

Sensationalization and Sextainment – Precepts for Success in Media and Entertainment Business

A Case Study

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Abstract

Newspaper industry is at crossroads today. While it offers news and entertainment in touch and feel format, its competition with web editions is getting stiffer by the day. The much celebrated position of serving the cause of education by creating informed-opinion and therefore producing socially-aware citizens has been hijacked by World Wide Web. The industry has retaliated by spicing-up its content. While this strategy may have given the industry some relief, it has put it in an unenviable position of being on the verge of losing its vaunted position of being the sentinel of values of society and its culture. Newspaper is also a business and survives on advertisement revenues. Television has appeared as biggest competitor and youth that comprises largest market in India is increasingly being weaned away from newspapers. This article explores this issue with the case of a popular newspaper in India, The Telegraph.

Keywords: Sensationalization, newspaper, content, advertisement, media

Mr Abhijit Ghosh has a habit of reading at least five newspapers every day: at least two Bengali and 3 or 4 English newspapers. He likes to explore the minds of editors and business heads of various newspapers and ascertain what innovations they are contemplating to heighten the impact of their newspaper among readers and deliver greater value to advertisers. He has found this industry, the newspaper industry of immense interest and has dedicated his life to it. He feels great admiration for the numero uno newspaper, The Times of India (TOI). He has been watching their growth with respect and envy. When the advertisement marketing department of TOI was renamed as Response and circulation department as Results & Marketing Department (RMD), he was most enthused and felt that they are moving in the right direction as these names carried the essence and spirit of both the departments.

The staggering growth of TOI has staggered most players in the English newspaper market in India. TOI has achieved this growth, particularly growth in terms of advertisement revenue by making its credibility, integrity and impartiality available for a price. Most newspapers begin with the grand vision of standing up for truth and of creating informed opinion among people. The advertisements that the circulation fetches covers the costs and helps the organization make a surplus to enable it to grow commercially. It may be said therefore that media industry is not just a commercial venture, no wonder it is called the fourth state. However it has not remained untouched by the generally prevailing atmosphere of commerce and business. TOI was a leader in this movement. Marketing strategies like brand building, diversification and delivering convergence, under-cutting etc took centre stage. The content or the approach towards content of the newspaper underwent a sea change. The content began being used to pull advertisement revenues.

Mr Abhijit Ghosh, the product head of The Telegraph is facing today, a dilemma that is unparalleled in the short history of twenty five years of the newspaper. Eastern India not being a very lucrative or a large market for companies have begun preferring TOI as rates are low and they get many freebies in national and other editions which TT cannot offer as it is limited to Eastern Region. The Telegraph was born on July 7, 1982. Edwin Taylor, design director of Sunday Times, London designed the newspaper, setting fresh standards in design and editing that acquired many admirers and later, followers. It is today, eastern India's largest circulated and read English newspaper. The Telegraph's readership in Calcutta itself is greater than that of all its competitors combined.

With an editorial policy that supports, among others, secularism and a free state, The Telegraph today is widely regarded as an emblem of everything a modern newspaper should be. Coupled with a long tradition of talented journalists, The Telegraph has always been in the thick of things — be it breaking news, unearthing scoops or investigating news. It takes up issues, makes the reader think and puts them in touch with the best of minds. The Telegraph, apart from being a thought leader is also an innovator. The Telegraph was the first to put sports news on the front page. It was the first newspaper in free India to dethrone the existing market leader — a feat that was accomplished within a mere 10 years.

It was the first sectionalized newspaper, the first modular designed daily, the first to have pull-outs every day (Metro, Careergraph and other sub brands), the first general interest daily with separate sections on sports and business, the first with a separate leisure section, with crosswords and comics, the first with a 32-page colour magazine on Sundays (much earlier than leading national English dailies), the first to use run-of-press colour and the first in India to win prestigious global print awards like the SNAP and IFRA. The Telegraph is the first Indian newspaper to be available on WAP- enabled phones worldwide. The Telegraph is also available as an e-paper at <http://epaper.telegraphindia.com>.

There's always something for everyone with The Telegraph supplements — city news in TT Metro on all days, career opportunities in Jobs on Tuesdays, children's entertainment in Telekids on Wednesdays, education and career guidance in Careergraph on Thursdays, lifestyle, travel and general interest features on weekends with Personal TT on Saturdays, Graphiti, the colour magazine on Sundays. The technology and knowledge section, Knowhow comes with the main paper. The Telegraph has five editions: • Calcutta edition • South Bengal edition • North Bengal edition • Northeast edition (Guwahati split) • Jharkhand edition (Jamshedpur, Jharkhand and Ranchi splits). In addition to this, there are two weekly tabloids for Calcutta's neighboring areas – Salt Lake and Howrah. The Telegraph has recently launched a school edition – a sixteen-pager with a special section, Teen TT, to connect with young minds.

Mr Ghosh was darling of the media industry in India when he led his newspaper to upstage deeply entrenched market leader of Calcutta, The Statesman from No 1 slot. He had done the unthinkable, never before a market leader had been decimated so badly. The last 10 years have been a period of unchallenged supremacy so much so that when The Times of India launched its Calcutta edition, Mr Ghosh was almost dismissive of their presence. He believed in the bhadralok culture of Bengalis and was sure that The Times of India in Calcutta will not cut much ice among Bengalis. He was also sure that the values of ostentation, brashness of reporting, disrespect towards tradition, sensationalization of news and overt use of sex will not be accepted by the people with deep-rooted beliefs and conservative outlook.

Mr Ghosh is approaching retirement. He has given more than 25 years to The Telegraph and its parent organization. He started his career with Bata India and after 3 years moved to The Telegraph. He has studied Economics from the prestigious St Xaviers College, Calcutta and is proud of his education and Bengali identity. He is blessed with two daughters, elder one is a b-school graduate from IIMA and the younger one is in school. His wife is a home maker. He has interests in classical music and is a good singer. He has enlivened several official outings with his accomplished singing. Raga Jaijaiwanti and raga bhairavi are his favorites. He still wears Bata shoes and is fond of his three-piece suit that he bought 15 years back.

Today he has lost a big advertising contract worth Rs 5 crores from a regular advertiser in TT to TOI. He is afraid that this may be an indication of things to come. TOI is diverting advertisements from its main paper to Calcutta Times where they can offer bigger discounts. Calcutta Times as a supplement is becoming popular by the day particularly among youth. It is the youth that most advertisers are trying to target. Calcutta Times is characterized by explicit content on dating habits, love and sex. Mr Ghosh is not able to decide whether he should hold on to the cultural platform that TT has historically occupied and continue as if nothing has happened or he should go the TOI way and include content appealing to the youth. Today as he opened TOI, he saw an article on bondage sex with an alluring photograph. He has been observing the news items closely that may appeal to youth and will tempt impressionable minds towards TOI and away from TT. He remembered the fulmination of Mr Samir Jain “I will decide what India will read every day morning” with dread. He feared that if he were not to read the writing on the wall and introduce spiced content, The Telegraph may go The Statesman way.

Exhibit – I

Circulation of Newspapers in West Bengal

Publication	Edition	J D 09	J J 09	J D 08	J J 08	J D 07
The Telegraph	Kolkata edition	367,487	361,928	381,532	366,124	367,038
The Statesman	Kolkata edition	158,658	152,541	153,869	160,685	159,016
The Economic Times	Kolkata edition	46,402	49,424	56,687	62,737	60,035
Business Standard	Kolkata edition	11,216	11,121	12,437	12,776	12,040
Hindu Business Line	Chennai edition	8,172	6,768	5,860	4,462	4,188
The Hindu	Chennai edition	3,353	2,251	2,053	2,125	2,156
The Times of India	New Delhi edition	736	740	734	672	664
The Times of India	Mumbai edition	152	287			

Times of India

Kolkata Edition

ABC Certification Not Obtained

120,000 Claimed

Claimed by TOI



Maximizer Index

DISPLAY/FINANCIAL

PUBLICATION	MARKETS	BASE RATE		POINTER
		BLACK AND WHITE	COLOUR	
THE TIMES OF INDIA				
Mumbai	M	3855	3855	Mumbai 44000
Delhi	D	3355	3355	Delhi 40000
Bangalore	Bg	2485	2485	Bangalore 20000
East	E	1430	2195	Pune 9500
Pune	Pu	1380	1380	Lucknow 8500
Chennai	Che	1135	1135	Kolkata 8500
Lucknow	L	835	835	Ahmedabad 8000
Hyderabad	H	790	790	Chennai 7000
Ahmedabad	A	625	625	Hyderabad 5500
Jaipur	J	260	430	Jaipur 4000
Nagpur	Ng	180	260	Mangalore 1500
Kanpur	Kn	190	190	Mysore 1500
Goa	Go	75	125	Kanpur 1500
Mysore	My	115	115	Nagpur 1500
Mangalore	Mg	95	95	Goa 1500
ECONOMIC TIMES				
Mumbai	M	2195	2195	NAVBHARAT TIMES (NBT)
Delhi	D	1930	1930	Delhi 8200
Kolkata	K	585	710	Mumbai 4000
Bangalore	Bg	590	590	MIRROR (MIR)
Chennai	Che	570	570	Mumbai 8000
Ahmedabad	A	260	310	Bangalore 3000
Hyderabad	H	320	320	Ahmedabad 2500
Pune	Pu	260	310	Pune 3000
Chandigarh	Cha	200	240	MAHARASHTRA TIMES (MT)
Gujarati - Mumbai	M	105	105	Mumbai 7500
Gujarati - Ahmedabad	A	85	125	SANDHYA TIMES (SNT)
Hindi - Delhi	D	140	140	Delhi 2500
Lucknow	L	75	105	VIJAYA KARNATAKA (VK)
MIRROR				
Mumbai	M	1505	1505	Karnataka 30000
Pune	Pu	625	625	
Bangalore*	Bg	600	600	
Ahmedabad	A	190	190	
NAVBHARAT TIMES				
Delhi	D	1055	1055	
Mumbai	M	520	680	
MAHARASHTRA TIMES				
Mumbai	M	1510	1510	
SANDHYA TIMES				
Delhi	D	190	230	
VIJAYA KARNATAKA				
Karnataka	Kar	1360	1900	

Exhibit – II - Advertisement Tariff – The Times of India

ABP RATES

Effective from April 1, 2008

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা
পত্রক হা। নিকা পত্রিকা পত্রক হা।
The Telegraph

All rates in Rs. Per square centimeter

	SUNDAY - THURSDAY		FRIDAY - SATURDAY	
	B&W	COLOUR	B&W	COLOUR
ALL EDITION	1600	2978	1715	3090
ALL EDITION BACK PAGE*		3718		3860
KOLKATA (CE) (MONDAY TO SATURDAY)	1215	2195	1290	2270
HOWRAH-HOOGHLY-24 PARAGANAS	285	369	295	380
BANDEBAMAN (SE)	166	209	169	209
KANPURA-SORBIHUM-PURULLIA (SE)	119	144	118	140
NADIA-MURSHIDABAD (SE)	159	165	154	165
MEDINIPUR (SE)	195	199	193	195
SOUTH BENGAL (SE)	699	818	694	810
NORTH BENGAL (NE)	229	279	228	275
TENDER	875	1079	879	1076
APPOINTMENT	925	1668	928	1668
BARRHIAL (SUNDAY)	619			
MELLOW BOLLIGNT**	5285		5225	
MELLOW ASHINGONGY**	16390		16398	
MELLOW PERSONAL COLUMN**	16390		16398	
KAR PANEL***		28378		28378
PATRICKA FRONT PAGE* (SATURDAY)				2270
PATRICKA BACK PAGE*				2270
PATRICKA INSIDE PAGES*				2025
RABHARARYO FRONT PAGE* (SUNDAY)		2278		
RABHARARYO BACK PAGE*		2278		
RABHARARYO INSIDE PAGES*	1125	2424		
FRASUTU FRONT PAGE* (ALTERNATE SUNDAY)		2278		
FRASUTU BACK PAGE*		2278		
FRASUTU INSIDE PAGES*	1125	2424		
UTTAR KOLKATA SPLIT (SATURDAY)			132	162
DARSHIN KOLKATA SPLIT (SATURDAY)			129	240
FURRA KOLKATA SPLIT (SATURDAY)			98	70
HOWRAH SPLIT (SATURDAY)			58	80

	SUNDAY - THURSDAY		FRIDAY - SATURDAY	
	B&W	COLOUR	B&W	COLOUR
ALL EDITION	1600	2169	1715	2699
ALL EDITION BACK PAGE*		2795		2999
METRO (CE)	658	1268	558	1488
METRO BACK PAGE*		1588		1688
SOUTH BENGAL (SE)	258	499	313	569
NORTH BENGAL (NE)	159	229	159	279
ALL BENGAL (CE+NE+SE)	1268	1898	1568	2518
NORTH EAST (CE)	228	468	278	588
JHARKHAND (SE)	158	288	198	378
TENDER	998	1248	908	1248
APPOINTMENTS (ALL EDITIONS) (TUESDAY)	998	1225		
APPOINTMENTS (MUSTED) (THURSDAY)	998	625		
OTHER PRODUCTS				
T2 FRONT PAGE & BACK PAGE* (SUNDAY TO SATURDAY)		775		848
T2 OTHER PAGES*		748		815
TALKING* (WEDNESDAY)		249		
PERSONAL TT* (SATURDAY)				268
CAREERGRAPH** (THURSDAY)		848		
GRAPHITV FULL PAGE*** (SUNDAY)		588888		
GRAPHITV HALF PAGE*** (SUNDAY)		249888		
TT19*		125		
SALT LAKE SPLIT* (FRIDAY)				59
HOWRAH SPLIT* (FRIDAY)				28

ABP FRONT PAGE RATES				
	SUNDAY - THURSDAY		FRIDAY - SATURDAY	
	B&W	COLOUR	B&W	COLOUR
ALL EDITION FRONT PAGE*** (28X12.1 CM)	187180		112180	
ALL EDITION FRONT PAGE*** (28X14.3 CM)	287780		214880	
KOLKATA FRONT PAGE*** (28X12.1 CM)	78280		63480	
KOLKATA FRONT PAGE*** (28X14.3 CM)	113480		138780	

TT FRONT PAGE RATES				
	SUNDAY - THURSDAY		FRIDAY - SATURDAY	
	B&W	COLOUR	B&W	COLOUR
ALL EDITION FRONT PAGE*** (28X12.1 CM)	83280		184280	
ALL EDITION FRONT PAGE*** (28X14.3 CM)	148280		178280	
METRO FRONT PAGE*** (28X12.1 CM)	43998		49498	
METRO FRONT PAGE*** (28X14.3 CM)	73398		81998	

Rates subject to revision 24/08

* ONLY COLOUR RATES APPLY ** RATES PER UNIT

PREMIA	
POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS	50%
POSITION	10%

COMBINATION DISCOUNT OF 17% ON ALL EDITION, BENGAL AND KOLKATA/METRO.

Digital Material Requirements

Receiving Centres:
Bhubaneswar, Bandikhan, Bangalore, Calcutta, Chennai, Delhi, Durgapur, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jamshedpur, Mumbai, Ranchi, Siliguri.
File Format (IBM PC) : pdf, tif, eps
No Raw/Open files will be accepted.

Terms & Conditions

- These rates are effective from publication date 1.4.2008
- Every precaution will be taken to ensure that competitive advertisements are not published on the same page. However no guarantee can be given to that effect. No claims will be entertained for discounting/undo goods in case competitive ads appear on the same or facing page
- No particular position or page is guaranteed unless premium is paid for the same
- All possible care will be taken to ensure proper reproduction. However, the company will not be responsible for improper printing due to supply of defective material
- Materials will be printed as supplied by the agency/client without any correction at our end
- All efforts will be made to print All Edition advertisements on the same day. However, no guarantee can be given for the same. The advertisement will be published within 48 hours of the original date, in case not carried on the same day
- In case corrections/alterations are made on a previously published advertisement, detailed instruction for the changes need to be made for the repeat insertion as well. Make good for publication of incorrect ad if merely repeat date is mentioned will not be entertained
- Advertisement materials will be retained at our end for 15 days post publication. The company will not be responsible for any material after first period
- Reproduction related complaints need to be brought to notice within 5 days of publication. No complaints will be entertained thereafter

Guidelines

- Column widths are fixed and materials should be prepared accordingly. Width of all advertisements will be measured as per our standard column width. Example: A 2-col advertisement will be treated as 7.9 cm as per our standard width even if it measures less than 7.9 cm
 - Release Orders should mention height, number of columns and width. Example: if advertisement is - 25 x 4 then RO should mention 25x4, width- 16.3 cm
 - Column width will be considered to one decimal place for billing purpose
 - All advertisements in Anandbazar Patrika (ABP) and The Telegraph (TT) having height of 50 cm or more will be treated as full height advertisements (52cm)
 - Height of advertisements will be taken as whole number for billing purpose. A fraction of a cm measuring 0.5 cm. or more will be treated as 1 (one) cm
 - A combination advertisement (i.e. ABP + TT) must be published within 30 days from the date of publication of the first advertisement. Otherwise, the first advertisement will be billed as per individual rate
 - Minimum size of an advertisement is 3cm(H) x 3.8cm(W)
- Appointment Advertisements will be in 3 columns (standard) width
 Ear Panel (Colour) in ABP Ear Panel (Colour) in Careergraph, etc
 Height - 3 cm Width - 4.1 cm Height - 3.7 cm Width - 4.7 cm
 The mechanical data below may be referred to for other sizes.

Deadlines

- A. Receipt of Release Orders & Materials**
- All Release orders have to reach us by 10am for advertisements to be published on the following day.
 - Advertisement materials must accompany the Release order
 - Advertisements that need to be prepared by us need to reach us 2 working days in advance.
 - For issue days Sunday, Monday, and Jobs on Tuesday all Release orders and Materials need to reach us on the previous Friday by 4pm
 - For Other Products except Graphiti release orders and materials need to reach us seven working days in advance
 - For Graphiti release orders and materials need to reach us fifteen working days in advance
- B. Cancellation Charges**
- | Front Pages | Other Pages |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| > 5 days No charge | > 2 days No charge |
| 3-2 days 50% | 2-1 days 25% |
| < 2 days 100% | Previous day 65% |

- All cancellations need to be informed by 11am on the respective days mentioned above
- Bills will be automatically raised by the system on the basis of release order, in case the cancellation and/or the material is not received within the scheduled time.

Material Guidelines

• Ad file should not contain any extra matter (that will not be printed) • Avoid thin/lower point/ serif type in reverse • Avoid colour type in same group of colours with the background colour. e.g. 20% Red against 50% Red • Avoid Yellow colour type against light background • File size should be optimized for effective work-flow. eg. A full page colour ad should have a file size of not more than 70mb • In the EPS/ PDF file linked image/images should be in CMYK • Minimum 200 Resolution for SNP & 300 Resolution for GNP/Artpaper • All the text should be converted to path • All overprint should be removed • Single color black, instead of 4-color black, to be used for text. • Electronic documents should always be accompanied by a proof sheet/print. • All colors in the ad must be in CMYK, optimized for newspaper printing. In Black and White ads, only black is permitted (K in CMYK). Pantone and RGB colors should not be used. • Do not use styles like "bold" or "italic" in the program, but always select the correct font from the font-menu (e.g. TimesBold or TimesItallo). Text in illustrations/logos must be transferred into letter contours.

MECHANICAL DATA

All measurements are in centimeter

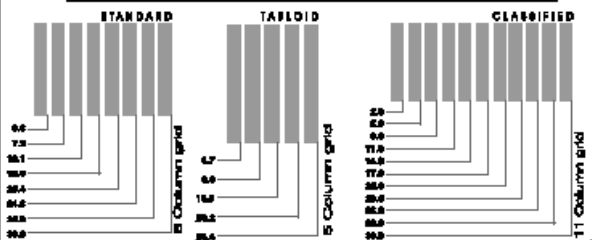


Exhibit – III - The Telegraph Rate Card (Above)

Exhibit – IV - Bad Girls Made Easy – An academic review of two popular and relevant songs in Bollywood (Below)

SHEELA AND MUNNI – BAD GIRLS MADE EASY

Munni and Sheela are the two most common names for girls in India. These names conjure image of a girl-next door. We are currently witnessing an unprecedented use of these two names in media. Since the iconic name Vijay given to Amitabh Bachchan by Manmohan Desai and later adopted by many, once again names are hogging the limelight. Vijay represented the social consciousness that was seething against the ills that plagued the then society. Fight against injustice and poverty, personal vengeance and protecting the weak were chief purposes that Vijay stood for.

Munni and Sheela also represent the ferment in current society. Universal suffrage is distant history, gender equality is passé, financial independence of women is in and so is aggressive female sexuality. The **hemline theory** is being validated again and this time in India. Most interestingly, it straddles both rural and urban India. If Bipasha Basu in *Beedi Jalaile* harbingered *Munni Badnam*, Malaika Arora in *Mahi Ve* prepared the stage for *Sheela ki Jawani*. India story would probably need a **décolletage effect** in addition to the hemline theory.

The selection of these two names betrays the careful and deep thought that has gone into the making of these videos nay the campaigns for their respective products. The selection either denotes or seeks to achieve what a number of legislations in the parliament or several social movements have not been able to till date and that is making our women confident and assertive of not only their ability but also their body. It is comical indeed that in our male-chauvinist society, they are called bad girls.