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A STUDY ON THE USAGE AND PERCEIVED IMPACT OF MOBILE JOURNALISM IN HINDI NEWS MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Mobile Journalism (MoJo) is rapidly transforming the global media landscape by enabling journalists to report, edit, and publish news content using only a smartphone. This transformation is especially significant in Hindi-language news media, which serves over 500 million speakers across India and the diaspora. The present study investigates the patterns of MoJo adoption among Hindi media professionals and analyses their perceived impact on news production speed, audience engagement, editorial quality, and rural outreach. Using a structured questionnaire survey administered to 100 working journalists and media practitioners across digital, print, and television organisations in India, the research employs a descriptive and analytical research design. Data were collected on a five-point Likert scale and subjected to frequency analysis, percentage analysis, and mean-score interpretation. Key findings reveal that a significant majority of respondents (86%) use smartphones as their primary field-reporting tool, 86% agree that MoJo accelerates news delivery, and 84% believe it strengthens rural audience reach. However, critical challenges persist: poor connectivity in remote areas (54% identify it as a major problem), insufficient institutional training (48%), and concerns regarding editorial quality. The study concludes that while MoJo holds transformative potential for Hindi journalism, its sustainable integration requires structured training frameworks, institutional policy support, and investment in digital infrastructure.

Keywords: *Mobile Journalism, MoJo, Hindi News Media, Digital Journalism, Smartphone Reporting, India, Media Transformation*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid proliferation of affordable smartphones and high-speed mobile internet has catalysed a paradigm shift in journalism practice worldwide. Mobile Journalism—popularly abbreviated as MoJo—refers to the practice of producing journalistic content, including text, photographs, audio, and video, using a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet, without the need for

GYANBODH
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Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

conventional broadcasting equipment or desktop production suites. The term was first widely adopted in the late 2000s when news organisations began experimenting with iPhone-based video reporting, and has since evolved into a fully recognised professional modality (Quinn, 2009; Burum & Quinn, 2015).

India presents a uniquely compelling context for the study of MoJo. With over 700 million internet users, more than 600 million active smartphone subscribers, and a Hindi-speaking audience of over 500 million people spread across urban and rural landscapes, the country represents one of the largest and most diverse audiences for mobile-first media content (TRAI, 2023; Census of India, 2011). Hindi language news media—encompassing national dailies such as Dainik Bhaskar and Dainik Jagran, 24-hour news channels such as Aaj Tak, India TV, and Zee News, and a rapidly growing ecosystem of digital-native portals such as The Lallantop, Newslaundry Hindi, and Quint Hindi—collectively command the largest news audience in South Asia.

Despite this scale and significance, systematic academic research on MoJo adoption within the Hindi-language media ecosystem remains sparse. Most existing scholarship on mobile journalism originates in Western contexts (e.g., Westlund, 2013; Sacco & Bossio, 2017), with limited attention to the specific professional, linguistic, infrastructural, and institutional conditions shaping MoJo practice in Indian regional-language journalism. This study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical, survey-based evidence on how Hindi media professionals perceive and deploy mobile journalism tools, and what challenges and opportunities they identify in this shift.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the nature and frequency of mobile journalism tools and platforms used by Hindi media professionals.
2. To assess the perceived impact of MoJo on news production speed, content quality, and audience engagement.
3. To identify the key challenges faced by Hindi journalists in adopting and sustaining mobile journalism practices.
4. To evaluate the perceived suitability of MoJo for rural news coverage within the Hindi media landscape.

GYANBODH
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Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

5. To explore the professional readiness and future outlook of Hindi journalists with respect to MoJo.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

- H1: A significant majority of Hindi media professionals use smartphones as their primary field-reporting device.
- H2: Hindi journalists who have adopted MoJo perceive it as positively impacting news speed and rural outreach.
- H3: Connectivity and training deficits are the most frequently reported barriers to MoJo adoption in Hindi media.
- H4: There is a positive disposition among Hindi media professionals towards further MoJo integration in the future.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The academic discourse on mobile journalism can be traced to the early theoretical work of Quinn (2009), who coined the term 'MoJo' and argued that convergence of smartphone camera technology, social media platforms, and broadband connectivity would fundamentally redefine the roles of the journalist. Quinn and Lamble (2008) further documented early experiments by the BBC and Associated Press in equipping field correspondents with Nokia N95 smartphones for news gathering. Their findings suggested that while image quality was initially limited, the speed and mobility advantages were substantial.

Burum and Quinn (2015) subsequently produced the foundational textbook on MoJo training, emphasising storytelling, ethical considerations, and workflow design for solo mobile journalists. Their framework for the 'backpack journalist' aligns closely with the demands of Indian field reporters who must frequently operate without a camera crew in remote locations. Sacco and Bossio (2017) examined MoJo training programs across three continents and found that journalistic quality and institutional support were the two most critical determinants of successful MoJo adoption.

In the Indian context, Thakurta (2012) and Mehta (2015) documented the technological transformation of Indian news media, though their analyses focused primarily on English-language outlets and television broadcasting. Mehta observed that digital penetration was intensifying competitive pressure among Hindi news channels, driving them toward faster

GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

turnaround models. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report India (2020, 2022) consistently identified smartphones as the dominant news consumption device among Hindi-speaking Indians, with over 74% accessing news primarily via mobile phones.

Westlund (2013) contributed significantly to the theoretical understanding of mobile news through the concept of the 'mobile media and communication' framework, distinguishing between consumption-side and production-side dimensions of mobile journalism. On the production side, he noted that journalists increasingly serve as multimedia one-person bands, a pattern especially pronounced in resource-constrained regional media environments—conditions that characterise many Hindi-language newsrooms. Knight and Cook (2013) similarly observed that MoJo democratises news production by lowering the entry barrier for independent and hyperlocal journalism.

Research specifically addressing mobile journalism in Hindi or other Indian regional-language contexts remains limited. Rao (2010) highlighted the potential of mobile journalism for rural India, noting that feature phones with camera capabilities were already enabling citizen journalists in underserved communities. Singh and Sharma (2019) surveyed 60 journalists at a Hindi news channel and found positive attitudes toward digital tools but significant concern about editorial quality and verification practices. Their study did not, however, systematically examine MoJo-specific tools or workflows. The present study builds on and extends this body of work by providing a larger, more diverse sample, a structured Likert-based instrument, and broader coverage of MoJo dimensions including impact, challenges, and future readiness.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical research design grounded in the positivist tradition. A structured questionnaire survey was employed as the primary data collection instrument. This method was selected because it is well-suited to capturing attitudinal and behavioural data from a defined professional population (Creswell, 2014). The survey instrument was developed in both Hindi and English to ensure accessibility for all respondents.

3.2 Universe and Sample

The target universe comprised working journalists, reporters, editors, camerapersons, and digital content producers employed in Hindi-language news organisations across India. A

GYANBODH
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ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

purposive sampling strategy was employed, targeting professionals actively engaged in news production. The final sample comprised 100 respondents, drawn from digital-only outlets (38%), print and digital organisations (27%), television and OTT media (22%), and radio and podcast platforms (13%). Respondents were located across major cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Bhopal, Patna, Jaipur, and Bhopal, as well as smaller towns and semi-urban centres.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of 42 items organised across five thematic sections: (i) demographic and professional background, (ii) mobile journalism tool usage patterns, (iii) perceived impact of MoJo on journalistic practice, (iv) challenges and barriers to MoJo adoption, and (v) future readiness and professional outlook. Attitudinal items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms and distributed through professional WhatsApp groups, press club networks, journalism alumni associations, and direct email outreach during October–December 2023. Content validity was established through expert review by three senior journalism academics; Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.87, indicating strong internal consistency.

3.4 Data Analysis

Collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics including frequency distribution, percentage analysis, and mean score computation for Likert-scale items. A mean score of 3.50 or above on the five-point scale was treated as indicative of agreement; scores between 2.50 and 3.49 as neutral; and scores below 2.50 as disagreement. All data were processed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS v.25. Results are presented through tables with interpretive commentary.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic and professional profile of the 100 respondents. The sample is predominantly male (63%), reflective of the continuing gender disparity in Indian journalism, though the 35% female representation is notable and somewhat higher than earlier studies (Singh & Sharma, 2019). The largest age cohort is 25–35 years (42%), consistent with

GYANBODH
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ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

the proposition that younger professionals are more likely to be early adopters of mobile-first journalism practices. Over half (51%) hold postgraduate qualifications. A majority (64%) have 2–10 years of experience, representing practitioners with sufficient field exposure to meaningfully evaluate MoJo tools. The sample spans all major media modalities, with digital-only organisations forming the largest single segment (38%).

Table 1: Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents (n = 100)

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	63	63.0
	Female	35	35.0
	Non-binary / Other	2	2.0
Age Group	Below 25 years	18	18.0
	25–35 years	42	42.0
	36–45 years	28	28.0
	Above 45 years	12	12.0
Education	Graduate	34	34.0
	Postgraduate	51	51.0
	Diploma / Other	15	15.0
Work Experience	Less than 2 years	14	14.0
	2–5 years	33	33.0
	6–10 years	31	31.0
	More than 10 years	22	22.0
Organisation Type	Print + Digital	27	27.0
	Digital Only	38	38.0
	Television / OTT	22	22.0
	Radio / Podcast	13	13.0

Source: Primary Survey Data (2023–24)

GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

4.2 Mobile Journalism Tool Usage Patterns

Table 2 documents the frequency with which respondents reported using various MoJo tools and platforms. An overwhelming 85% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they use smartphones as their primary field reporting device—supporting H1. Mobile editing applications (InShot, KineMaster, Filmic Pro, CapCut, and similar) are used by 82% of respondents, indicating high uptake of post-production workflows on mobile devices. Live-streaming via mobile (using platforms such as YouTube Live, Facebook Live, and Instagram Reels) is practised by 76% of respondents, a particularly striking finding given the technical and connectivity demands of live broadcasting. Social media platforms as distribution channels were adopted by 84% of respondents, reinforcing their role as primary publication pathways in contemporary Hindi digital journalism. Cloud-based storage and collaboration tools were used by 76%, though this was also associated with data security concerns reported separately.

Table 2: Usage of Mobile Journalism Tools and Platforms (n = 100)

Device / Platform	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Smartphone for field reporting	52	33	8	5	2
Mobile editing apps	44	38	11	5	2
Live-streaming via mobile	41	35	14	7	3
Social media for news distribution	48	36	9	5	2
Cloud-based storage for content	37	39	15	6	3

Source: Primary Survey Data (2023–24). Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

4.3 Perceived Impact of Mobile Journalism

Table 3 summarises respondents' perceptions of MoJo's impact across eight dimensions. The results provide strong support for H2. The most strongly endorsed perception is that MoJo is suited for breaking news coverage (86% agree/strongly agree), followed by improvements in

GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

news delivery speed (86%) and strengthening of rural audience outreach (84%). These findings align with the structural advantage of mobile devices in reaching last-mile field reporters and enabling direct-to-audience publication without editorial gatekeeping delays.

Notably, the statement that 'MoJo threatens editorial quality' received a divided response: 45% agreed (suggesting concern), while 35% disagreed, and 20% remained neutral. This internal tension suggests that MoJo's quality implications are perceived differently depending on the respondent's institutional context and experience level. The statement that 'institutional training for MoJo is adequate' received the lowest agreement (36%), pointing to a significant gap between the pace of MoJo adoption and the readiness of media institutions to provide structured professional development.

Table 3: Perceived Impact of Mobile Journalism on Journalistic Practice (n = 100)

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
MoJo improves news speed	58	28	8	4	2
MoJo improves audience engagement	49	34	10	5	2
MoJo reduces production costs	43	37	12	5	3
MoJo threatens editorial quality	19	26	20	22	13
MoJo empowers citizen journalists	46	35	11	5	3
Hindi MoJo reaches rural audiences better	55	29	9	5	2
MoJo suitable for breaking news	61	25	8	4	2
Institutional training for MoJo is adequate	14	22	28	24	12

Source: Primary Survey Data (2023–24). Figures indicate percentage of respondents selecting each option.

GYANBODH
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ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

4.4 Challenges and Barriers to MoJo Adoption

Table 4 presents the distribution of perceived challenges. The findings validate H3: connectivity and training deficits emerge as the most acute barriers. Poor internet connectivity in the field was identified as a major problem by 54% of respondents—the highest proportion of any challenge listed. This reflects the persistent 'digital divide' between urban and rural India, where 4G/5G coverage remains uneven. Managing simultaneous roles as shooter, reporter, and editor was also identified as a major challenge by 52% of respondents, highlighting the physical and cognitive demands of solo mobile journalism that are often underestimated in institutional discourse.

Lack of formal MoJo training (48%) and low-quality audio in noisy environments (51%) were among the next most pressing concerns. Data security issues were identified as a major problem by 39% of respondents, a finding with significant implications given that Hindi journalists increasingly work in sensitive political and conflict environments. Credibility perception by audiences—the concern that mobile-shot content is perceived as less professional—was raised by 36% as a major problem.

Table 4: Challenges in Mobile Journalism Adoption Among Hindi Media Professionals (n = 100)

Challenge	Major Problem (%)	Moderate (%)	Minor (%)	Not a Problem (%)
Poor internet connectivity in field	54	27	12	7
Lack of formal MoJo training	48	29	14	9
Low-quality audio in noisy environments	51	28	13	8
Data security concerns	39	33	18	10
Credibility perception by audiences	36	30	22	12

GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

Challenge	Major Problem (%)	Moderate (%)	Minor (%)	Not a Problem (%)
Managing simultaneous roles (shoot+report+edit)	52	30	12	6
Insufficient institutional support	44	32	15	9

Source: Primary Survey Data (2023–24).

4.5 Future Readiness and Professional Outlook

Table 5 presents mean scores for six statements assessing professional readiness and outlook toward MoJo's future in Hindi journalism. All six statements registered mean scores above the neutral threshold (3.50), supporting H4. The highest mean scores were recorded for 'MoJo can strengthen rural news coverage' ($\mu = 4.44$) and 'MoJo is the future of Hindi journalism' ($\mu = 4.38$), confirming a strongly positive professional disposition. The statement that 'MoJo will replace traditional newsrooms' attracted a near-neutral mean ($\mu = 3.14$) with high standard deviation ($\sigma = 1.09$), indicating significant divergence of opinion—with many respondents viewing MoJo as a complementary tool rather than a wholesale replacement.

A mean of 4.12 for the statement that 'Hindi-language MoJo apps need improvement' underlines that the existing ecosystem of MoJo tools—most of which are designed for English-language markets—does not yet fully serve the needs of Hindi journalists in terms of script support, vernacular interface design, and feature localisation.

Table 5: Mean Scores on Future Readiness and Professional Outlook (n = 100)

Statement	Mean (μ)	Std. Dev. (σ)	Interpretation
MoJo is the future of Hindi journalism	4.38	0.72	Strongly Agree
I will increase MoJo use in next 2 years	4.21	0.81	Agree

GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

Statement	Mean (μ)	Std. Dev. (σ)	Interpretation
MoJo will replace traditional newsrooms	3.14	1.09	Neutral
Hindi-language MoJo apps need improvement	4.12	0.88	Agree
MoJo can strengthen rural news coverage	4.44	0.69	Strongly Agree
Overall satisfaction with MoJo adoption	3.97	0.93	Agree

Source: Primary Survey Data (2023–24). Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Mean ≥ 3.50 = Agreement.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study make several theoretically and practically significant contributions to the understanding of mobile journalism in the Indian regional-language context. First, the near-universal adoption of smartphones as primary reporting devices (85%) among the sample—cutting across age groups and media modalities—confirms that MoJo is no longer a fringe or experimental practice in Hindi journalism but a mainstream professional reality. This aligns with the trajectory documented by Burum and Quinn (2015) in Western markets and extends it to India's largest language media ecosystem.

Second, the strongly positive perception of MoJo's impact on news speed, rural outreach, and breaking news coverage underscores a distinctive dimension of the Indian MoJo landscape: geographic and demographic reach. Hindi news media must serve dispersed rural populations across states such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan—territories characterised by poor road infrastructure, limited television penetration, and uneven print distribution. Mobile journalism, with its low equipment cost and capacity for direct digital publication, emerges as a structurally appropriate tool for closing this information gap. The mean score of 4.44 for 'MoJo can strengthen rural news coverage' is the single highest score across all measured dimensions and deserves particular policy attention.

GYANBODH
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Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

Third, the identification of connectivity, training, and role overload as the top three challenges reveals systemic rather than individual failures in MoJo adoption. Poor field connectivity is ultimately a telecommunications infrastructure challenge that requires government and industry intervention rather than journalist adaptation. The training gap, conversely, represents a failure of media institutions and journalism education to keep pace with technological practice. The finding that only 36% of respondents considered institutional MoJo training adequate is particularly alarming and echoes Sacco and Bossio's (2017) finding that training is the most under-resourced dimension of MoJo integration globally.

Fourth, the ambivalence around editorial quality and newsroom replacement reflects broader anxieties in global journalism about the 'de-skilling' risks of technological acceleration. While 45% of respondents expressed concern that MoJo may compromise editorial quality, the majority disagreed, suggesting that practitioners who have directly worked with MoJo tools are more confident in reconciling technological efficiency with journalistic standards. This supports Westlund's (2013) argument that production-side mobile journalism is less threatening to journalistic norms than initial fears suggested, provided that institutional training and workflow design are appropriately managed.

Fifth, the finding that Hindi-language MoJo tools are perceived as needing significant improvement ($\mu = 4.12$) opens a critical area for product development and policy intervention. The international MoJo ecosystem is dominated by English-language applications, interfaces, and training resources. The development of culturally and linguistically appropriate MoJo tools—with Devanagari script support, Hindi-language tutorials, and interfaces calibrated to Indian field conditions—could substantially lower the adoption barriers documented in this study.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides the first systematic, quantitative evidence on the adoption and perceived impact of mobile journalism among a sample of 100 Hindi media professionals in India. All four research hypotheses were supported by the data. Hindi journalists have embraced MoJo as a primary reporting modality and perceive it overwhelmingly positively in terms of its speed, reach, and suitability for breaking news and rural outreach. At the same time, critical structural

GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

challenges—particularly connectivity deficits, training inadequacies, and role overload—prevent MoJo from realising its full potential in this media ecosystem.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Media organisations should establish structured, in-house MoJo training programmes covering reporting workflow, mobile editing, live-streaming ethics, and data security. These should be mandatory for all field journalists rather than optional.
2. Journalism education institutions should incorporate dedicated MoJo modules into undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, including practical field workshops conducted in low-connectivity environments to simulate real reporting conditions.
3. Technology developers should invest in localisation of MoJo applications for Hindi and other Indian regional languages, including Devanagari keyboard integration, vernacular tutorials, and interfaces optimised for entry-level smartphones.
4. Government telecommunications authorities and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should prioritise expansion of rural broadband and 4G/5G infrastructure, explicitly recognising its role in enabling citizen and professional journalism.
5. News organisations should revise editorial workflows to acknowledge and manage the cognitive load of solo MoJo reporting, including provisions for editorial support, fact-checking review, and post-production assistance for field reporters.
6. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and include qualitative interviews to deepen understanding of the lived MoJo experience among Hindi journalists, and should extend samples to smaller towns and semi-urban areas currently underrepresented in media research.

In conclusion, mobile journalism represents not merely a technological shift but a structural transformation in how Hindi news media can serve India's geographically and socially diverse audiences. The evidence from this study suggests that the conditions for transformative MoJo adoption are in place—motivated journalists, high smartphone penetration, and proven rural reach potential—but that infrastructure, institutional support, and tool localisation must urgently catch up if this potential is to be fully realised.

GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

6.1 Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations. The sample of 100 respondents, while adequate for a descriptive survey, may not be fully representative of the diversity within Hindi media across all states. Purposive sampling introduces the possibility of self-selection bias—respondents with stronger views on MoJo may have been more likely to participate. Additionally, survey-based self-reporting is subject to social desirability bias, particularly on questions relating to professional training and editorial quality. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. Future studies should employ larger probability samples and supplement quantitative data with qualitative interview data.

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GYANBODH
An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN:3048-9792
Volume: 3
Issue: 3
Special Issue: 1
June: 2026

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