



# Jai Maa Saraswati Gyandayini

An International Multidisciplinary e-Journal  
(Peer-reviewed, Open Access & Indexed)

Journal home page: [www.jmsjournals.in](http://www.jmsjournals.in), ISSN: 2454-8367

Vol. 11, Issue-III, Jan. 2026



## A study of the Advertising, social media and Journalism

Dr. Arpita Sneh<sup>a,\*</sup>, 

<sup>a</sup>Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Tecnia Institute of Advanced Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi.

### KEYWORDS

Advertising, social media, Journalism, Digital Media, Algorithms, Media Ethics, Public Opinion, Media Convergence, Online Journalism, Media Ethics, Audience Engagement.

### ABSTRACT

In the digital age, the relationship between advertising, social media, and journalism has become extremely complex, multifaceted, and influential. While there was a clear division between journalism and advertising in the traditional media system, this division has become blurred with the rise of social media. Today, journalism is not only a medium for the transmission of information, but it is also deeply intertwined with digital platforms, algorithms, advertising-based revenue models, and audience engagement. Social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube have completely transformed the process of news production, distribution, and consumption. Simultaneously, advertising is no longer limited to product promotion but has also begun to influence ideas, political ideologies, and social discourse. This research paper analyzes the interrelationships, impacts, opportunities, and challenges of advertising, social media, and journalism. It also examines how commercial pressures are affecting the independence, impartiality, and credibility of journalism, and what possibilities exist for establishing a balance between these three in the future.

### 1. Introduction

The twenty-first century can be called the century of the digital revolution. The rapid expansion of the internet, smartphones, and social media platforms has transformed the entire structure of communication. This transformation has had the most profound impact on journalism. Traditional journalism, which was based on newspapers, radio, and television, has now shifted to digital platforms. In this new landscape, advertising and social media have become essential components of journalism.

Advertising has long been a major source of the economic foundation of the media. A large portion of the income of newspapers and TV channels has come from advertising. However, with the advent of social media, the nature, strategy, and scope of advertising have completely changed. Now, advertising is no longer limited to news media but has started reaching consumers directly. This has raised serious questions about the economic model of journalism. Social media has transformed ordinary citizens into “citizen journalists.” Now,

#### Corresponding author


\*E-mail: [arpitasneh@gmail.com](mailto:arpitasneh@gmail.com) (Dr. Arpita Sneh).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53724/jmsg/v11n3.02>

Received 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2025; Accepted 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2025

Available online 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2026

2454-8367/©2026 The Journal. Published by Jai Maa Saraswati Gyandayini e-Journal (Publisher: Welfare Universe). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7382-9343>



news is not only shared and created by journalists but also by ordinary users. This has strengthened the democratic nature of journalism, but it has also given rise to problems such as fake news, misleading advertisements, and sponsored content. In this context, studying the relationship between advertising, social media, and journalism becomes extremely relevant.

The second decade of the twenty-first century has emerged as a decisive turning point in the history of communication and information. The rapid development of digital technology, the internet, and social media has not only changed the means of human communication but has also redefined the entire process of information creation, distribution, and consumption. At the heart of this transformation are three elements—advertising, social media, and journalism—whose interrelationship is shaping the direction and nature of the modern media system. While in the traditional media era the roles between these three were relatively clear and limited, in the digital age the boundaries between them are constantly blurring. As a result, the character of journalism, its autonomy, credibility, and social role have come under the scrutiny of new questions and challenges. Advertising has long been the economic foundation of the media. The financial stability of newspapers, magazines, radio, and television channels has primarily depended on advertising revenue. However, with the advent of digital and social media, the nature of advertising is no longer limited to a single medium but has become part of a broader digital ecosystem. Today, advertising not only promotes a product or service but also

influences lifestyles, consumer behavior, social values, and political ideologies. Social media platforms have made advertising highly targeted, personalized, and data-driven, multiplying its impact manifold. In this situation, the pressure of advertising on journalism has become far more complex and subtle than before.<sup>1</sup>

Social media has fundamentally challenged the traditional framework of journalism. Previously, media institutions had a monopoly on news production and distribution, but now ordinary citizens have also become creators and disseminators of information. Platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have made the speed of news instantaneous and global. In this process, journalism appears more democratic and participatory, as marginalized groups and issues are finally getting a platform. However, this has also raised fundamental questions about the veracity of information, the reliability of sources, and editorial responsibility. Content that goes viral on social media is often driven by algorithmic priorities, rather than by core journalistic values.

In the digital age, journalism is no longer merely about “informing”; it has become part of a competitive content industry. In this industry, visibility, clicks, likes, shares, and views have become crucial indicators of economic success. The advertising-based revenue model has made journalism dependent on audience size and consumer engagement. Consequently, the selection and presentation of news often align with market demands rather than the public interest. Sensational headlines, emotional language, and incomplete

information are examples of this trend. This situation adversely affects the impartiality and depth of journalism.<sup>2</sup>

Ethical questions regarding the relationship between advertising and journalism are not new, but social media has made them even more complex. On digital platforms, trends such as “native advertising,” “branded content,” and “sponsored news” have rapidly increased, where advertising is presented as news. This makes it difficult for readers and viewers to distinguish between advertising and editorial content. This confusion undermines the credibility of journalism and affects public trust in media institutions. Therefore, the question of whether journalism is able to fulfill its social responsibility amidst commercial pressures becomes extremely important.

Social media platforms present themselves as neutral technological mediums, but in reality, they are powerful commercial institutions whose main source of income is advertising. Their algorithms analyze user behavior to determine which content will be more visible and which will be marginalized. In this process, the role of journalism becomes limited, as the visibility of news now depends more on algorithmic priorities than on editorial decisions. As a result, journalists and media institutions are forced to make their content algorithm-friendly, increasing the likelihood of compromising journalistic standards.

Political advertising and social media campaigns have made this relationship even more sensitive. During elections and political movements, sponsored content, targeted advertising, and data-

driven propaganda are widely used on social media. This not only influences public opinion but also challenges the impartial role of journalism. It becomes essential for journalists to maintain a clear distinction between information and propaganda, but this task is becoming increasingly difficult in the digital environment.<sup>3</sup>

In the Indian context, the relationship between advertising, social media, and journalism holds particular significance. India is one of the world's largest social media markets, where people from diverse linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds are connected through digital platforms. Media institutions here face both political and commercial pressures. Regional and local journalism has succeeded in reaching a wider audience through social media, but it has also become more dependent on advertising-based models. This has raised new questions about its editorial independence and social role.

## **2. The Concept and Evolution of Advertising**

The basic purpose of advertising is to present a product, service, or idea to the public and make it acceptable. In its early stages, advertising was simple—informational and limited. Small advertisements in print media and messages broadcast on radio are examples of this. Gradually, with the advent of television, advertising became more visual, emotional, and impactful.

In the digital age, advertising has taken on a new form. It has now become data-driven, targeted, and personalized. Social media platforms present advertisements based on users' behavior, interests, and preferences. While this has increased the effectiveness of advertising, it has also raised

questions related to privacy and ethics.

In the context of journalism, the influence of advertising has always been controversial. On the one hand, advertising provides financial stability to media organizations, while on the other hand, it also puts pressure on editorial independence. Often, news priorities are determined according to the interests of advertisers, which affects the impartiality of journalism.<sup>4</sup>

### **3. The Rise and Nature of Social Media**

Social media has become the most powerful medium of modern communication. It is not only a platform for the exchange of information but also plays a significant role in shaping opinions and public discourse. Platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have made the speed and reach of news unprecedented.<sup>5</sup>

The biggest characteristic of social media is its participatory nature. Here, the user is not only a recipient of information but also its creator and distributor. This has broken the traditional one-way model of journalism. Now journalists receive immediate feedback from readers and viewers, making the communication process more dynamic. However, social media is driven by algorithms. These algorithms determine what a user sees and what they don't. Advertisers leverage this system to reach the maximum number of people with their message. This establishes indirect control over the freedom of journalism, as only the content that generates more clicks and advertising revenue is shown more prominently.

### **4. The Changing Nature of Journalism**

The fundamental purpose of journalism is to provide society with truthful, unbiased, and

relevant information. However, the influence of digital and social media has changed the nature of journalism. Now news is not just information, but has become “content,” with the goal of reaching and being shared by as many people as possible.

This transformation has brought about both positive and negative changes in journalism. On the one hand, access to information has become easier, and marginalized issues have found a platform, while on the other hand, the problem of sensationalism, clickbait, and incomplete information has increased. The advertising-based revenue model has made journalism dependent on viewership and traffic.

Social media journalism has challenged the role of traditional media. Now news organizations have also become dependent on social media platforms. This is increasingly limiting their autonomy, as platform policies and algorithms determine the visibility of their content.

### **5. The Interrelationship of Advertising, Social Media, and Journalism**

Advertising, social media, and journalism are bound together in a triangular relationship. Social media has become a major platform for advertising, advertising is the economic foundation of journalism, and journalism is a source of credible content for social media. This relationship exemplifies interdependence.

The trend of “native advertising” and “sponsored content” has increased on digital platforms. In this, advertising is presented as news, which can confuse the reader. This poses a serious challenge to journalistic ethics. Sometimes, important social issues are given less priority due to commercial

interests.

Political advertising is also significant in this context. Political parties and groups influence public opinion through advertising on social media. This makes the role of journalism even more complex, as it has to confront these campaigns while maintaining verification and impartiality.<sup>6</sup>

### **6. Questions of Ethics and Credibility**

The pressure from advertising and social media raises serious questions about journalistic ethics. Fake news, sponsored stories, and misleading advertisements damage the credibility of journalism. When the line between news and advertising is not clear, public trust is eroded. It has become essential for media organizations to maintain transparency and clearly distinguish between advertising and editorial content. Social media platforms also have a responsibility to control misleading advertisements and misinformation.<sup>7</sup>

### **7. The Situation in the Indian Context**

The number of social media users in India is growing rapidly. The country is one of the world's largest digital markets. Here, the relationship between advertising, social media, and journalism becomes even more complex due to the immense social, political, and linguistic diversity.

The influence of advertising on Indian journalism has been long-standing, but digital platforms have intensified it. Regional and local news organizations have also become dependent on social media. This has given them a wider audience, but it has also increased commercial pressures.

In the Indian context, the relationship between

advertising, social media, and journalism is more complex and multifaceted than in a global perspective. India is a vast, diverse, and rapidly digitizing society where language, caste, class, religion, and regional variations profoundly influence the nature and impact of media. Over the past decade, the availability of smartphones and affordable internet has made India one of the world's largest social media user bases. This digital expansion has decisively transformed the form, reach, and economic structure of journalism.<sup>8</sup>

The Indian media system has historically been heavily reliant on advertising. A large portion of the revenue for newspapers and television channels has come from government and private advertisements. This dependence has increased further in the digital age, as news content is often provided free of charge on online platforms. Consequently, media organizations have become more reliant on social media and digital advertising to maintain their financial stability. This situation presents a serious challenge to editorial independence, as news priorities are sometimes dictated by advertisers or political interests.

Social media has provided Indian journalism with the opportunity to reach a wider audience. Regional language journalism, which was previously confined to limited areas, is now being seen and heard at national and international levels. This is a positive development from a democratic perspective, as it has given a platform to marginalized issues and communities. However, it has also led to a rapid increase in the problems of fake news, rumors, and misleading advertisements. In India, social media is often used as a medium for

spreading social tensions, political polarization, and misinformation, which further increases the responsibility of journalism.<sup>9</sup>

The role of social media and advertising in Indian politics is particularly noteworthy. Targeted advertising, data-driven campaigns, and sponsored content are being used extensively in election campaigns. This has become a powerful tool for influencing public opinion. In such a situation, providing unbiased and factual information becomes a challenging task for journalism, as the line between propaganda and information on social media often becomes blurred. Furthermore, the influence of government advertising on the media in India is a significant factor. Many media outlets are dependent on government advertisements, which indirectly puts pressure on critical journalism. Digital and social media have challenged this pressure to some extent, but have not eliminated it entirely. Journalism is currently going through a transitional phase where it has to strike a balance between commercial pressures, political influences, and social responsibility.<sup>10</sup>

Overall, the relationship between advertising, social media, and journalism in the Indian context is a complex mix of opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms are making journalism more widespread, participatory, and accessible, they are also raising questions about its credibility, ethics, and independence. The future of Indian journalism appears to be one of navigating this delicate balance.

## **8. Challenges and Opportunities**

This triangular relationship presents several challenges economic pressures, ethical dilemmas,

fake news, and algorithmic control. But it also offers opportunities. Digital platforms can make journalism more democratic, participatory, and accessible.

In the future, journalism will need to adopt new revenue models, such as subscriptions, crowd funding, and public support. This can reduce dependence on advertising and strengthen the independence of journalism.

## **Conclusion**

The relationship between advertising, social media, and journalism has become an integral part of the modern communication system. This relationship is fraught with both opportunities and challenges. While social media and advertising provide journalism with wider reach and economic resources, they also exert pressure on its independence and ethics. It is essential that journalism redefine itself in this changing landscape while upholding its core values—truth, impartiality, and public interest. Only then will it be able to effectively fulfill its role as the fourth pillar of democracy.

## **References:**

1. Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power*. Oxford University Press, London, p. 151
2. Fuchs, C. (2014). *Social media: A critical introduction*. Sage Publications, New Delhi, p. 79
3. Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere*. MIT Press, N. Delhi, p. 56
4. McChesney, R. W. (2015). *Rich media, poor democracy*. New Press, p. 46
5. McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory (6th ed.)*. Sage Publications, New Delhi, p. 92

6. Napoli, P. M. (2011). Audience evolution: New technologies and the transformation of media audiences. Columbia University Press, p 85
7. Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Schulz, A., Andi, S., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). Digital News Report. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, p. 13
8. Sharma, K. (2020). Digital media and Indian journalism. *Journal of Media Studies*, 12(2), 45–60.
9. Thompson, J.B. (1995). *The media and modernity: A social theory of the media*. Stanford University Press, p. 61
10. Williams, R. (2003). *Television: Technology and cultural form*. Routledge, London, p. 93

\*\*\*\*\*