

## **Response Of Readers Towards Periodicals: A Study With Special Reference To Madurai Districts, India**

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### **Abstract**

In this study was of qualitative, theoretical and descriptive nature. It keeps generality and was not meant for solving any institutional or organizational problem. Conversely it was a field study in which a sample of randomly selected respondents registers their opinions regarding newspaper reading habits, choices and preferences, and subscription patterns. Thus regular newspaper readers with permanent subscription constitute the chief information base of the research.

**KEYWORDS:** Periodical Readers, Reasons for Reading Newspaper, Nature of Acquiring Newspaper, News Items of Regular Reading, Satisfaction with Quality of Newspaper.

### **1. Introduction**

The study was restricted to newspaper readers of Madurai district of the state of Tamil Nadu. In covering the geographical region, the study chose a selective group of respondents scattered over the Madurai district. Only urban and semi-urban areas were considered. The reason was that this population has the predominant percentage of the middle and higher middle class families that constitute the socioeconomic heartland of the study area. Although the study was restricted to this geographical scope, its information scope was extended upon need. The environment representing the society, economy, polity, culture and technology was considered whenever the implications were pertinent to the newspaper industry.

In the past, newspapers served only to know what happened around in the world. This however has changed. Now newspapers have gone to the extent of shaping individual, group and social behavior of people. They divide people on different lines or unite them on equal lines regardless of caste, creed, colour, age and sex. More clearly, newspapers have effected

for themselves a steady and gradual transition from being merely news medium to a mind control mechanism (WPTR 2012),

## **2. Area Profile of Madurai**

Madurai is a place of immense historical importance and has a cultural heritage that is 2,500 years old. It is internationally acclaimed as the place of temples and festivals. More than its having been the capital of the Pandiya kingdom and Nayak dynasty, it was the seat of the third and last Tamil Sangam (Tamil lyrical assembly) wherein volumes of sophisticated literature were produced. It patronized very famous Tamil poets like Nakkirar, Kumaragurubarar, Seethalai Chathanar and Ilango Adigal (Sugirdha T 2008).

The district covers an area of 3,741.73 Sq. km and has 2 revenue divisions, 7 taluks, 52 firkas and 670 villages. Under these subdivisions, the district has a municipal corporation, 6 municipalities, 12 town panchayats and 431 village panchayats. There are 10 State assembly constituencies and 3 Parliamentary constituencies in the district. The city of Madurai, a municipal corporation on the banks of Vaigai River, is its headquarters.

The district has a total population of 30,38,252 as per the 2011 Census, comprising 15,11,777 males and 15,26,475 females. That is, males constitute 49.76 percent of the population and females 50.24 percent with a sex ratio of 990 females per 1,000 males. The population density is 819 heads per sq. km

## **3. Review of Literature**

According to Santanu Sinha Chaudhuri (2013) an expert reader of The Hindu, wrote his opinion in response to the editorial by Harish Khare titled 'Why the intellectual is on the run' on February 6, 2013. Harish Khare is one of the editors of The Hindu, and formerly Media Advisor to the Prime Minister of India. The reader said that the editor presented a convincing case for moderation in the thoughts of readers and media persons, which only would help to keep thought policing at bay. He added that as India had many problems, rising intolerance disabled the capacity to address all these problems.

According to Panneerselvam A S (2013) was again writing this piece of opinion against the suggestion by the former Chief Justice of India and the Chairman of the Press Council of India Justice Markandey Katju. Justice Katju had rightly said that as there was no qualification for entry into the profession of journalism, very often persons with little or inadequate training entered the profession. And these lead to negative effects because such untrained persons did not maintain high standards of journalism. The author was of the view that Justice Katju's recommendation would lead to unintended consequences that undermined the wellsprings of democratic entailments.

## **4. Objectives of the study**

This research has the following objectives.

- ✓ To study Impact by the Newspaper

- ✓ To study Nature of Acquiring Newspaper
- ✓ To study Preferred Aspects in the Newspaper
- ✓ To study reader attitude Edition of Newspaper
- ✓ To study reader attitude of News Items Read Regularly
- ✓ To study reader attitude of Satisfactions with Newspaper Quality
- ✓ To identify Reasons for Reading the Newspaper and Mean Score
- ✓ To study the Regular Reading Tamil and English Newspapers readers of Madurai district of the state of Tamil Nadu.

## **5. Methodology**

This study was of qualitative, theoretical and descriptive nature. Conversely it was a field study in which samples of randomly selected respondents register their opinions regarding newspaper reading habits, choices and preferences, and subscription patterns. Thus regular newspaper readers with permanent subscription constitute the chief information base of the research.

## **6.Data Collection**

The research was based on survey method, for this study both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data was collected from the sample respondents with the help of a questionnaire prepared on the basis of the objectives. The study area was Madurai district in Tamil Nadu, India. Data collection was carried out between June 2021 and December 2021.

Once ready for data collection, each respondent was personally handed over the questionnaire by the researcher. The questionnaire was in Tamil and English. Whenever needed an unstructured personal interview schedule was executed in Tamil to minimize response errors. The collected data was properly classified, edited, coded and tabulated according to the need of analysis.

## **7.Sampling**

The present study has adopted simple random sampling method and questionnaire has been distributed to the selected Tamil and English newspaper readers of Madurai district in Tamil Nadu. 235 questionnaires were distributed, of which 35 questionnaires were not furnished with all relevant information and hence 200 duly filled questionnaires were used for the analysis and the response rate was 85.11 percent.

## **8.Analysis**

The bellow table shows a noticeable difference between the subscribing patterns of Tamil and English newspapers. In Tamil, the choice was more prevalent, but four newspapers namely Dhina Thanthi, Dhina Malar, Dhinakaran and Hindu Tamil altogether have a lion's share of subscribers. Difference among their percentage was not that much substantial. In English however the reader's choice was much restricted.

### **Table - 1: Regular Reading Newspapers – (Tamil & English)**

S.No	Tamil Newspapers	Subscribers	Percentage
1.	Dhina Thanthi	165	82.50
2.	Dhina Malar	160	80.00
3.	Dhinakaran	153	76.50
4.	Dhina Mani	143	71.50
5.	Hindu Tamil Thisai	139	69.50
6.	The New Indian Express	130	65.00
7.	The Hindu	126	63.00
8.	Malai Murasu	119	59.50
9.	The Times of India	118	59.00
10.	Malai Malar	117	58.50
11.	Dhina Boomi	106	53.00
12.	The Business Line	105	52.50
13.	The Deccan Chronicle	86	43.00
14.	Others	23	11.50

(Source: Primary Data)

Among the surveyed Tamil and English newspapers reading respondents, there are 82.50 percent of the respondents regularly reading Dhina Thanthi Tamil Newspaper, followed by 80.00 percent of the respondents regularly reading Dhina Malar Tamil Newspaper, 76.50 percent of the respondents regularly reading Dhinakaran Tamil Newspaper, 71.50 percent of the respondents reading Dhina Mani Tamil Newspaper, 69.50 percent of the respondents reading Hindu Tamil Thisai Newspaper, 65.00 percent of the respondents reading The New Indian Express English Newspaper, 63.00 percent of the respondents reading The Hindu English Newspaper, each 59.00 percent of the respondents reading Malai Murasu Tamil and The Times of India English Newspapers, 53.00 percent of the respondents reading Dhina Boomi Tamil Newspaper, 52.50 percent of the respondents reading The Business Line English Newspaper and 43.00 percent of the respondents reading The Deccan Chronicle English Newspaper. It is inferred that in an average of more than 61.67 percent of the subscribers prefer newspapers from Kasthuri & Sons Ltd., namely the Hindu Tamil, the Hindu and the business line.

### 8.1 Reasons for Reading Newspaper

There are seven reasons were identified that serve a man or woman to subscribe or read a newspaper. These reasons are based on both the pilot study and inputs from experts. The bellow table will have more respondents than the sample size itself as many respondents will have a combination of reasons to read a newspaper.

**Table – 2: Reasons for Reading the Newspaper and Mean Score**

S.No	Reasons	Respondents	Percentage	Mean	SD	Skewness
1	Personal Interest	135	67.50	8.2	1.74	1.0

2	Distinctive Purpose	121	60.50			
3	Language Development	118	59.00			
4	Comprehensive Coverage	109	54.50			
5	Educational Purpose	101	50.50			
6	Employment Purpose	56	28.00			
7	News items	29	14.50			

(Source: Primary Data)

Although a reader has many reasons to read newspaper, one reason will be dominant and precedes all others. In this sample, ‘Personal interest’ was the dominant reason. Nearly 67.50 percent of the respondents have chosen this. It emphasizes the fact that newspaper reading has become one of the indispensable activities in many households. ‘Distinctive purpose’ and closely thereafter “Language development’ shares a relatively distant second (60.50 percent) and third position (59.00 percent). ‘Comprehensive coverage’ was the fourth compelling reason with 54.50 percent of responses. ‘Educational purpose’ was the fifth compelling reason with 50.50 percent of responses and ‘Employment purpose’ was the sixth compelling reason with 50.50 percent of responses.

The observations of Purpose of using Newspaper resources by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 82 with the standard deviation 74.95332 and the skewness (-1.0818) seems to lie within the normal distribution.

## 8.2 Nature of Acquiring Newspaper

The reader has the possibility of getting newspaper from many sources. The respondents may purchase regularly after the morning walk. The bellow table summarizes the responses with regard to the nature of acquiring newspaper.

**Table – 3: Nature of Acquiring Newspaper and Mean Score**

S.No	Acquiring Newspaper	Respondents	Percentage	Mean	SD	Skewness
1.	Own Purchase	135	67.50	27	49.52777	1.888707
2.	Teashop	29	14.50			
3.	Library	25	12.50			
4.	Neighbors	11	5.50			
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>			

(Source: Primary Data)

It was evident that ‘Own purchase’ was the most preferred nature of acquiring a newspaper both in Tamil and English language with 67.50 percent of respondents opting for them. In teashops the choice was predominantly Tamil newspapers and in libraries it was English newspapers. It reveals the fact that teashops have become strong advertising mediums

for Tamil newspapers. Likewise, libraries have become the instruments of promotion for English newspapers.

The observations of Nature of Acquiring Newspaper resources by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 27 with the standard deviation 49.52777 and the skewness (1.888707) seems to lie within the high distribution.

### 8.3 Edition of Newspaper

Many newspapers now come in two forms. One was the traditional printed paper form and another was electronic form. This electronic form was the exact softcopy of the newspaper formatted and uploaded onto the Internet. Anyone with Internet connection can read that online newspaper with their desktop, laptop, Computer and Cell Phones. Either it needs a subscription fee or available free of cost, based on the policies of the newspaper publisher. Nowadays, many professionals, officials and executives, especially those travelling extensively, read only e-newspapers on their cell phones.

**Table – 4: Edition of Newspaper**

S.No	Newspaper Edition	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Hard Copy	185	92.50
2.	E-edition	15	7.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Among the total respondents, there are 95.50 percent of the respondents, irrespective of desktop, laptop; Computer and Cell Phones, still prefer paper form. As per the respondents, the tangible physical newspaper at their hands gives them satisfaction. One cannot get the feel of it in the e-form. The newspaper can be put on shelf and accessed any time, they asserted.

### 8.4 Satisfaction with Quality of Newspaper

In this subdivision, satisfaction of respondents with their present newspaper was analyzed. The satisfaction level reveals their intention to changeover their choice.

**Table – 5: Satisfactions with Newspaper Quality**

S.No	Newspaper Quality	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Good	169	84.50
2.	Fair	21	10.50
3.	Not Good	10	5.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

The above table revealed that the satisfactions with newspaper quality, among the total respondents, there are 84.50 percent of the respondents regarded their newspaper was of good quality, followed by 10.50 percent of the respondents regarded their newspaper was of fair quality and a few of, 5.00 percent of the respondents regarded their newspapers was of not good.

### 8.5 Impact by the Newspaper

After reading the Tamil and English newspaper, a subscriber possibly gets impacted by certain news items. This impact stems from many standpoints of his perception.

**Table – 6: Impact by the Newspaper**

S.No	Impact	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Cut and retain important news	89	44.50
2.	Discuss and critically analyze	53	26.50
3.	Compare with TV and radio news	33	16.50
4.	Write feedback to editor	25	12.50

(Source: Primary Data)

Table confirms that impact differs from reader to reader. Moreover, personal qualities and requirements determine the type of impact. In this sample of respondents, 44.50 percent of them opt for cutting and retaining important news. Followed by 26.50 percent of the respondents Discuss and critically analyze. There are 16.50 percent of the respondents to compare with Television and radio news and 12.50 percent of the respondents to write feedback to editor.

### 8.6 News Items of Regular Reading

A newspaper consists of various news items. Organization of the same was determined by publisher's priorities, advertisers' conditions and subscribers' preferences. It was ever-changing with regard to social and business environment.

**Table – 7: News Items Read Regularly and Mean Score**

S.No	Read Regularly	Respondents	Percentage	Mean	SD	Skewness
1.	Politics	149	74.50	56	45.15172	0.781821
2.	Educational Materials	131	65.50			
3.	Regional	112	56.00			
4.	Magazines and supplements	59	29.50			
5.	Sports	56	28.00			
6.	Opportunities	56	28.00			
7.	Cinema	49	24.50			

8.	Matrimonial	42	21.00			
9.	Business, Tenders and classified	31	15.50			
10.	Other news	12	6.00			

(Source: Primary Data)

Among the ten, politics was the most regularly read news item as more than 74 percent of voters in Madurai District. Educational Materials (65.50 percent) and Regional news items (56.00 percent) items share second and third place with the responses. Fourth importance was given to Magazines and supplements news items (29.50 percent). Fifth and sixth place occupied sports and opportunities with an each 28.00 percent and the remaining news items like Cinema, Matrimonial, Business and Tenders and classified with less percentage. It was hence observed that politics was the most widely read among the ten news items with 74.50 percent of respondents preferring it.

The observations of News Items Read Regularly by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 56 with the standard deviation 45.15172 and the skewness (0.781821) seems to lie within the high distribution.

### 8.7 Preferred Aspects in the Newspaper of Choice

Published every newspaper has its own quality characteristics. These characteristics show up in its distinctive layout, language, news scope, supplements and coverage pattern. They differentiate a newspaper from all others.

**Table – 8: Preferred Aspects in the Newspaper and Mean Score**

S.No	Preferred Aspects	Respondents	Percentage	Mean	SD	Skewness
1.	Timely and updated news presentation	139	69.50	59	41.88556	0.590374
2.	Lesser Price	121	60.50			
3.	Accurate and neutral information	110	55.00			
4.	Importance to local, business & cinema news	80	40.00			
5.	Attractive language	59	29.50			
6.	Many supplements	59	29.50			
7.	Brilliant coverage	35	17.50			
8.	Color images	35	17.50			
9.	Traditional and age old inclination	25	12.50			
10.	Free offers	25	12.50			

(Source: Primary Data)



Timely and updated news presentation was the largest aspect with 139 (69.50 percent) responses. Less Price was the second most preferred aspect with 121 (60.50 percent) respondents. Third position was Accurate and neutral information preferred aspect with 110 (55.00 percent) respondents, fourth position was Importance to local, business & cinema news preferred aspect with 80 (40.00 percent) respondents. Fifth position was shared by Attractive language and many supplements with 59 (29.50 percent) responses each. Other quality attributes such as Brilliant coverage, Colour pictures, Traditional and age old inclination and free offers have registered quite some responses. They are, however, only additives to the above said aspects.

The observations of Preferred Aspects in the Newspaper by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 59 with the standard deviation 41.88556 and the skewness (0.590374) seems to lie within the high distribution.

## 9. Findings

- ✓ There are 82.50 percent of the respondents regularly reading Dhina Thanthi Tamil Newspaper, followed by 80.00 percent of the respondents regularly reading Dhina Malar Tamil Newspaper, 76.50 percent of the respondents regularly reading Dhinakaran Tamil Newspaper.
- ✓ It is inferred that in an average of more than 61.67 percent of the subscribers prefer newspapers from Kasthuri & Sons Ltd., namely the Hindu Tamil, the Hindu and the business line.
- ✓ 'Personal interest' was the dominant reason. Nearly 67.50 percent of the respondents have chosen this. 'Distinctive purpose' and closely thereafter "Language development" shares a relatively distant second (60.50 percent) and third position (59.00 percent).
- ✓ The observations of Purpose of using Newspaper resources by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 82 with the standard deviation 74.95332 and the skewness (-1.0818) seems to lie within the normal distribution.
- ✓ It was evident that 'Own purchase' was the most preferred nature of acquiring a newspaper both in Tamil and English language with 67.50 percent of respondents opting for them.
- ✓ The observations of Nature of Acquiring Newspaper resources by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 27 with the standard deviation 49.52777 and the skewness (1.888707) seems to lie within the high distribution.

- ✓ There are 95.50 percent of the respondents, irrespective of desktop, laptop; Computer and Cell Phones, still prefer paper form. As per the respondents, the tangible physical newspaper at their hands gives them satisfaction.
- ✓ There are 84.50 percent of the respondents regarded their newspaper was of good quality.
- ✓ There are 44.50 percent of them opt for cutting and retaining important news. Followed by 26.50 percent of the respondents Discuss and critically analyze.
- ✓ Politics was the most regularly read news item as more than 74 percent of voters in Madurai District. Educational Materials (65.50 percent) and Regional news items (56.00 percent) items share second and third place with the responses.
- ✓ The observations of News Items Read Regularly by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 56 with the standard deviation 45.15172 and the skewness (0.781821) seems to lie within the high distribution.
- ✓ Timely and updated news presentation was the largest aspect with 139 (69.50 percent) responses. Less Price was the second most preferred aspect with 121 (6050 percent) respondents.
- ✓ The observations of Preferred Aspects in the Newspaper by the newspaper readers of Madurai district had mean average of 59 with the standard deviation 41.88556 and the skewness (0.590374) seems to lie within the high distribution.

## **10. Conclusion**

In this paper analyzed many aspects pertaining to newspaper subscriber's choices and preferences. As far as the subscribers' distinctive choices and tendencies were concerned, a noticeable difference between the subscribing patterns of Tamil and English newspapers was observed. In addition, newspaper reading had become one of the indispensable personal interest activities in many households. Finally in the ranking of newspapers, Dhina Thanthi and Dhina Malar were the most prominent Tamil newspapers, but in English, it was The New Indian Express with others far behind. Now a day's newspapers concertededly strive to define the personality of individuals, the characteristics of social groups/communities and the worthiness of ideologies. Therefore setting aside errors of any kind, this analysis should serve as a conceptual guide for future studies in this regard.

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