factor in context of media and disability in past few years. Some of the pros for the social media include ease of use, wider and immediate reach, strong alternative for mainstream media that often does not give space to the disability-related news, and flexible applications with array of options and platforms
- On the flip side, social media platforms are not always the right vehicles to address serious issues or garner attention of policymakers. Lack of filter and fact-checking mechanism also results into frivolous content that can sometimes hamper the issue.

Shorter shelf life and shorter attention span also make it a parallel avenue to mainstream and not a replacement

## 5. Converging Themes

A total of 15 themes emerged from the data analysis which were found in at least two of the tools of data collection. The following table indicates which themes were found in which tools. Out of total, eight were found in all three – document analysis, questionnaire and perception scale, and in-depth interview. Three were found in questionnaire and perception scale, and in-depth interviews, and four in document analysis and in-depth interviews.

The three-pronged approach not only validated the data analysis but also highlighted the similarities or differences of how the different data sets looked at the themes.

*Table 65: Convergent Themes Emerging from Three Tools of Data Analysis*

Sr No.	Theme	Document Analysis	Questionnaire and Perception scale	In-depth Interviews
1.	Media focuses on special days	✓	✓	✓
2.	Media uses 'Divyang' more	✓	✓	✓
3.	Media representation is stereotypical	✓	✓	✓
4.	Language used which should not be used anymore	✓	✓	✓
5.	Focus more on visible disabilities	✓	✓	✓
6.	Media gives motivational stories about PwDs	✓	✓	✓
7.	Media raises issues related to disability	✓	✓	✓
8.	PwDs get to share their views with media	✓	✓	✓
9.	Reporters/ editors should be sensitized		✓	✓

10.	Information on social media is more useful		✓	✓
11.	Image of PwDs in media is closer to reality, representation satisfactory		✓	✓
12.	Improvement in media coverage	✓		✓
13.	Coverage of 'old' and 'new' disabilities	✓		✓
14.	Disability models and perception	✓		✓
15.	Accessible India and RPwD Act	✓		✓

### **Focus on disability on special days**

Document Analysis: Both Divya Bhaskar and The Times of India had about 10% stories related to disabilities on specific days.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: With mean of 3.7 on intensity scale, majority of the respondents agreed that the coverage on disability is found on special days.

In-depth Interviews: Five of 16 or 31% of the interviewees said that the coverage on disability is primarily around special days.

Summary: Contrary to perception of respondents and interviewees, the overall share of coverage on special days was found to be not more than 10%. However, around these days the number of stories, special stories, and positive stories with more than 200 words were found to be higher than average. These days included International Day for Persons with Disabilities, Helen Keller Day, Louis Braille Day, World Sight Day, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and Thalassaemia Day, among others.

### **Usage of 'Divyang'**

Document Analysis: Compared to 'Viklang' word used to describe disability having 23% frequency in 2015, both 2016 and 2017 saw 'Divyang' used 21% and 23% times, making it the most frequently-used word in Divya Bhaskar. The word 'Divyang/s' was used nine times in 2016 and five times in 2017 or less than 5% in The Times of India, showing not much usage.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: The perception scale had two questions related to ‘Divyang’ – majority of the respondents agreed that media now uses ‘Divyang’ more to describe persons with disability compared to other terminology with mean score of 3.6. The response was more ambivalent about ‘Divyang’ being an appropriate word to describe persons with disability at mean score of 3.2.

In-depth Interviews: Nine out of 16 or 56% of the interviewees said that the word ‘Divyang’ has gained currency fast due to push from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is now used in the right spirit to describe persons with disabilities and gave impetus to other campaigns. Three or 19% of the respondents felt the labelling does not help if there is no change in societal perception.

Summary: The word ‘Divyang’ has become popular and is accepted by media and society to describe persons with disabilities. The usage of the word in media has increased, and experts also felt that the word gave PwDs a new identity despite some reservations.

### **Representation termed to be stereotypical**

Document Analysis: In Divya Bhaskar, 39% of the total stories in 2015 and 2017 were features and 25% or more stories were human interest. In The Times of India, features were 30-33% and human-interest stories were 17% in 2017.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: Majority of the respondents felt that media representation of disability was stereotypical with mean score of 3.6 on perception scale.

In-depth Interviews: Six of the interviewees or 37.5% of experts felt that stereotypical representation often portrays PwDs as recipients of charity, helpless and dependent. Stereotypes also form when they are often associated with specific activity – for example, a blind man good at singing.

Summary: With one-third of the stories related to features and 17% or more stories related to human-interest topics, there was no major change in representation, which was also felt by the questionnaire respondents and interviewees.

### **Use of terminology for disability**

Document Analysis: Pragnachakshu remained second-most used word in Divya Bhaskar, whereas words such as andh, muk-badhir, apang, etc. also remained in use. In The Times of India, mentally ill, disabled, differently-abled, etc. were used.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: The respondents were neutral about usage of language by media with mean score of 3.4 on perception scale.

In-depth Interviews: Interviewees said that occasionally one comes across words such as mandbuddhi (mentally challenged), lula -langda (those with locomotor disabilities), but overall, the terminology has improved with more socially acceptable words in use including special and differently-abled.

Summary: The terminology for disability has improved over the years, with words such as Divyang replacing other words to describe disability. However, occasionally one can see the terminology in media reportage which is no longer acceptable.

### **Focus on corporeal/ visible disabilities**

Document Analysis: Locomotor disabilities and blindness accounted for nearly half the coverage in Divya Bhaskar over three years. In The Times of India, the two classes of disabilities accounted for 32% or nearly one-third of total stories.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: The respondents did not agree with the statement that the portrayal is often only about visible disabilities with mean score of 3.3 on perception scale.

In-depth Interviews: Four or 25% of the interviewees felt that the media focus has remained more on corporeal or visible disabilities with rare articles on mental illness or development disorders.

Summary: While questionnaire and perception scale did not indicate it strongly, the content analysis and interview results indicate that the disabilities that can be easily perceived are highlighted more and get more opportunity to interact with media.

### **Motivational stories about PwDs**

Document Analysis: Divya Bhaskar carried 63% and 55% stories with positive tone, whereas 48-52% of the stories in The Times of India were positive.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: With mean score of 3.3, majority of the respondents on perception scale did not agree with the statement that media frequently gives motivational coverage.

In-depth Interviews: Five or 31% of the interviewees agreed that media frequently publishes stories about achievements of persons with disabilities and inspires the society to take interest in activities such as sports and science and technology related to disability sector.

Summary: The content analysis and in-depth interviews showed positive trend about PwD portrayal as motivation, whereas the questionnaire and perception scale did not agree with the statement.

### **Taking up issues related to disability**

Document Analysis: Technology and innovation, education, employment, and policy announcement stories formed a small part of overall media coverage. In Divya Bhaskar, employment-related news got reduced from 7% in 2015 to 2% in 2017. Education-related stories in 2016 and 2017 were 4-6% of total coverage.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: Three statements on the perception scale were related to the issues. The answer was negative for the statement that media raises issues related to disability with mean of 2.9. Likewise, the mean scores were 3.3 and 3.4 for the statements that media is the only way in which the non-disability sector interacts with disabled and media representation can have a strong impact on disability sector respectively.

In-depth Interviews: Six or 37.5% of the interviewees said that media should take up issues such as accessibility, lack of employment, and social assimilation. They said that the coverage of primarily superlatives gives a skewed picture of disability sector to the society.

Summary: In all three segments, the media were not found to be taking up issues related to disability and there were suggestions by experts on what issues are most pertinent when it comes to disability sector.

### **Opportunity for PwDs to share views**

Document Analysis: In Divya Bhaskar, the share of direct quotes of PwDs over the three years was 24%. The share was less or similar in The Times of India. About 37% and 23% of the stories in Divya Bhaskar and The Times of India had no direct quotes.

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: The mean score of 2.9 showed predominant negative answer to the statement that PwDs get to share their views with media on perception scale.

In-depth Interviews: Six or 37.5% of the interviewees discussed lack of adequate opportunities for the PwDs to share their views with media directly, and thus they said that social media platforms are getting traction to circumvent conventional media.

Summary: All three segments' findings indicate that the PwDs do not get the adequate opportunity to share their views with media.

### **Reporters/ editors should be sensitized**

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: Two of the statements for the perception scale talked about the theme. Majority of the respondents agreed that the reporters or editors should be sensitized about disability-related issues with mean score of 3.9. Likewise, majority also agreed that a presence of a person with disability in media can improve representation and authenticity with mean score of 3.7.

In-depth Interviews: Eight or 50% of the interviewees talked about sensitization of media in context of disability by organizing workshops, seminars or improving dialogue. Two or 12.5% of the interviewees stressed on having a person with disability in media for better coverage.

Summary: Both questionnaire respondents and interviewee experts said that sensitization of mediapersons is necessary to improve representation, and having a PwD in media could improve the coverage and perspective.

### **Social media information more useful**

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: Two of the statements on perception scale talked about social media perception. Majority of the respondents agreed that social media is easier than the mainstream media to take up issues with mean score of 3.8. Likewise, majority respondents agreed that information on social media is more useful with mean score of 3.6.

In-depth Interviews: Majority of the interviewees (10 or 62.5%) agreed that social media has emerged as a major factor for disability sector that allows them to circumvent the conventional media and directly talk to the community and society at large. They however were ambivalent about impact of social media content with questions on authenticity and lack of objectivity.

Summary: Results of both the methods underlined importance of social media to disseminate information about disability. However, interviewees also asked for caution to believe content on social media due to lack of fact-check mechanism.

### **PwD image in media closer to reality, satisfactory representation**

Questionnaire and Perception Scale: Majority of the respondents answered in negative about the statement that the image of disability is closer to reality with mean score 3.1. Likewise, with mean score of 2.8, majority of respondents did not agree with the statement that the representation of disability is satisfactory in media.

In-depth Interviews: The interviewees were ambivalent about the depiction of disability in media. While they praised media's role in bringing out inspirational stories, they also criticized the stereotypical coverage especially in context of super achievers with fewer articles depicting normal PwDs indulged in activities such as 'DJ nights' which is '99.9% of population.'

Summary: The findings were similar with both questionnaire and perception scale, and in-depth interviews raising issues about balanced portrayal of disability by media.

### **Improvement in disability coverage**

Document Analysis: The year 2016 saw highest coverage of disability-related issues due to factors such as Paralympics and introduction of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Positive stories with right terminology improved in both 2016 and 2017.

In-depth Interviews: Out of total interviewees, seven or 44% felt that there has been an improvement in both quality and quantity of coverage of disability issues with improved terminology, coverage apart from specific days and stories appearing from local, state, national and international sources.

Summary: The improvement was not seen in quantity of articles in both the newspapers under review, but qualitative aspects including usage of language were found to be improving. Experts interviewed also felt that there has been an improvement in coverage.

### **Coverage of 'old' and 'new' disabilities according to the RPwD Act, 2016**

Document Analysis: Share of old disabilities mentioned in the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 got reduced from 57% in 2015 to 48% in 2017 in Divya Bhaskar and from 55% to 48% in The Times of India in the same period. The coverage of new disabilities according to the RPwD Act, 2016 got reduced from 32% to 27% in Divya Bhaskar and increased from 14% to 22% in The Times of India.

In-depth Interviews: Four or 25% of the interviewees, primarily from the NGO sector, felt that the disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, mental illness, intellectual disabilities, blood

disorders and acid attack victims do not get adequate share in coverage, with focus on more conventional disabilities such as locomotor disabilities and blindness.

Summary: Content analysis showed positive trend related to new disabilities included in the RPwD Act, 2016, but interviewees felt that the coverage – while initiated in a welcome step – was inadequate.

### **Models of disability and perception**

Document Analysis: The stories following traditional models of disability such as Medical and Charity got reduced from 62% in 2015 to 55% in 2017 in Divya Bhaskar and from 51% to 34% in The Times of India in the same period. Both newspapers showed either rise or status quo in stories following progressive models.

In-depth Interviews: Five or 31% of the interviewees said that the disability representation is more progressive over the years with rise in awareness about the issue and impact of Accessible India and the RPwD Act. Four or 25% of interviewees felt that models such as ‘supercrip’ or ‘medical’ are still prevalent in media discourse on disability.

Summary: Both content analysis and in-depth interviews indicated improvement in representation of disability in media. The criticism in some interviews stemmed from use of traditional models to frame disability.

### **Accessible India and the RPwD Act**

Document Analysis: Less than 10% of the total stories in both Divya Bhaskar and The Times of India directly talked about Accessible India campaign and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in 2016 and 2017 respectively. However, due to its provisions, the coverage of laws and regulations introduced by states and rise in advocacy saw improvement which was reflected in quality and quantity of the coverage.

In-depth Interviews: Experts were not convinced that the Accessible India campaign and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 directly influenced the way media covered disability. More than 50% of the interviewees said the provisions of both the initiatives have not been relayed to larger society effectively by stakeholders.

Summary: Both content analysis and interviews underlined importance of the two seminal events in context of disability in India, but indicated that its impact was not at desirable levels and did not drastically change the way media framed disability.