

A Study on Impact of the Digital Mediums on Preferences of Media by Marathi Literature Readers

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Abstract:

In the process of human evolution, the mediums of communication, information have gone through various developments. From verbal communication to written communication, the process of reading developed over time. During the past centuries, with advancements in technologies, the pattern of reading transformed from handwritten content to printed content and in today's world, as screen-based content. As the mediums to deliver the content changed, the mediums for receiving the content also changed, and people had their preferences of mediums. India, being a culturally and socially diverse nation, has multiple languages. It has a rich tradition of literature in all the regional languages. Marathi literature is one of them. Throughout the journey of Marathi literature, various genres with various motives like entertainment, social enlightenment, political and educational awareness, from then to now, Marathi literature is popular in every Marathi speaking household. With the growing digitization, mediums to deliver the Marathi

literature also changed. Marathi literature is emerging on various digital platforms in the form of audiobooks and e-books in the last decade. Therefore, the researcher of the present study aims to find the preferences of the mediums of Marathi literature readers. The study employs a triangulation research approach, involving survey and focus group discussion, telephonic interviews as the quantitative and qualitative research tools respectively. The present research signifies the importance of understanding preferred media by Marathi readers to read Marathi literature. This will guide hard copy book publishers, e-book publishers, and producers of audiobooks to understand the demand of their audience and the medium they prefer the most.

Keywords: Digital Mediums, preferences by Marathi literature readers, Marathi Literature, Hardcopy books, E-books, Audiobooks.

Introduction:

Reading is a cognitive process; at the same time, it is a historical, social, and cultural activity too. Right from its inception, reading as a process has evolved in many different factors. The growing digitization is one of the important factors which changed the mediums for reading.

The Reading Mania:

Throughout the history of humans, man has led to advancement in every aspect. With development, the mediums for information

dissemination have also experienced various phases. From the era of spoken communication and oral messages to the birth of writing, the reading culture commenced. From reading handwritten material to reading printed books, the inception of reading activated a revolution. German historian Rolf Engelsing argues that the reading revolution occurred at the end of the 18th century. From the middle ages, humans read intensively. Engelsing also states, humans, read repeatedly and generally read in a group. By the beginning of the 19th century, people started reading extensively (Bewildered Creatures) The concept of the bookwheel also contributed a lot to the revolution of reading. In the late 16th century, Italian Military engineer Agostino Ramelli invented furniture named bookwheel, where an individual can read and have access to multiple books at one location (Wikipedia)

With such innovations and improvements in printing machinery as well, the reading culture was built up. From first typefaces to the developments in typography, quality of paper used for printing, designs of the books, the printed copy book emerged as a new medium for information and knowledge dissemination.

Digital Mediums for reading:

With the growing digitization, and massive usage of the internet and computer-based technologies all over the world, alternatives for every medium are available. The idea of carrying a whole book in a handset device instead of carrying the weighted hardcopy book fascinated the whole world very quickly. The first every electronic book, e-book, first emerged in the 1990s. The technology became so popular that many foreign authors started publishing their books with digital editions only in the early era of the 21st century. Since then many popular digital devices and

application companies are producing technologies to increase the reach of e-books. For example, in 2010, Apple launched iBooks and iBookstore, Google launched eBookstore in the same year (Government Book Talk). Along with the e-books, the recorded book, that is, audiobooks were also forming a shape in the publishing industry. In the late 20th century, audiobooks became way more popular in the outer world, whereas in India it took a lot of time for the acceptance of audiobooks. Indians are familiar with the concept of storytelling from listening to stories from grandparents or elderly people. But, someone else with a new and strong voice reciting a story, was not an accepted fact in India. Thus, it took time for Indians to open their doors for audiobooks. In one of the interviews conducted by Scroll, Storytel mentions that, with the developments in smartphones and speedy mobile internet, the regional catalog is helping them to reach the maximum audience, especially the youth, who consumes the regional content but finds difficulty in reading the regional language. (Scroll, 2017).

Hence, audiobooks and e-books also emerged as a medium for reading and listening to a book, especially for consuming a book.

Marathi Literature and Mediums Available to read:

India is a culturally diverse country and is flourished with multiple languages. Marathi is one of them. Languages developed and expand with their spread, which is done with the help of literature. India has a rich tradition of literature in all the regional languages. Out of those, Marathi is one of the oldest and popular literature. The scholars of Marathi language and Marathi literature established that the Marathi language was existing since 680 CE. Marathi literature's legacy dates back to the

12th Century. The few of the primal Marathi literature were Viveksindhu (foosdfla/kw) and Lilacharitra)yhykpfj=(, composed in the year 1112 and 1200 respectively. Following the legacy, many writers, poets in Marathi emerged from the era of Chakradhar Swami (Mahanubhav) to the writers and poets in the pre-independence era. Marathi literature also played a pivotal role during the independence for creating awareness amongst Marathi reading population. Books in genres like sociology, politics culture, law were written, published and the legacy is continued till the date

(आधुनिक मराठी वाङ्मयाचा इतिहास)

Along with the printed published books, Marathi literature is growing in the digital space as well in the last decade. Platforms like Majestic, Bookganga, Storytel are publishing and delivering content in printed hardcopy books, e-books, and audiobook format. Thus, the mediums that are available to read Marathi literature are classified as three mediums, further can be divided into two such as printed hardcopy books and digital mediums like e-book and audiobooks.

Purpose of the Study:

The study aims towards understanding the preferences of the mediums by readers who read Marathi literature. With growing digitization and immense use of smart phones and the internet, and with many options available, it is important to understand the choices of the consumer of the content. Thus, the purpose of the study is to understand the choices of the receivers of the content concerning the medium of content.

This study will help the hardcopy books and e-books publishers, audiobooks producers to

understand the demand of the audience and their preferences to read Marathi literature.

Operational Definitions:

1. Books: The word book in this study refers to any book which is part of Marathi literature, except, textbooks, dictionaries, magazines, and thesaurus.
2. Marathi literature: Any part of literature, published in the Marathi language.
3. Readers of Marathi literature / Marathi literature readers: Readers who read Marathi literature.

Review of Literature:

Before understanding the preferences of Marathi literature readers, it is also important to trace the preferences of mediums by readers in the rest of the world.

Dornton (1989) in his paper ‘Toward a history of Reading’ traces the history of reading, where he stated, reading is a social activity, it did not move into the one direction to the phase of extensiveness, it involved groups, different communities, and individuals from a different era. He also mentioned that reading is not only social but also cultural activity, it helped people to make sense in life, it gave direction to the people with various aspects of life.

Liu (2005) in the paper ‘Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years’ finds that, in the digital world, readers are adopting screen-based reading and used various aspects of it academically like browsing and skimming, but the readers will also continue reading hard copies in case of the in-depth reading situations.

The research study titled ‘ Impact Of Internet On Reading Habits Of The Net Generation

College Students' Loan (2011) concludes that the internet and online sources provide unrestricted access to the content, but at the same time it decreases the reading culture in local languages, the focus is more on the English language. Similarly, the students who participated in the research study agree that the internet and online sources have made a huge fall in the readings of books.

All these researches are conducted at the university and academic levels. The research literature about Marathi literature and mediums available for it is not properly documented. The research about the preferences of readers in other language literature is also not documented. Hence, the present study attempts to fill the gap by understanding the preferences of the readers which will contribute to Marathi literature as well as to the communication studies as its primary focus is on choices of mediums by the readers.

Theoretical Framework:

The study tries to incorporate certain media theories.

Media Convergence Theory:

The theory says that new technologies merge various mediums and emerges with new media environments. This theory is employed in the present study as a new advancement in technologies are defining the new mediums to consume the Marathi literature. The Marathi literature can be read with the help of all three mediums at the same time. For example, the famous novel Mrityunjay authored by Shivaji Sawant is available as a printed hardcopy book, e-book and audio book as well. This novel can be read from all three platforms.

2. Media Dependency Theory:

The theory claims that more and more an individual consumes the media, more and

more it depends upon that, thus media has a great influence on the individual's life. The theory suits the present study as more and more the reader reads from one particular platform, he/she will tend to prefer that platform only.

Research Objectives:

1. To identify the platforms available to read Marathi Literature.
2. To understand the preferred mediums by readers to read Marathi Literature.
3. To examine the impact of advertisements of the digital mediums on preferred media by Marathi Literature readers.
4. To analyze preferred media choices of Marathi Literature readers during the pandemic.

Hypothesis:

1. **H1:** Digital mediums are preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature.
2. **H0:** Digital mediums are not preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature.
3. **H2:** Readers between the age group of 17 – 40 years, prefer digital mediums to read Marathi literature.

Research Questions:

1. Which platforms are preferred by readers to read Marathi Literature?
2. What is the impact of advertisements of the digital mediums on the preferred media by Marathi Literature readers?
3. During the pandemic, Marathi literature readers preferred which medium/s?

Research Methodology:

The study adopts a triangulation research approach. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. Survey and Focus Group discussions, telephonic interviews were used as quantitative and qualitative research tools respectively. The

quantitative tool, that is, the survey was conducted to understand the preferences of the audience, whereas, focus group discussions were conducted to understand the reasons behind the particular preference. The telephonic interviews of the owners of publishing houses, audiobook producers were conducted to understand the impact of the digital mediums from their perspective.

Statistical Methodology:

The data collected through the survey is analyzed with two methods.

- 1. Descriptive Analysis:** The data is analyzed based on the frequency and percentage method.
- 2. Inferential Analysis:** Hypothesis testing was carried out with the help of Z – test (one proportional) of statistics with a 95% of the significance level. Similarly, a chi-square test was conducted to find the correlation between the two variables.

Sample Size:

- 1. Survey:** The online survey with the help of Google form was conducted including 167 respondents who are readers of Marathi literature.
- 2. Focus Group Discussion:** Three focus group discussions were conducted involving 13 participants on the Google Meet platform. The participants of the focus group discussion were Marathi literature readers.
- 3. Telephonic interview:** 5 telephonic interviews were conducted which involved the owners of the publication houses, audiobook producers, authors of audiobooks, and Official of Maharashtra State Marathi Development Institute.

Sampling Technique:

- 1. Survey:** Convenient snowball sampling technique was employed to reach a large number of respondents.
- 2. Focus Group Discussion:** Purposive sampling was incorporated for focus group discussion by purposefully selecting Marathi literature readers only.
- 3. Telephonic Interview:** For telephonic interviews, purposive sampling was used, as the owners of popular publication houses, audiobook producers were selected purposefully.

Limitations:

1. Due to the pandemic, the survey, focus group discussions, and interviews were conducted via online platforms and in telephonic format respectively.
2. The population of the study is limited up to the readers who read Marathi literature only.
3. The digital mediums considered for the study are only those that deliver Marathi literature and produce new literature.
4. The platforms available to read Marathi literature are limited up to – printed hard copy books, e-books, and audiobooks.

Findings and Analysis:

To conduct the study, the researcher employed a triangulation approach. Survey and focus group discussion, telephonic interviews were used as quantitative and qualitative tools respectively. The data collected from these tools were analyzed as quantitative data and qualitative data. The analyses include hypothesis testing and answers to research questions.

Quantitative Data Analysis:

An online survey was conducted involving 167 respondents who are readers of Marathi literature. The data was then analyzed in the

format of descriptive and inferential analysis with the help of SPSS software. The descriptive data is analyzed by using the frequency and percentage method, presented in the bar graph and pie-chart format.

- **Age distribution:**

The age distribution of the 167 respondents is as follows:

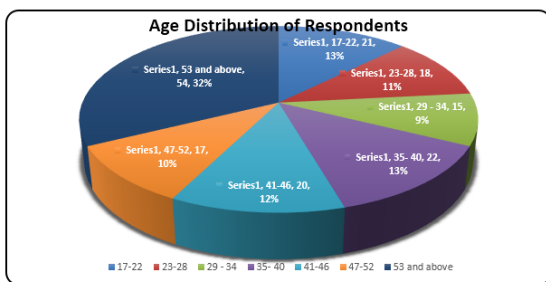


Figure 1: Age Distribution Chart

The maximum respondents are from the age group of 53 and above years who read Marathi literature. Following them, the maximum respondents are from the age group of 17 – 22 years and 35 – 40 years with each having 13% of respondents.

- **Frequency of respondents who have listened to audiobooks:**

It is important to understand the number of respondents who have listened to audiobooks already and then understanding their preferences of mediums.

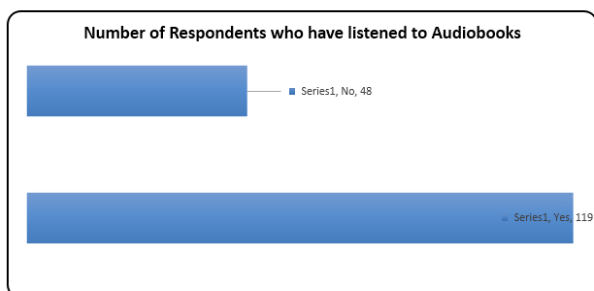


Figure 2: Number of respondents who have listened to Audiobooks chart

Out of 167 respondents, only 48 respondents have already listened to the audiobooks, whereas, 119 respondents have not. It is

further noticed that, out of 119 respondents (those who have not listened to audiobooks), 100 respondents would like to try listening to a book, while 19 of them would still not prefer listening to a book.

- **Preferences of Mediums by readers to read Marathi Literature:**

To understand the preferences of mediums to read Marathi literature, respondents have selected one of three options, i.e., reading hardcopy books, audiobooks, e-books. Whereas, audiobooks and e-books are included in the digital mediums.

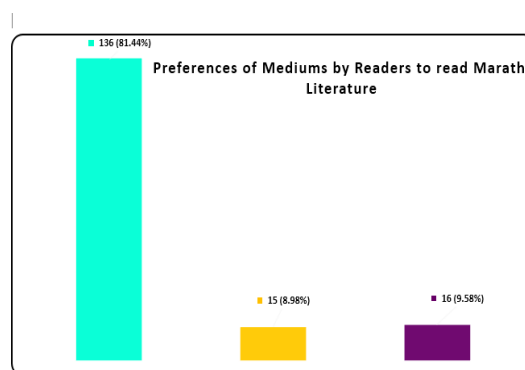


Figure 3: Preferences of mediums by readers to read Marathi Literature

It is seen in the bar graph presented that the maximum percentage of respondents, that is, 81.44% of the respondents prefer reading hardcopy books to read Marathi literature than the digital mediums. It is further observed by the researcher that those who have listened to the audiobooks already, also do prefer reading hardcopy books instead of listening to books again. Out of 48 respondents who have listened to audiobooks already, 37 of them prefer reading hardcopy books.

- **Opinion of respondents about the characteristics of the platforms:**

Respondents were asked about certain characteristics of every platform, and whether they agree to it or not. The questions involved:

1. Do you agree? [Reading Hard Copy books is time-consuming]

2. Do you agree? [Reading e-books requires less time than reading hard copy books]
3. Do you agree? [Audiobooks can be completed faster than reading a book]
4. Do you agree? [Listening to a book makes it more relatable than reading a book]

The opinions of the respondents are presented graphically:

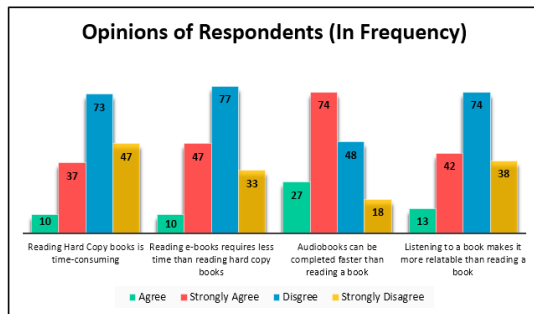


Figure 4: Opinions of the respondents

When asked about whether reading hardcopy books is a time-consuming process, the majority of the respondents disagree with it, similarly, when asked about whether Reading e-books requires less time than reading hardcopy books, the maximum respondents disagree with it. 74 out of 167 respondents agree that audiobooks can be completed faster than reading a book, while a similar number of respondents disagree that listening to a book makes it more relatable than reading a book.

Hypothesis Testing:

The hypothesis of the study are:

1. **H1:** Digital mediums are preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature.
2. **H0:** Digital mediums are not preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature.
3. **H2:** Readers between the age group of 17 – 40 years, prefer digital mediums to read Marathi literature.

To test the hypothesis, the researcher employed the inferential statistical method.

For the convenience of testing the hypothesis, the researcher merged the number of respondents who preferred digital mediums to read Marathi literature. Therefore, the number of respondents who preferred hardcopy books and digital mediums to read Marathi literature are 136 and 31 respectively.

Hypothesis testing of H1 and H0:

The One – proportional Z test was conducted to test the hypothesis H1 and H0 at 95% of the significance level. The test and results are as follows:

Hypothesized Population Proportion (P_e)	0.5
Sample Size (N)	167
Number of Favourable cases (Those preferring digital mediums to read Marathi Literature)	31
Significance Level (α)	95% (0.05)

1. The null hypothesis and main hypothesis are tested based on the following population proportion.

The observed proportion (P_o) for the favorable cases, i.e. to digital mediums is 0.1856.

The observed proportion (q) for unfavorable cases, i.e. to hardcopy books mediums is 0.8.

To perform the test, the correspondents for the H1 and H0 will be,

$$H1: q (0.8) > P_e(0.5)$$

$$H0: P_o(0.1856) \leq P_e(0.5)$$

For these correspondence tests, for which Z – test for one proportion is incorporated.

2. Rejection Region

Based on the information the significance level is $\alpha=0.05$, and the critical value for a right-tailed test is $Z_c=1.64$

The rejection region for this right-tailed test is $R = \{ z : z > 1.645 \}$.

3. Test Statistics:

The Z – Test is computed as follows:

$$z = \frac{p_0 - p_e}{\sqrt{\frac{p_e(1-p_e)}{n}}}$$

$$z = \frac{0.1856 - 0.5}{\sqrt{\frac{0.5(1-0.5)}{167}}}$$

$$= -8.125$$

4. Results:

Since it is observed that $z = -8.125 \leq z_c = 1.645$, the main hypothesis (H1) is rejected and the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted.

Using the P-value approach: The p-value is $p = 1$ and since $p = 1 \geq 0.05$, it is concluded that main hypothesis H1 is rejected.

5. Conclusion:

It is concluded that the null hypothesis Ho is not rejected. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to claim that the population proportion pp is greater than 0.5, at the $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level.

Confidence Interval

The 95% confidence interval is $0.127 < p < 0.245$

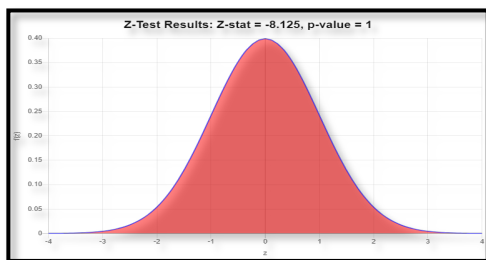


Figure 5 Graphical representation of Z test
Graphical Presentation:

Hence, in conclusion, H1, that is, Digital mediums are preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature is rejected and hypothesis H0, that is, Digital mediums are not preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature is accepted.

Hypothesis Testing of H2:

The hypothesis H2 talks about: readers between the age group of 17 – 40 years, prefer digital mediums to read Marathi literature. To test this hypothesis correlation of the two variables, that is age and preferences of the readers are used. By using those, the chi-square test of correlation was performed to test the significant relationship between the variables at a 95% of the significance level.

To conduct the test, the age groups are combined and then divided into two groups, that is group one of 17 – 40 years and group two of 41 and above years. The respondents from both the age groups are 76 and 91 respectively. Similarly, the preferences of the mediums to read Marathi literature are combined and divided as readers preferring hard copy books and readers preferring digital mediums. The frequency of the readers in both the categories is 136 and 31 respectively.

1. Cross-tabulation of Age and Preferences of media:

		Digital Mediums	Reading Hardcopy Book	Total
Age	17 to 40 Years	15	61	76
	41 and Above years	16	75	91
Total		31	136	167

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of Age and Preferences of Media

2. Chi-Square Test:

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.127 ^a	1	0.721

Table 2: Chi - Square test Table

Figure 7 presents the table which represents the chi-square test. The p-value which after calculation appears as 0.721. The results reveal that p-value (0.721) > significance level (0.05). Thus, there is no significant relationship between the age group and preferences of media by the readers to read Marathi literature. Hence, hypothesis H2, that is, readers between the age group of 17 – 40 years, prefer digital mediums to read Marathi literature is rejected.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

To answer the research questions, qualitative tools were employed. To understand the grounds based on the preferences of readers are decided, focus group discussions were conducted. To understand the impact of digital mediums from creators' perspectives, telephonic interviews were conducted. The group discussions and interviews were later transcribed and analyzed thematically as follows.

Telephonic Interview Analysis:

Telephonic interviews have contributed to this study by delivering and understanding the perception of the creators of the mediums. The researcher interviewed the owner of the Marathi leading publishing house named Majestic Prakashan. The researcher also interviewed the Consultant publisher of Storytel (Audiobook platform), the official from Bookganga (Marathi books seller company), the author of an audiobook, and the official of Maharashtra State Marathi

Development Institute to understand their perspective as a third person.

These interviews highlighted the viewpoints regarding the adoption of digital mediums. The official of Maharashtra State Marathi Development Institute stated that “in today’s world, due to proliferation of the internet, the content and likings of the readers and audience as a whole are changing. The population of Marathi readers has changed, as a result, the mediums are changing. The acceptance of the new mediums will take time, but it will also develop the number of readers who read hardcopy books”. Agreeing with the viewpoint, the Consultant publisher mentioned that, because of audiobooks, people are taking interest in reading. Audiobooks are leading people to read Marathi literature.

It is also been observed from the interview, as well as from focus group discussion, even though new mediums are introduced and adopted, the audience of the hardcopy books will not reduce. This has been proved by the statements of the owner of the leading publishing house. He states, every month, 100 – 120 Marathi books are been published by each publishing house.

Thus, it can be said that, due to the availability of various mediums, readers of Marathi literature select their preferences very carefully.

Focus Group Discussion Analysis:

Focus group discussion has played a pivotal role in the study by contributing the perspectives of the readers about mediums available to read Marathi literature. By employing the purposive sampling technique, three focus group discussions were conducted, involving 13 participants. These 13 participants are the user of printed hard copy books as well as some of them use digital mediums to read Marathi literature.

Technological Advancement in the mediums for reading Marathi Literature:

The reading culture in India is entrenched in the reading hardcopy book. Since childhood, the theory of 'reading' is developed as the 'reading' printed hardcopy book only. The culture for reading Marathi literature with digital mediums is forming shape in India. Different platforms are emerging digitally with the concept of 'listening to a book. A very interesting input was added by the participant is, "the culture of 'listening to a book is rooting in India now. We are familiar with the listening stories concept, thus the concept of listening to a book will be accepted soon".

While discussing the culture of audiobooks in Marathi literature, the participant said, "the experiments are running concerning Marathi literature in audiobook format, and it should be successful as well, because it is the need of the society and the readers' community".

While discussing the impact of the mediums on readers, the participant believed that impact will happen only to those who read. The first step is to develop a reading culture. Justifying his answer, the participant further said, "books are a very gigantic and strong concept. One needs to deliver a dedicated time for the book, but in the case of audiobooks, as someone is reciting a story, one needs to be consistent with it. Developing this consistency will require a lot of time". Concerning the technological developments in the mediums for Marathi literature, the participant delivered a remarkable perspective. He said, "the technology creators should focus on broadening the reading culture, once it happens, the mediums will be consumed. Technology cannot create the will and enthusiasm to read".

The content of the book also sometimes has the ground for selection of medium, the participants believed. Because of technology, the art of reading a book has varied a lot. All the platforms, that is hardcopy books, e-books, and audiobooks have their features.

During the discussion, the researcher realized that some participants are not admiring the concept of 'listening to a book or reading the book on 'screen'. They found some audiobooks are 'overdramatized'. Agreeing to this input, another participant said, "audiobooks create pre-environment for the listeners/readers. For example, if it is a romance genre, audiobooks have the liberty to create an environment by adding background music. While reading a book, readers travel their journey, which connects them with the book. This connection is sometimes lost in the audiobooks format".

E-books as a part of digital mediums are preferred by some of the audience as the process of 'reading' is performing. While some of the audience found reading e-books is a 'monotonous' process as screen viewing is involved.

Thus, with the help of technology, digital mediums are emerging in Marathi literature as well which are been adopted by the readers, while some of them are in disfavor of the mediums.

Preferences of the readers to read Marathi Literature:

During the discussion and after analyzing it, it was found that the majority of the participants are preferring print hardcopy books to read Marathi literature. The grounds that they mention for preferring the hardcopy books are the feeling of holding a book, the smell of the pages which is lacked in audiobooks and e-books. Another important aspect that was added by the participant is that, while reading

a hardcopy book, there is a direct conversation between the author and reader, which is generally not experienced while reading an e-book or while listening to a book. Supporting the statement, the participant said, “whenever we read a hardcopy book, we read it from our perception. When we listen to a book, we listen to it from the storyteller’s perspective, which we may not like”. A similar argument was made by another participant. She said, “in audiobooks, storylines are adjusted according to the storyteller. We receive the content from the storyteller’s perspective, which might not be similar to the author’s perception”.

Thus, these participants prefer hardcopy books to read Marathi literature. Another participant inserted a ground that, reading hardcopy books is comforting to her than reading on-screen or listening to books. In addition to this, it was pointed that, “the richness of reading is experienced by reading hardcopy books only”.

While discussing the factors that make the reader prefer hardcopy books only, the participant highlighted a point that “every book has its journey, similarly, every reader has its journey. While reading a hardcopy book, those journeys are merged and delivers a whole new experience to the reader. Because of this, we value what we have read”.

Some of the respondents also highlighted that, they do prefer the digital mediums to read Marathi literature, but they won’t leave reading hardcopy books. Their first preference will be hardcopy books, but in some situations, they will opt for digital mediums as well.

Impact of advertisements of Digital Mediums on the Preferences of Media to read Marathi Literature

Advertisements do play a very pivotal role in the life of a consumer. The ultimate goal of an advertisement is to make the audience aware

of their products. Digital platforms are nowadays advertising on various social media platforms. During the discussion about advertisements, the participants agreed that the advertisements and marketing strategies platforms are using are impactful. Some participants also agreed that they came to know about the platforms after watching an advertisement.

Some participants also said that because of the advertisements, excitement about the product will be created but it won’t change the preference of media. While highlighting the same point, another participant mentioned, “even if one likes to read the author, he/she might not like listening to author”.

Hence, to conclude, advertisements do impact but they do not change the preferences of the mediums to read Marathi literature.

During the pandemic, preferences of the readers to read Marathi Literature:

It was observed from the survey as well as from the group discussions that, during the pandemic, the majority of the readers switched their preferences from reading hardcopy books to reading e-books or listening to audiobooks. In the survey, it was found that there was a shift in preferences of the mediums from reading hardcopy books to digital mediums by 31.73%. It was also agreed upon by the participants of focus group discussions. This is also evident from the fact that the Consultant Publisher of Storytel (Audiobook platform) stated that there is a rise in the consumption of audiobooks by 30 – 40%.

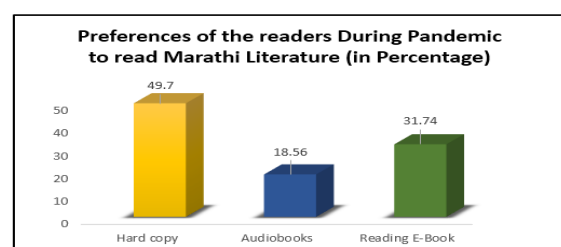


Figure 5: Preferences of the media by readers during pandemic to read Marathi Literature

Thus, in conclusion, although there is technological advancement in the mediums to read Marathi literature, the readers will prefer reading hardcopy books only. The readers will like to consume the other digital mediums as well, but the first preference is the hardcopy books only. This is evident from the fact, even during the pandemic, in the crisis, the maximum number of the readers prefer reading hardcopy books only.

Conclusion:

To conclude, there are three platforms available to read the Marathi literature, those are hardcopy books, e-books, and audiobooks. Out of these two, e-books and audiobooks are considered digital mediums. The survey data reveals that a maximum of the respondents prefers reading hardcopy books to reading or listening on digital mediums concerning the Marathi literature. The data also reveals that those who have already listened to the audiobooks will also prefer reading hardcopy books to read Marathi literature.

The hypothesis testing was conducted with the help of a Z-test. The results of the test reveal that the hypothesis 'digital mediums are preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature is been rejected whereas the null hypothesis, 'digital mediums are not preferred by the readers to read Marathi literature is accepted. The hypothesis relating to the correlation between the age group and preferences of the mediums was tested with a chi-square test. The results show that there is no significant relationship between the age of the individual and its preference of medium to read Marathi literature.

Furthermore, through the telephonic interviews, it can be concluded that mediums

are emerging, the acceptance of new mediums will take time, but at the same time, it won't reduce the readers of hardcopy books.

The focus group discussion concludes that advertisements of digital mediums have an impact on the audience, but it doesn't change their preference. The first preference of the audience will always be the hardcopy books. In times, if hardcopies are not available, the readers will opt for new mediums, but they will never leave hardcopy books. This is evident from the fact that, during the pandemic, when hard copies of books were not available, 31.73% of respondents switched from hardcopy books to digital mediums, whereas they still prefer consuming both mediums.

Scope of the Study:

The study signifies the importance and gaining popularity of the digitalized mediums in the world of Marathi literature. The study also guides the publishing houses, audiobook producers, also e-book publishers. The study also helps the communication and media scholars to understand the choices of the audience of the mediums.

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