JOURNAL OF
PARLIAMENTARY STUDIES

[A PEER-REVIEWED BI-ANNUAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL]

INSTITUTE OF
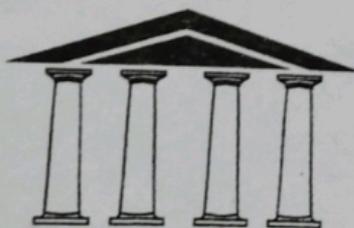PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

INSTITUTE OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

**INSTITUTE OF
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA**

JOURNAL OF PARLIAMENTARY STUDIES

Contents

A Realistic Perception of Media Interviews: Transition from Learnings to Earnings

Reshmi. S

Assistant Professor of English,
MES Asmabi College, Kodungallur, Kerala.

&

Krishnachandran. M

MA English Literature, MES Asmabi College,
Kodungallur, Kerala.

Abstract

A competitive and contentious generation leads to no choice of being outdated. An era built on the top technical and technological possibilities have led to drastic changes in the field of visual, print, and social media. The post pandemic era has seen a boom in the viewership of media interviews. The practice of asking casual questions and getting similar response for the same has clearly bifurcated the traditional media interviews and the modern ones. The paper discusses on how the art of interviewing shifted from a formal set up to ask relevant questions, that often added to the intellectual satisfaction to the more ludicrous, revenue and viewership-based ones.

Keywords : Media interview, Social media, Audience analysis, Technological boom

Introduction

A decade ago, most of the commoners had a prime objective of 'a television in a home', which lately changed to 'a smartphone per head in a house'. The sudden technological boom not only changed the outer world but also the complex inner mind of people. This paper titled "Media Interviews: From Learnings to Earnings" elaborates such an alteration in the point of carrying out media interviews. An interview can generally be defined as a well-structured conversation between two or more people, most likely between an interviewer and interviewee. An interview can become a space to explore opinions, experience, and information of particulars. Unlike a job interview, media interviews are not set up to evaluate the interviewee but rather to have a relaxed conversation with the celebrity concerned or fame about the selected topic. The history of such interviews in India started way back in the year 1953, which was an interview of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. William Clark was the host of the programme and introduced Nehru to the whole world through the BBC

channel. It was more of an ordeal than a talk show or interview to be precise and Kingsley Martin, HV Hodson and Donald Mc Lachlan were the gentlemen to raise questions. It lasted around 8 minutes and the video clip was released again through the official twitter account of BBC Archive on the occasion of India's 75th anniversary of Independence. Nehru's appearance cannot be stated as the start of a series of television interviews in India, but rather a milestone to remember as the first interview of an Indian in the history of television.

While talking about the history of television programmes in India, soap operas were the initial ones to be broadcasted. Unlike other programmes in television, these talk shows and interviews were of short duration. These systematic and lenient interviews with questions of great relevance never failed to intellectually satisfy an average viewer. It is difficult to answer when? but knowingly or unknowingly the style and tone of such interviews slowly started to change in the past few years, quite often related to the social media and media convergence. The pandemic has also played its role in relocating the people's idea of entertainment. Online journalism as a trend, has rather developed into a revenue generating medium for many. A look on such a notable change in the area of media interview is necessary.

Relevance and Objectives

Apart from the visual media and other means of electronic media, there existed a mass which largely relied on the print media, especially the newspaper. Newspapers are still relevant due to the fact that it can store history in itself till the paper decays. The electronic media is more of an instantaneous one, due to the fact that recording everything which comes and goes in it is not practical. It is evident that the practice of interview started from the print media itself. Going through some noted interviews of film makers in the book 'Interviews with Film Directors' of Andrew Sarris which was published in the year 1967, a series of excellent questions to the top Hollywood directors of that time can be seen. For example; "Do you think that critics, and perhaps audiences as well, have become too self-conscious about the British cinema? For the last three or four years we have been talking about a breakthrough, questioning each new film as it comes along about how far it measures up to expectations, pulling the cinema up by the roots to see how it's getting on. Does this attitude perhaps put an unfair burden on British film-makers? No, I don't think so, because there is a real mystery here. We all talk about England's terrible heritage; about how impossible everything is in this country. But at the same time, we know, by a piece of double-think, that this is really completely untrue, and that there's a tremendous tradition and fund

of intelligence and imagination and originality which has always been there, and which has suddenly come out in a certain form in the theatre. There doesn't seem any reason why it shouldn't take the British cinema way out into all sorts of exciting directions. But in fact it doesn't; and so we have, I think, to go on hoping and praying and nudging and wondering" (Sarris, 52).

Without much explanation, the elegance of an interview in the print can be simply seen here. The significance of such a discussion increases while analysing the contemporary media interviews, especially the ones in the social media platforms. It is to be noted whether the decorum of a basic interview is maintained throughout the whole session of these interviews. When the medium of the propagation evolved over the course of time, noticeable changes happened. A walk through the evolution of media interviews and talk shows with respect to the print, electronic, and social media exhibits not only the easiness to set up and broadcast but also makes us question the alterations occurred in its style over the course of time. The authenticity of an interviewer is also to be questioned along with the 'instant celebrities' being interviewed. Even in such a stage of inflation and unemployment, the social media and internet acts as a handy method of earning a good revenue, redefining the perception of profession and income. Some find part-time earnings from various social media platforms, while some other find this as their primary source of income. Although it is necessary to see whether the ethics of online journalism is violated for the sake of revenue.

Denunciation of Various Aspects of Social Media Interview

- **Authenticity of the Interviewer**

An interview will mostly be centred on a principal talking point. More than just asking a number of questions, the interviewer must have a sound knowledge of what is being asked. A conversation gets interesting when the interviewer asks excellent follow-up questions. This talent cannot be achieved over a night, and some famous personalities in the electronic media are good examples for the same. The experience matters due to the fact that they know what to ask and how to ask. A trend that has started with the social media interviews is that most of the channels, especially YouTube, tends to assign an interviewer with poor journalistic background and knowledge, overwhelming communication skills, least formal, and hyperactive. The interviewers are said to be more of an entertaining element throughout the programme, seeking attention from the audience. The viewers, captivated by the entertainment factors, are deviated from the topic or the specific purpose of why such an interview is done. These are commonly associated with the interviews of celebrities, mainly involved in

the promotions of their movies or upcoming projects. It is not being stated as a collective criticism against all the interviewers in the social media platform, but rather to give an insight on the fact that the authenticity of an interviewer is neglected in the social media these days.

• **Standard of the Questions**

"Making interviews is not easy at all. People think it's easy. It's stupid to think it's easy" (Grobel, 27). A close look into the words of Oriana Fallaci reveals how lightly people try to approach interviews. As it is known that an interview will be related to a specific topic, the questions to be asked should be closely related to the subject. Such creative questions are the soul of interview. Some genuine questions might open up an opportunity to make interpretations and discussions, not only between the interviewer and interviewee, but also among the audience, or even comparatively large community. The negligence of this matter in the contemporary interviews happen due to the fact that some questions about the personal life of the interviewee evokes interest in the public.

While examining the structure of a standard question, the question might sometimes be preceded by a statement or idea related to the same. This in-turn makes the interviewee go through a thought process in contemplation of answering the question from various aspects. The inclusion of such questions should make sense, letting the question be related with the interviewee's professional career, opinions on relevant social issues, or based on any specific reasons for that person to be in that spot. A well scripted interview leads or takes the audience through a path of intellectual satisfaction whereas, the other does not explore the depths of specific subjects. The in tolerant reaction of a celebrity while raising a critical question is the same since the beginning of interviews. Even though such behaviours are anticipated, the interviewer tries to ensure that the person sitting opposite to them is not hurt. The interviewee also tries their best to maintain the decorum for the same. While analysing some recent interviews in the social media platforms, this mutual respect is not being displayed, mostly from the side of some interviewers. Controversies are now created due to the lack of understanding between the interviewer and interviewee. Sub-standard questions, with the aim of entertaining, might inversely affect the whole mood of the show.

• **Problems with the Lack of Censorship and Motives**

In-order to broadcast a show through the electronic media, it had to be recorded, edited, censored, and would go through a series of other filtration

process before it reaches the public. This ensure that offensive or unacceptable parts, if any, in such programmes, does not reach the viewers. A problem with social media is the lack of censorship, which people might take advantage of, for the sake of continuity. Even though there are policies for censorship in the social media, they are not as strong as the policies implied in the electronic media. Interviews based on the electronic media might take a week or so to be broadcasted, whereas the social media interviews could be uploaded within a shorter span of time than that the former.

Another matter to be discussed is the motives of these media interviews. In one way or the other, it has started to feel that such programme are done, based on a didactic purpose of benefiting both the interviewer and interviewee. The lately formed trend of promoting the celebrities' movies through such interviews in You Tube seemed to have formed especially after the pandemic period. Being said that the social media is a novel way to earn revenue, the public relations team of both the You Tube channels and films takes advantage of it. A change in motive of making useful content for the public has shifted to using the public for their purpose.

Conclusion

The netspeak has always been devastating for the formal communication among people. Interactions happen more often through the social media, especially after the pandemic period. Despite the shortcomings of such media interviews and continuous criticism through the social media platforms, they still have a great viewership. This automatically raises a question towards the average viewer about the perception of contents in the social media. The didactic purpose and its structural change, makes an interview less appetising to the intellect. Humans have evolved as rational beings, giving much importance to pleasures in their lives.

A deep-rooted fact about the modern era is that, it gives no options to be outdated. Each individual has to be well aware of their surroundings and has to adapt to the immediate changes across various fields in-order to be updated. Such interviews are the latest entries in the recommendation lists and social media feeds of many users. The entertaining factor or the clickbait makes the end user to play those as such. The alarming factor lies where people are enjoying the novel interviews, mistaking them to be the best form of interviews. The denial of the public from knowing about how a proper interview should be conducted keeps away a lot of criticism from these channels. Vagueness in its structure and evolution splits the modern media interviews from the older ones. The elegance

of the printed interviews already gets sliced off when they are presented through the electronic media, leading to almost a nil in the relevance of media interviews. Just a mere look at the two ends (interviewer and interviewee) of the media interviews are enough to know whether it will be a good watch or not. The lack of integrity, respect, and decorum adds up to the lost credits of the ignorant interviewer along with the interviewee. The shift from setting up interviews for a good cause to a good cost is a matter to be noted. In the end, it becomes a personal choice through the sensibility acquired through a lifetime, to enjoy what is displayed before a person.

References

Crown, 2004. Bowker, https://doi.org/10.1604/9781400050710.

Grobel, Lawrence. "The Art of the Interview." Lessons From a Master of the Craft

Jenkins, Henry. Convergence Culture: Where Old and new Media Collide. NY Press, 2006.

Sarris, Andrews. "Interviews with Film Directors". Bobbs-Merrill, 1967.