

CHAPTER 3:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The present study follows descriptive survey research design as the methodology was found to be the most relevant for the research objectives. Goal of the descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics (Nassaji, 2015). The method focuses on ‘what’ rather than ‘how’ or ‘why’ of a social phenomenon. Thus, observation and survey are used as tools to gather data which is analysed using ‘frequencies, percentages, averages, or other statistical analyses to determine relationships’ (Gall, Gall and Borg, 1996).

The two major sections of the chapter describe underlying theories and models, and methodologies along with tools employed for data collection and interpretation.

2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework in social sciences provides the context to place their findings within an existing literature, and justification for the importance and significance of the research (Lederman and Lederman, 2015).

The present study delves upon the intersection of media studies and disability studies. Thus, elements from both the fields are integrated for better understanding of the phenomenon of disability representation by mainstream media. The theories and models described are categorized in media and disability sections for providing context for the present study.

2.1 Media Theories

2.1.1 Media Framing

The framing theory by Entman (1993) associates framing with selection and salience – selecting some aspect of a perceived reality and make it more prominent to highlight a ‘particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation for the item described.’ (p. 52). He also attributes four functions of framing – defining problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements, and suggest remedies. He adds that one news story might not change attitude and behaviour of the audience, but ‘constant and persistent strategic use of frames holds the potential to transform public opinion.’ (p. 73).

Framing in journalistic context is the way a story is written or produced (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). Thus, the emphasis is not just about *what* is being presented, but also *how* it is presented for the audience.

2.1.2 Agenda Setting Theory

McCombs and Shaw (1972) set out to explain how media shapes the public opinion – and that took shape of *agenda setting theory* of mass communication. The fundamental idea the duo presented was, the mainstream media creates a public agenda by focusing its attention on certain issues, while ignoring others.

The theory, which took shape as a result of Chapel Hill study, empirically tested Lippman's theory during 1968 Presidential campaign. The outcome claimed that the issues found most important by the media through its reporting were also found important by the voters.

'Agenda setting is considerably more than the classical assertion that the news tells us *what to think about*, the news also tells us *how to think about it*. Both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of frames for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda-setting roles,' claimed the duo (1993).

2.1.3 Media and Social Responsibility

McQuail (2013) claimed that media has an obligation to 'be truthful, fair, objective and relevant to the public served' as part of the social responsibility theory. He added that the editorial freedom should be subject to some form of public accountability, and codes of conduct and professional ethics should be observed. The norms of public journalism also warrant the media owners to pursue goal of improved quality of civic life and foster public discussion.

Earlier in their influential work 'Four Theories of the Press,' Siebert, Peterson, Peterson and Schramm (1956) listed 'Social Responsibility' along with Authoritarian, Libertarian and Soviet Communist theories. Describing what it means to have social responsibility of press, the book mentioned – 'to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society.' (p. 74) One of the six tasks listed include 'safeguarding the rights of the individual by serving as a watchdog against government.'

2.2 Disability Theories

Over five decades, the researchers have listed over 20 different models of disability based on context and evolution of disability studies (Retief and Letšosa, 2018; Barnes and Mercer, 2001). The present study however narrows down the ideas and theories related to representation of disability in media.

2.2.1 Disability framing in media

Clogston (1990, 1994) and Haller (1998, 2010) provide a perspective of ‘disability framing’ in context of media representation. Two most prominent frames observed were ‘traditional’ and ‘progressive.’ (Haller and Burns, 2015).

Table 1: Traditional v/s. Progressive Models of Disability

Traditional	Progressive
Medical – disability presented as an ‘illness or malfunction;’ disability first, person second	Minority/civil rights – PwDs seen as members of a community with legitimate civil rights and access to justice
Social pathology – PwDs presented as disadvantaged, looking for economic support which is a gift and not a right	Legal – PwDs have legal rights and can resort to legal instrument to fight discrimination
Supercrip – PwDs are rarity with their ‘superhuman feat’ or ‘special’ because they lead a normal life despite their disabilities	Cultural pluralism – PwDs are seen as multi-faceted members of society and their disability is not their only identity
Business – PwDs and their accessibility has a cost to society, and they affect business and productivity	Consumer – The disability community is an untapped consumer group and tapping them can be profitable for business and society

Clogston (1990, 1994), Haller (1995, 1998), Burns (2015)

2.2.2 Disability Stereotypes in media

Biklen and Bogdan (1977, 1985) point out ten common stereotypes of disabled individuals in the media including the object of pity, the object of violence, as evil, as irrelevant atmosphere, as superhuman, as laughable, as his/her own worst enemy, as a burden, as either asexual or sex deprived, and as incapable of meaningful participation in society.

Similarly, Nelson (1994), based on the work of Biklen and Bogdan, identified seven stereotypes which he associated with ableism. The stereotypes included 1) pitiable and pathetic, 2) supercrip, 3) sinister, evil, and criminal, 4) better-off dead, 5) maladjusted, his or her own worst enemy, 6) a burden, and 7) unable to live a successful life.

2.2.3 Critical Disability Theory

The Critical Disability Theory (CDT) by Hosking (2008) modifies Social Model of disability with the following principles

- Disability is a social construct, and not an inevitable consequence of impairment
- Disability is best characterized as a complex interrelationship between impairment, individual response to impairment, and the social environment

- The social disadvantage experienced by persons with disabilities is due to physical, institutional, and attitudinal environment that refuses to acknowledge needs of the people who do not conform to societal standards of ‘normalcy’

The approach by Goodley (2013, 2017) towards critical disability studies underlines the transient nature of the issue – the philosophy of dis/ability indicates interplay between normality and disability. Thus, it does not deal with the ‘marginal’ but the ‘centre’ of the issue in context of society and culture.

‘Critical disability studies start with disability but never end with it: Disability is the space from which to think through a host of political, theoretical, and practical issues that are relevant to all... Critical disability studies, then, capture some of the sophisticated ways in which bodies, knowledge, and technology merge.’ (p. 84, 2017)

2.3 Use of theories in present study

As the subject of the present study comprises of looking at disability from media perspective, the study intended to address issues such as social representation in media discourses (Marková 2003), media framing of disability (Goethals, et al., 2022), use of language used in media narratives for persons with disability (Haller, 2010) and role of media to represent societal issues (McQuail, 2013).

Thus, an amalgamation of theoretical approaches was used in the study to derive the answers to the research questions. The study borrows concepts from both media and disability discourses and uses unique framework for multi-faceted examination of the issue of media representation of disability.

3. Research Methodology

To get a deeper perspective on the phenomenon under study, the research objectives aimed at collecting data from media, PwDs, and subject experts. Thus, the design includes two quantitative methods and one qualitative method to answer the research questions.

3.1 Research Design

The present study aimed to understand the changes in media representation of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in response to independent variables such as introduction of Accessible India (Sugamya Bharat) campaign and word ‘Divyang’ to describe PwDs by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 and implementation of The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 in 2016.

Table 2: Research Question and Objectives Matrix

Research Question	What has been the change in coverage of disability issues by mainstream media in Gujarat after the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016?	How PwDs in Gujarat perceive the media coverage of disability issues vis-à-vis factors such as nature of disability and education? Has technology and social media changed the way PwDs interact with media?	What are the factors that determine coverage of disability-related issues in media?
Research Objectives	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>To examine and quantify print media coverage of the disability sector for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017 in Gujarat</p> <p>To study the difference between pre-Act and post-Act (RPwD Act) coverage of disability issues in Gujarat-based newspapers including terminology</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>To find perception of the PwDs and other stakeholders on the depiction of PwD in mainstream media</p> <p>To examine how the PwDs consume media and use of new technology for the same</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>To identify key issues related to the representation of disability sector and PwD in mainstream media</p>

The study also aimed to examine how the PwDs perceived these changes and their interaction with new media and technology including social media and smartphones. The study was based in Gujarat – specifically in Ahmedabad – due to factors such as presence of all major media houses, presence of major non-government organizations (NGOs) working in the field of various disabilities, and educational institutes for the PwDs.

The primary approach to address the research questions was qualitative as it is ‘multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Thus, the study was carried out to understand the phenomenon (in this case representation of disability in mainstream media), and interpret the changes brought about by the important milestones for the community of PwDs.

For the three primary objectives of the study – documenting and examining media coverage pre- and post-the Rights of PwD Act, 2016, understanding consumption and perception of media coverage among PwDs in Gujarat, and identifying key issues related to the representation of disability sector – three methods namely document analysis, questionnaire with perception scale and in-depth interview were employed respectively. The approach was employed to look at the same phenomenon from three different perspectives.

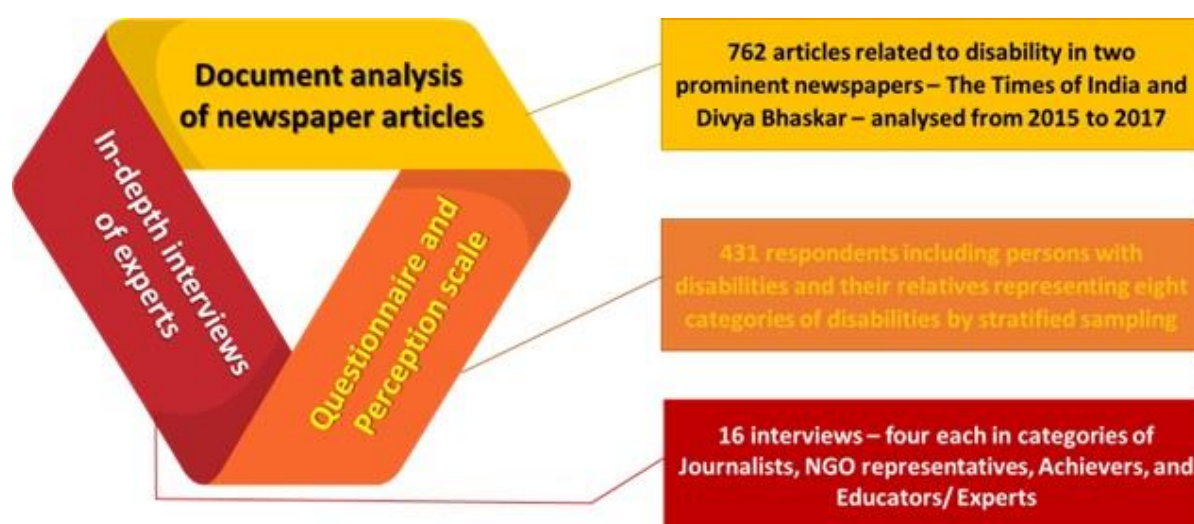


Figure 1: Graphical representation of research design

The first phase of the study was carried out with identification of newspapers for content or document analysis for coverage of disability-related topics. The second phase included sample or questionnaire survey of persons with multiple disabilities. The method also included perception scale to gauge sentiments of the respondents towards media coverage and expectations. Primary findings of both these methods were then shared with the experts for their suggestions and reflections.

While a large section of the respondents for the questionnaire and perception scale mentioned reading Gujarati and English-language newspapers, several of the experts also got featured in the newspapers during the period under the study. Thus, several themes such as usage of disability-related terminology, coverage on special occasions and topics covered were the common links that connected all three arms of the data collection.

3.2 Tools for data collection and coding of data

3.2.1 Document Analysis

Content analysis is a popular method for social science and communication research (Wimmer and Dominick, 1994). The technique comes handy while analysing large bodies of text and offers objective guidelines in the coding of the text and to draw inferences from the data (Bowen, 2009). According to Holsti (1969), content analysis is any technique for making inferences by ‘systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages. In context of this study, document analysis was used as a tool for data collection.

The method is also studies and analyses communication in ‘systematic, objective and quantitative manner’ for the purpose of measuring variables (Kerlinger, 1986; Berelson, 1952). Kaid (1989) lays down seven steps of content analysis – formulating research question, selecting samples to be analysed, defining categories to be applied, outlining coding process, implementing coding process, determining trustworthiness, and analysing the results of coding process.

Several Indian studies have employed the method including Devi Prasad et. al. (1991) for analysis of editorials and letters to the editor before the General Elections, Murty (2001) for coverage of development news, and Biswal (2015) for coverage of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in newspapers.

The present study selected two daily newspapers – The Times of India for English language, and Divya Bhaskar for Gujarati language – for document analysis. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) mentioned, data is examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge in this method. Selection of the newspapers was based on them being the highest circulating dailies in their respective categories in Gujarat based on the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) 2018 figures.

To answer the first research question and first two research objectives, the research design included newspapers of three years – 2015, 2016 and 2017. All the days were included in the sample with one exception of November 2017 in case of Divya Bhaskar where file for the month was inaccessible. Thus, in all over 2,000 newspapers for 35 months (12 months X 3 years – 1 month) were scanned.

The newspapers for the period under study were not available with or without subscriptions in e-paper format on their websites. Thus, access to the archives – physical in case of Divya

Bhaskar and digital in case of The Times of India – were sought with special permissions. None of the publications had indexed or searchable databases. Thus, every page of the newspapers was manually scanned to search for stories that mentioned disability-related keyword in headline or text. Some of the months were randomly selected to check that all the stories with mention of disability were identified and documented.

With the method, 331 stories from Divya Bhaskar and 431 stories from The Times of India were identified. Each story – including photo captions – was included for the final analysis. When the stories were presented as a news package (where more than one story was placed on the same page and mention of the same or similar topic), each story was treated as a different unit for analysis. Some of the stories (especially in The Times of India) used disability terminology for non-disability stories such as ‘crippled’ and ‘blind’ among others. They were not included for final analysis.

Coding

Each article was treated as a unit of analysis. On a coding sheet, the details such as date, page number, headline/ photo caption, word length, position on page, use of picture, byline, direct quotes in story, tone of story, disability model of story, place of occurrence, nature of story, topic of story, words used and disability mentioned were recorded.

For designing the tool, previous studies including Haller, Dorries and Rahn (2006) and Biswal (2015) were referred. Moreover, some techniques were also employed from Lynch and Peer (2002) that provided methods for coding ‘manifest content’ – referring to ‘concrete things that you can point to in the text of the story – for example how many times a certain word appears, or how many different people are quoted.’

For disability model of story, the study by Burns and Haller (2015) was taken as a reference point. While there are multiple models of disability (Refer Chapter 2), for the ease of analysis, three categories of Traditional, Progressive, and Not Applicable were created.

According to the classification, Traditional Models included Medical Model, Social Pathology Model, Supercrip Model, and Business Model. The Progressive Models included Minority/ civil rights Model, Legal Model, Cultural pluralism Model and Consumer Model.

Table 3: Units of newspaper story analysis

Sr No.	Unit	Explanation
1.	Date	As a method of record-keeping, and to ascertain how many stories appeared on special days such as December 3 (International Day of Persons with Disabilities) or April 2 (World Autism Awareness Day)
2.	Page no./ Section	To ascertain how many stories made it to front page (page 1) of the publication, how many were local, national, or international or were specific to sections such as sports
3.	Main paper or supplement	In the case of Divya Bhaskar, both main paper and supplement were taken into consideration for analysis due to high frequency of local stories in supplement. Due to nature of publication, only main paper was analyzed in case of The Times of India
4.	Headline/ Caption	In the case of news stories, headlines were recorded, whereas in case of photo captions, captions were recorded. The keywords gave indication about disabilities mentioned and tone of the article
5.	Word length	For the purpose of analysis, the stories were divided into five categories – photo caption, less than 100 words, 100-200 words, 200-300 words and more than 300 words. The word length was used as a measure to ascertain importance attached to the story. It is similar to another method of column centimeters – the bigger the story, the more importance was given to the topic by the editors
6.	Position on the page	The newspaper page was divided into three equal horizontal bars – top (lead), middle (belly), and bottom (anchor). Newspapers often put the

		breaking news/ important stories in top section and soft/feature stories in bottom section of the page
7.	Picture	Use of pictures/ images was analysed to ascertain importance given to the visual aspect of disability and to understand disability-wise representation
8.	Byline	Bylines in newspaper parlance are related to stories exclusive for the reporter and newspaper. In contrast to routine stories generated by events or press releases, exclusive or special stories emphasize a specific point of view and in-depth analysis of a phenomenon
9.	Quoted/ mentioned in the story	Person/ persons whose direct quotes were used in the stories were recorded to ascertain frequency of their representation. The categories included persons with disabilities (PwDs), their relatives, NGO officials, government officials, medical officials, others, or none
10.	Tone of the story	Based on the words used in the headline and/or text (copy) of the story, the tone was ascertained to be positive or negative. For example, 'Visually impaired girl from Gujarat gets 30 th position in Children Science Congress' was termed positive, whereas 'Swimming pool for the disabled in Navrangpura closed' was termed negative. The stories with no apparent tone were termed neutral
11.	Dominant model of disability	The categorization considers Haller (1995) and Burns and Haller (2015) classification of media framing of disability to identify stories as following traditional or progressive models of disability (Medical, Charity, Social). Those with no apparent

		words or tone were classified as Not Applicable (NA)
12.	Place of occurrence	Dateline of the stories were recorded to ascertain place of occurrence – local, state, national, or international. For the features with no dateline, the place was ascertained based on text
13.	Nature of stories	Based on classification by McCormick, Frechie, and Halbert (2004) and BBC (n.d.), the stories were categorized into breaking news, event, feature, interview, and editorial comment. The events that spanned over multiple stories were termed ‘follow-up’ for analysis
14.	Topics covered in stories	Beats in a newspaper refer to area of specialization a reporter looks after. Based on the topic of the story, they were classified further (from nature of stories) into human interest, crime/law, sports, policy announcement, charity, medical, education, technology/innovation and other. The classification was carried out to understand whether any specific genre was covered more compared to others
15.	Words used	All the disability-related words – or those describing a condition – were identified by reading and re-reading of the stories so that none are left. Those getting repeated in the same story were excluded. Thus, words such as ‘Divyang,’ ‘Viklang,’ ‘Muk-badhir,’ ‘Pragnachakshu’ in Gujarati and ‘Deaf,’ ‘Blind,’ ‘Specially-abled,’ ‘Born without arms’ in English were identified and recorded to check frequency and change in its usage over three years
16.	Disability mentioned	The 21 disabilities listed in The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 were taken as

		the base for analysing the stories and identifying them based on words used. If there were more than one disability mentioned, they were recorded duly. When the text did not specify any specific disability and just identified ‘disabled,’ it was recorded as Not Mentioned
--	--	--

3.2.2 Questionnaire and Perception Scale

Questionnaire

Questionnaires are used in sample surveys or censuses to elicit reports of facts, attitudes, and other subjective states (Martin, 2006). A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2014).

While questionnaire is a tool for primary data collection, survey indicates the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data gathered from a large number of respondents.

In context of the present study, the tool was administered to the persons with disabilities (PwDs) or their immediate relatives to determine their media consumption habits.

The study employed close-ended questionnaire design to get responses on the perception. The study also referenced Zhang and Haller (2013) for a similar study design to elicit responses from PwDs on the representation of disability in mainstream media.

The questionnaire was designed in three parts including personal information, and media consumption patterns.

The questionnaire was administered in mid-2021 when the impact of the second wave of Covid pandemic was still fresh. As several of the NGOs working with the persons with disabilities (PwDs) were not fully operational, the questionnaire and perception scale were administered in hybrid mode. An online Google Form was created based on the physical questionnaire. While the forms were distributed to the NGOs, they were also encouraged to distribute it through their social media and WhatsApp groups to achieve the required number of respondents.

The NGO officials were first explained the purpose of the study, the outline of questionnaire form, and nature of answers – close-ended questions with multiple choices were chosen to reduce confusion. In case of respondents with visual impairment, the volunteers at NGOs read out the questions to them, sought the answers and filled up the form after confirming the answers. In some of the disabilities where the persons themselves were not able to fill up the responses – such as mental illness or autism spectrum disorder – their parents were requested to fill up the forms as important stakeholders in the disability discourse.

To broad-base the questionnaire, it was prepared in both Gujarati and English languages. An informed consent was taken by the respondents in terms of a letter attached with each questionnaire. The design of questionnaire and administering it was carried out in all cases in coordination with the respective NGOs to ensure that the norms to work with persons with disabilities (PwDs) are followed.

A pilot study with a group of 15 students was carried out at the Blind People’s Association (BPA) in Ahmedabad before the start of the questionnaire distribution, and the form was improved based on feedback.

Table 4: NGOs chosen for administering questionnaire

Disability	NGO/ Trust
Blindness	Blind People’s Association (BPA), Ahmedabad
	Andh Kanya Prakash Gruh, Ahmedabad
Locomotor disability	Apang Manav Mandal (AMM), Ahmedabad
	Saika Mobility Hub, Ahmedabad
Intellectual disability/ Autism Spectrum Disorder/ Learning disabilities	BM Institute of Mental Health, Ahmedabad
Speech and hearing impairment	Tara Foundation, Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar
	School for Deaf-Mutes Society, Ahmedabad
Other/ Multiple disabilities	School of Physiotherapy, Ahmedabad
	Voice of Specially-Abled People (VoSAP), Ahmedabad and US
Blood-related disorders	Thalassemia Day Care Centre, Ahmedabad
	Social media/ WhatsApp groups of patients based in Ahmedabad

Cerebral palsy/ Muscular dystrophy	Social media/ WhatsApp groups of patients based in Ahmedabad
Neurological conditions	Social media/ WhatsApp groups of patients based in Ahmedabad

A total of 10 Ahmedabad-based organizations were approached for getting responses of the questionnaire. In addition, several other individuals and social media/ WhatsApp groups were approached to identify persons with not so common disabilities such as blood-related disorders, cerebral palsy, and neurological disorders.

Perception Scale

One part of the questionnaire was perception scale which was carried out simultaneously. A five-point Likert Scale was employed to understand the respondents' perception of media representation of disability issues. A total of 20 questions were included ranging from feelings about word 'Divyang' to role of media in creating reality of persons with disability for society.

The scale was validated statistically with Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.903, indicating high reliability of the scale.

3.2.3 In-Depth Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were conducted after basic data collection and analysis for document analysis, and questionnaire and perception scale. The semi-structured interviews are 'generally organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees... The individual in-depth interview allows the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters.' (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

According to Kvale (1996), qualitative interviewing is interpretative method, and open-ended in the sense that 'it is more concerned with being attuned to the participant than with necessarily following the same path for all respondents.' Qualitative interview is chosen as a method over ethnographic methods when the topic of interest does not centre on a 'particular settings, but the concern is with establishing common patterns or themes between particular types of respondents' (Rubin and Rubin, 1995).

Majority of (12 out of 16) interviews were carried out in-person to yield authentic and deep descriptions of phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 1994). Due to Covid period and other factors (one

of the interviewees was in the US, whereas another was in the other city due to professional engagements), two interviews were carried out over video call, whereas two others were carried out over audio call.

In all the cases, the primary findings of the previous two rounds of data collection were shared with interviewees via email or messages. The informed consent for their participation was sought, and later transcripts were shared with the interviewees to keep the process transparent.

On an average, the interviews were between 40 to 60 minutes. They were audio recorded with consent of the participants and were transcribed using online tools. Some of the interviews, which were conducted in Hindi or Gujarati for ease of eliciting information from the interviewees, were transcribed again in English for the uniformity of analysis.

Coding

The present study follows thematic analysis approach where a series of structural codes are applied to the large dataset. As Namey, Guest, Thairu and Johnson (2008) describes,

‘This approach works for data collected using structured or semi-structured interview or focus group guides that have discrete questions and probes that are repeated across multiple files in a data set... Each discrete question and its associated probes are assigned a code that is then applied or linked to the question and subsequent response text in each data file. Sets of questions that comprise a conceptual domain of inquiry can also be given a structural code.’

The codes were derived from the dataset and the coding approach was ‘bottom-up’ in the tradition of inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998). The themes in this context are ‘a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon’ (Boyatzis, 1998).

The single-coder exercise was carried out to find the codes from the transcripts of interviews, which were then assigned broader labels or themes such as ‘Media as facilitator,’ ‘Media bias,’ ‘NGOs’ role in information dissemination’ among others. After the first round of coding, the text was scanned again to see whether any codes are left. The entire process was also shared by subject experts to ensure that the method has rigour, credibility, and trustworthiness.

3.3 Sample and sampling techniques

Sampling is defined as the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality based on which a judgement or inference about the aggregate or totality is made. In other words, it is the process

of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it (Kothari and Garg, 2014).

3.3.1 Document Analysis

For the longitudinal (observing the same variables over a period) approach, three years of 2015, 2016 and 2017 were chosen. For the document analysis to understand representation of disability, the Audit Bureau of Circulation (<http://www.auditbureau.org/>) was referred to select the daily newspapers. The non-profit auditor is one of the oldest and trustworthy measures to ascertain circulation of a newspaper.

The ABC figures indicated The Times of India to have the highest circulation in India among English dailies and Divya Bhaskar to have the highest circulation among Gujarati dailies at the time of commencement of the present study (in 2018). Both the dailies have presence in Gujarat and having state headquarters in Ahmedabad. Both the dailies have multiple regional editions in Gujarat and have editions across India through their other publications - while The Times of India is part of Times Group, Divya Bhaskar is part of Dainik Bhaskar Group which also owns Dainik Bhaskar Hindi daily.

Both the newspapers were chosen based on their pan-India presence and general interest nature of news along with circulation figures.

All the available newspapers during the year (as mentioned in section 3.2.1) were included in the sample for data collection and analysis.



AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS

Highest Circulated amongst ABC Member Publications (across languages)
As certified upto 22nd February, 2019.

Sr. No.	Title	Language	Average Qualifying Sales Jan - Jun 2018	Average Qualifying Sales Jul - Dec 2017
Daily Newspapers (amongst member publications)				
1	Dainik Bhaskar	Hindi	4,318,377	4,146,737
2	Dainik Jagran	Hindi	4,144,706	4,367,541
3	The Times of India	English	2,826,164	3,198,449
4	Hindustan	Hindi	2,625,343	2,763,623
5	Amar Ujala	Hindi	2,610,784	2,711,504
6	Malayala Manorama	Malayalam	2,368,672	2,411,402
7	Eenadu	Telugu	1,807,998	1,842,624
8	Daily Thanthi	Tamil	1,525,526	1,571,782
9	The Hindu	English	1,397,944	1,548,660
10	Mathrubhumi	Malayalam	1,363,931	1,451,420
11	Daily Sakal	Marathi	1,204,640	1,278,971
12	Punjab Kesari	Hindi	1,165,506	1,180,348
13	Sakshi	Telugu	1,091,079	1,110,141
14	Ananda Bazar Patrika	Bengali	1,080,478	1,080,883
15	Patrika	Hindi	1,005,485	1,014,688
16	Hindustan Times	English	1,004,110	1,168,613
17	Dinamalar	Tamil	848,287	894,731
18	Prabhat Khabar	Hindi	829,982	858,084
19	Divya Bhaskar	Gujarati	822,513	770,023
20	Vijayavani	Kannada	760,738	802,619

Figure 2: Circulation figures for The Times of India and Divya Bhaskar in the first half of 2018

accessed from

[http://www.auditbureau.org/files/JJ2018%20Highest%20Circulated%20amongst%20ABC%20Member%20Publications%20\(across%20languages\).pdf](http://www.auditbureau.org/files/JJ2018%20Highest%20Circulated%20amongst%20ABC%20Member%20Publications%20(across%20languages).pdf)

3.3.2 Questionnaire and Perception Scale

The questionnaire and perception scale were administered in mid-2021 with the effect of Covid pandemic still on the organizations working in the field of disabilities. For the purpose of the study, the persons with disabilities (PwDs) affiliated with these organizations were chosen to be respondents for ease of eliciting responses based on their understanding of disability and authenticity of the responses.

Ahmedabad-based organizations were chosen for the purpose primarily due to relatively higher concentration of the organizations working in disability sector for decades and due to the high number of students and working professionals from other parts of Gujarat living in the hostels or facilities by these organizations. Ahmedabad being the hub of both print and electronic media in Gujarat, the frequent coverage of these organizations (as mentioned in document analysis part) – encountered by the respondents – was also the reason.

For the questionnaires, sample size 384 is the magic number as it is considered to be a good representation of large population size by researchers such as Krejcie and Morgan (cited in Rahi, 2017). While the Census 2011 data indicated population of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in Gujarat at 10,92,302 (<https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/43396>), in Ahmedabad (urban), the number was 1,84,302.

Table 5: Snapshot of disability profile in Ahmedabad according to Census data of 2011

Disability	Population	%
Seeing	52626	29
Hearing	43179	23
Movement	23211	13
Speech	11672	6
Mental retardation	6780	4
Multiple	6645	4
Mental illness	4540	2
Other	35649	19
Total	184302	100

Source: Census of India, 2011; % figures rounded off

For 95% confidence level at 5% margin of error the minimum sample size required was 384. A total of 492 filled-up forms – both online and offline – were collected. After eliminating incomplete or irrelevant responses for the purpose of study, 431 were chosen for the final analysis, which were higher than the minimum number required.

An attempt was made to get the percentage representation of different disabilities (strata in context of sampling for stratification) in the population for the questionnaire responses. As new categories of disabilities after introduction of The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 were introduced, they were also included for the data collection purpose. Thus, it was stratified sampling where 10 different disabilities were represented.

The respondents were chosen randomly by the NGOs who were at least 16 years of age, were available on campus at the time of distribution of questionnaires or agreed to be respondent of the questionnaire and perception scale through online forms. The volunteers from the NGOs were trained for data collection to reduce the chances of irrelevant details. The NGOs were involved from start to end to ensure that the disability-related research norms including maintaining privacy and informing the respondents in clear terms why and how the data is collected and analysed.

In case of disabilities where the direct responses were difficult to obtain (mental illness, autism spectrum disorder) their immediate relatives such as father or mother filled up the form. A few of the parents of children that underwent Cochlear implant were also included in the sample.

3.3.3 In-depth Interviews

For qualitative research tool such as in-depth interviews, different sources cite optimal number to be between 9 and 17 (Boddy, 2016; Hennink and Kaiser, 2022). According to Charmaz

(1990), the number of respondents ‘depends upon developing the range of relevant conceptual categories, saturating (filling, supporting, and providing repeated evidence for) those categories, and explaining the data.’

Table 6: Interviewees’ categories and organizations they represent

Category of interviewees	Organization
Journalists	The Times of India Divya Bhaskar India TV Aaj Tak/ India Today
NGO representatives	Blind People’s Association (BPA) Sense (India) International Apang Manav Mandal (AMM) The School for Deaf-Mutes Society
Educators/ Experts	BM Institute of Mental Health National Institute of Design (NID) International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) Voice of Specially-Abled People (VoSAP)
Achievers/ Award winners	Paralympian National Award winner, 2014 National Award winner, 2017 National Award winner, 2019

For the purpose of the present study, four categories of interviewees were devised – Journalists, NGO representatives, Educators/ Subject experts, and Achievers/ Award winners. The categories were to ensure that all the perspectives on the topic could be covered. Thus, four respondents were interviewed from each category, taking the total to 16, for robust and reliable data. All interviewees were based in Ahmedabad.

The sampling method was purposive sampling with the reasons as follows –

The journalists from The Times of India and Divya Bhaskar were among the interviewees as both the publications were also part of the document analysis. The two other journalists – senior

TV channel representatives in Gujarat – worked as counterbalance to ascertain whether there were any inherent differences between the print and electronic media.

Likewise, as data collection took place from organizations such as Blind People's Association, Apang Manav Mandal, The School for Deaf-Mutes Society, BM Institute of Mental Health, and Voice of Specially-Abled People, the senior representatives from the same organizations were interviewed. It was to understand the responses in context of special groups such as persons with visual impairment or multiple disabilities such as deafblindness.

In addition, independent experts were also interviewed such as a disability scholar from the National Institute of Design (NID) and representatives of two international organizations to gain insight into Indian vis-à-vis international scenario.

The achievers included a Paralympian and Para Commonwealth Games (CWG) bronze award winner from Gujarat who had won laurels over the years. The three others were National Award winners from Ahmedabad from the years 2014, 2017 and 2019 in different categories.

The National Awards are conferred by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) of the Government of India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (<https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/year-wise-national-awards.php>). The reason to choose these specific award winners was again the fact that all four of them got featured during the period of study (2015 to 2017) in the newspapers considered for document analysis.

4. Plan for Analysis and interpretation

4.1 Document Analysis

The 762 stories (331 stories from Divya Bhaskar and 431 stories from The Times of India) over three years of 2015, 2016 and 2017 were coded based on selected parameters. The codes were then quantified to ascertain frequencies – number of articles for specific word length, number of articles with pictures, frequency of words used, disability mentioned, and so on.

The presentation used descriptive statistics as the numbers derived from tabulation were analysed using Microsoft Excel. The results were presented in form of numerical tables and charts including pie charts and bar charts. Analysis was carried out differently for both Divya Bhaskar and The Times of India, after which differences and similarities were interpreted. For the words used to describe disabilities, online tools were employed to create word clouds for

each year. The exercise provided frequency of the most-used words and shift in terminology over the three years.

Further analysis such as disability getting higher word count and front-page coverage, and specific themes such as sports and crime getting more coverage was also carried out to get in-depth perspective on the media representation of disability, answering the first research question.

4.2 Questionnaire and Perception Scale

The 431 forms were tabulated in three categories of personal details, media consumption habits and perception of media coverage on disability. The first two categories' responses were quantified and analysed using Microsoft Excel for descriptive statistics. The results were presented in form of pie charts and bar graphs.

The perception scale was analysed with SPSS ver.24 to get the mean values and to ascertain the answers' relationship with other aspects of the questionnaire. Thus, tests including frequency test, intensity index, t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) for time spent on reading, age of respondents, type of media, type of disability were administered. The results were presented both in numerical tables and graphs.

The method gave answers to the second research question on media coverage perception and habits of media consumption with respect to developing technology and social media.

4.3 In-depth Interviews

The 16 interviews were transcribed and coded with inductive method. Following the thematic analysis method, the themes emerged out of the coding which were categorized (Poole and Folger, 1981; Weber, 1990). and the codes were distributed. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), the thematic analysis is 'a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set.'

With use of Microsoft Excel, the codes were assigned a specific colour and a coding sheet was created.

For the analysis, the categories were described with conclusion based on codes generated and direct quotes from the interviews. The analysis was also carried out for four categories and similar and different points of view based on the categories.

The findings were descriptive in nature which answered the third research question on factors influencing the coverage of disability in mainstream media and key issues related to representation of disability and persons with disabilities (PwDs) in media.

4.4 Common themes and Conclusion

The results of all three tools were analysed to find common themes that emerged out such as use of words for persons with disabilities, frequency of disability-related stories, frequency of newly-coined words and concepts. It also provided the way to summarize the findings and providing recommendations.

Analysis of the common themes in the study provided inter-relatability for findings as it were derived from three different sources and tools.

5. Delimitation

The present study was primarily based in Ahmedabad due to presence of major media houses and NGOs working in the field of disability. The study employs single-coder method for the thematic analysis of in-depth interviews. The period of three years was chosen for analysis of the newspaper coverage of disability.

Bibliography

- Barnes, C., and Mercer, G. (2001). Disability culture. *Handbook of disability studies*, 515-534.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communication research*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 19(4), 426-432.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). *Document analysis as a qualitative research method*. Qualitative research journal, 9(2), 27-40.
- Boyatzis, R. (1998). Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association.
- Burns, S., and Haller, B. (2015). The politics of representing disability: Exploring news coverage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 25(2), 262-277.
- Cappella, J. N., and Jamieson, K. H. (1997). The Cognitive Bases for Framing Effects. New York: Oxford University Press., 58-86. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/610
- Charmaz, K. (1990). 'Discovering' chronic illness: using grounded theory. *Social science and medicine*, 30(11), 1161-1172.
- Corbetta, P. (2003). *Social research: Theory, methods and techniques*. Sage.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Fifth edition. Los Angeles, SAGE.
- Denzin, N., and Lincoln. Y. (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Devi Prasad, B and Sampath Kumar, R D (1991) *Opinion moulding by the press: An analysis of the election related content of editorials and letters to the editors*. Media Asia, 18 (1): 24-29.

- Eisner, E.W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Toronto: Collier Macmillan Canada.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). *Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm*. Journal of communication, 43(4), 51-58.
- Fife-Schaw, C. (1995). Questionnaire design. *Research methods in psychology*, 174-193.
- Goethals, T., Mortelmans, D., Van den Bulck, H., Van den Heurck, W., and Van Hove, G. (2022). *I am not your metaphor: frames and counter-frames in the representation of disability*. Disability and Society, 37(5), 746-764.
- Goodley, D. (2017). Dis/entangling critical disability studies. *Culture–theory–disability*, 81.
- Goodley, D. (2013). Dis/entangling critical disability studies. *Disability and Society*, 28(5), 631-644.
- Haller, B., Dorries, B., and Rahn, J. (2006). Media labeling versus the US disability community identity: a study of shifting cultural language. *Disability and Society*, 21(1), 61-75.
- Haller, B. A. (2010). *Representing disability in an ableist world: Essays on mass media*. Louisville, KY: Advocado Press.
- Hennink, M., and Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social Science and Medicine*, 292, 114523.
- Holsti, O.R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Hosking, D. L. (2008). Critical disability theory. In *A paper presented at the 4th Biennial Disability Studies Conference at Lancaster University, UK* (Vol. 14, No. 5, p. 736).
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., and Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. Longman Publishing.
- Jones, S. C., and Harwood, V. (2009). Representations of autism in Australian print media. *Disability and Society*, 24(1), 5-18.
- Kaid, L.L. (1989). *Content analysis*. In P. Emmert and L.L.Barker (Eds.), *Measurement of communication behavior* (pp. 197-217). New York: Longman.

- Kerlinger, F. N. (1986). *Foundations of behavioural research* (3rd ed), New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Kothari, C. R., and Garg, G. (2014). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (3rd ed.). New Age International.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lederman, N. G., and Lederman, J. S. (2015). What is a theoretical framework? A practical answer. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 26(7), 593-597.
- Leech, N. L., and Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2009). A typology of mixed methods research designs. *Quality and quantity*, 43, 265-275.
- Lynch, S., and Peer, L. (2002). Analyzing newspaper content: A how-to guide. *Readership Institute: Media Management Center at Northwestern University*, available at: http://readership.org/content/content_analysis/data/How-to.pdf.
- Martin, E. (2006). Survey questionnaire construction. *Survey methodology*, 13, 1-13.
- Marková, I. (2003) *Dialogicality and Social Representations. The Dynamics of Mind*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- McCombs, M. E., and Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public opinion quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.
- McCombs, M. E., and Shaw, D. L. (1993). The evolution of agenda-setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas. *Journal of communication*, 43(2), 58-67.
- McCormick, C., Frechie, S., Halbert, H. W. (2004). *The Newspaper Reader: Reading, Writing, and Thinking about Today's Events*. United Kingdom: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Murty, D.V.R. (2001). *Developmental Journalism*, New Delhi: Dominant Publishers.
- Namey, E., Guest, G., Thairu, L., and Johnson, L. (2008). Data reduction techniques for large qualitative data sets. *Handbook for team-based qualitative research*, 2(1), 137-161.
- Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. *Language teaching research*, 19(2), 129-132.

- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 137-145.
- Poole, M.S., and Folger, J.P. (1981). Modes of observation and the validation of interaction analysis schemes. *Small Group Behavior*, 12, 477-493.
- Prasad, B. D. (2008). Content analysis. *Research methods for social work*, 5, 1-20.
- Rahi, S. (2017). Research design and methods: A systematic review of research paradigms, sampling issues and instruments development. *International Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*, 6(2), 1-5.
- Retief, M., and Letšosa, R. (2018). Models of disability: A brief overview. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 74(1).
- Rubin, H. J., and Rubin, I. S. (1995). Interviews as guided conversations: Qualitative interviewing the art of hearing data.
- Siebert, F., Peterson, T., Peterson, T. B., and Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press: The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet communist concepts of what the press should be and do* (Vol. 10). University of Illinois press.
- Vargo, J. W. (1989). 'In the house of my friend': Dealing with disability. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*.
- Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic content analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Zhang, L., and Haller, B. (2013). Consuming image: How mass media impact the identity of people with disabilities. *Communication Quarterly*, 61(3), 319-334.