

# Challenges in Distribution Network of Newspapers: A Study of Newspaper Distribution Agents in Tirupati

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**Abstract:** *In this era of globalisation and digitalisation the newspaper industry are experiencing with the radical changes due to technological advancements in all aspects, particularly in physical distribution of newspapers. Distribution network plays a pivotal role in for any newspaper organisation to reach the customers in time. The main objectives of this study is to study the distribution network system and analyse the challenges in distribution faced by agents from starting point to end point with respect to Tirupati region. For this study, the samples of 50 distribution network agents have been taken from the total population based on purposive sampling method*

**Key Words:** *Newspapers, Distribution Network, Circulation, Advertisement, strategies.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

In the era of information the newspaper is considered to be one of the most important reading materials in the life of a literate person to know about surroundings of the globalised world. At present 60% of the people cannot imagine their day without a newspaper. Newspaper is a perishable and distinct product in its nature, and every newspaper organization must concentrates on marketing activities of the product because the life span of the newspaper is only 12 to 24 hours because readers don't pay any amount for yesterday's paper. In newspaper organisation there are two departments namely Advertisement department and Circulation department will handle all the functions and activities regarding marketing and distribution of the newspaper. The primary function of the Advertisement department is to attract the commercial advertisers and the Circulation department is wholly responsible for generating new subscriptions and distribution of copies to the existing ones. Strategies of both the departments should complement each other for the overall success of the organization.

The Unique characteristics of Newspaper make it a bit complex for marketers to chalk out promotional and distribution strategies. In any Newspaper organisation the marketing and circulation departments involve in establishing and implementing the marketing plans for promoting Newspapers. The circulation department is also responsible to attain and retain the customers through the value delivery network. For this the newspaper organisations must concentrate on distribution network and monitor the distribution agents on regular basis to overcome the distribution challenges.

There are many factors that determine the successful operations of the distribution channel in a newspaper organisation. Accordingly a small issue in these operations can eventually affect the newspaper. The customer has various reasons to choose a particular newspaper. However, it is the responsibility of newspaper agents to communicate to the customer and deliver their newspaper within time. The reach and popularity of a newspaper to a large extent depends on its distribution network.

However, this study will examine the relationship between newspaper publisher and newspaper vendor with regard to the subject matter of the topic, it will identify the problems that exist in the distribution process of Newspaper industry in Andhra Pradesh.

In newspaper distribution network human factor plays a crucial role. In India nearly 70% of the newspaper sales happen through door to door delivery through network agents. There are various problems that challenges to newspaper distribution from newspaper printing location to final destination. In Tirupati, only newspaper agent distribution system is practiced. In this context this paper concentrates on the following objectives.

## 2. OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the newspaper distribution network system in Tirupati.
2. To analyse the challenges in distribution faced by agents from starting point to end point with respect to Tirupati region.

## 3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Morgan (2009)** in his article, "My last column on the newspaper Industry" revealed that most of today's leading newspapers were built through achieving dominant distribution in their markets, not through delivering better

journalism. He also states that in the current scenario great newspapers are built on the basis of their distribution strategies and not on the basis of their content.

**Office of Fair Trading, UK (2008)**, the report revealed that a newspaper is a unique product which perishable in nature. The span of newspaper is 12 to 24 hours only. So certainly, a large distribution network is needed to distribute the newspapers in very early morning to sustain it readers. Generally the publishers have only one opportunity to deliver newspapers to agents and retailers within time, if a newspaper arrives a few hours late at an, the demand is likely to have expired. At the same time, the publishers are forced to publish or incorporate the latest news items in the newspapers at late hours it creates a pressure and reduce the distribution time of newspaper

**Postol (1997)** said that for survival any newspaper the distribution of newspapers at the door step of the reader is very important. He also explained that the way newspaper boy is trained to shoulder the responsibility of increasing circulation. In order to get boys to selling, the newspaper organisation would need to just stimulate them and then reward. If the newspaper organisation is unable to getting boys to distribute newspapers, then the distribution of newspaper will become very difficulty.

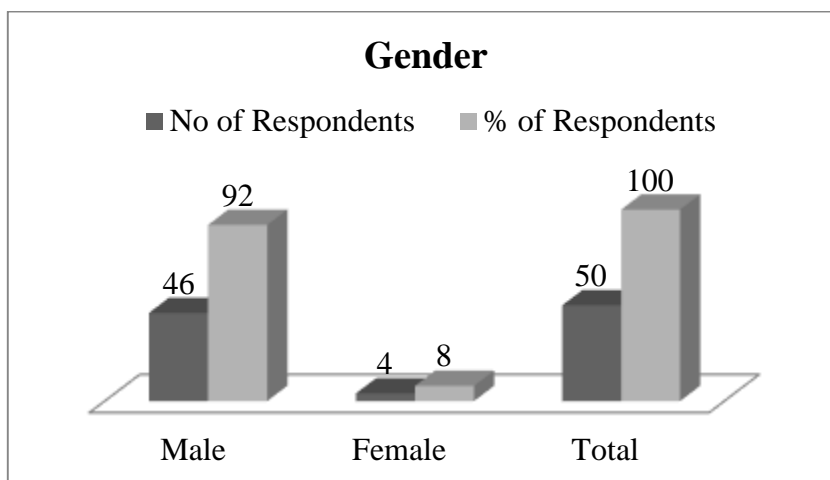
**4. RESEARCH DESIGN:**

- 📌 **Area of Study:** Tirupati region was chosen for the area of study.
- 📌 **Data Collection:** The data can be collected by using primary and secondary ways.
  - **Primary Data:**  
For primary data the structured questionnaire was used to collect the data about distribution system of newspapers. The questionnaire was distributed to newspaper distribution agents in Tirupati Urban region.
  - **Secondary Data:**  
The secondary data for study was collected through periodicals, Surveys, Journals, Organisation profiles, websites, and official portals of newspaper agencies, governing bodies of newspapers and other related sources.
- 📌 **Sample for Study:**  
For study, 50 newspaper distribution agents were selected as sample. Distribution agents are the key players in entire newspaper distribution process. They play a key role in distributing the newspapers to the readers in time. In that process they may face various challenges and problems related to distribution.

**5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:**

**5.1 Gender classification of Respondents:**

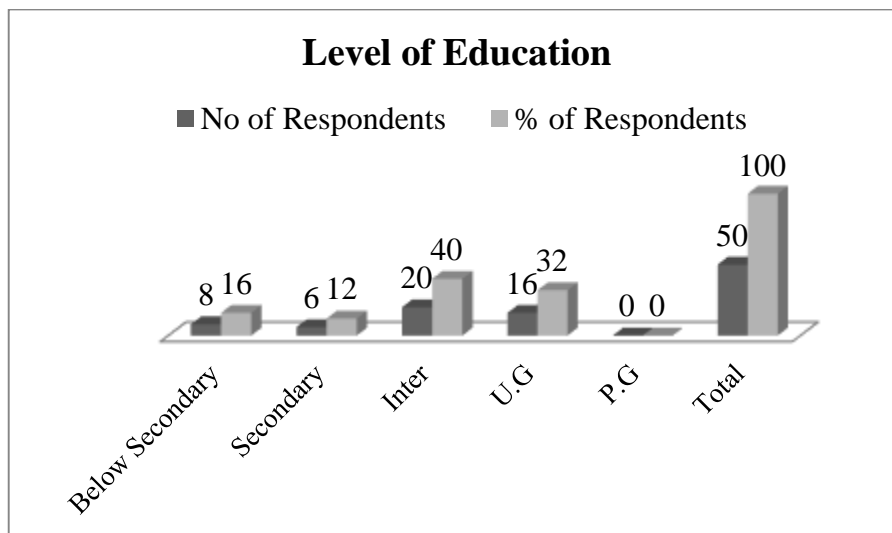
Gender	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Male	46	92
Female	4	8
Total	50	100



The above table reveals the gender wise representation of distribution agents. The male respondents are 46 out of 50 i.e 92% of the respondents are male and only 8% of the respondents are female. From the above data it is clear that only male persons are interested in the newspaper distribution business. In majority cases females are only the owner and the actual business was carried by their spouse (men) only.

### 5.2. Level of Education of Distribution Agents

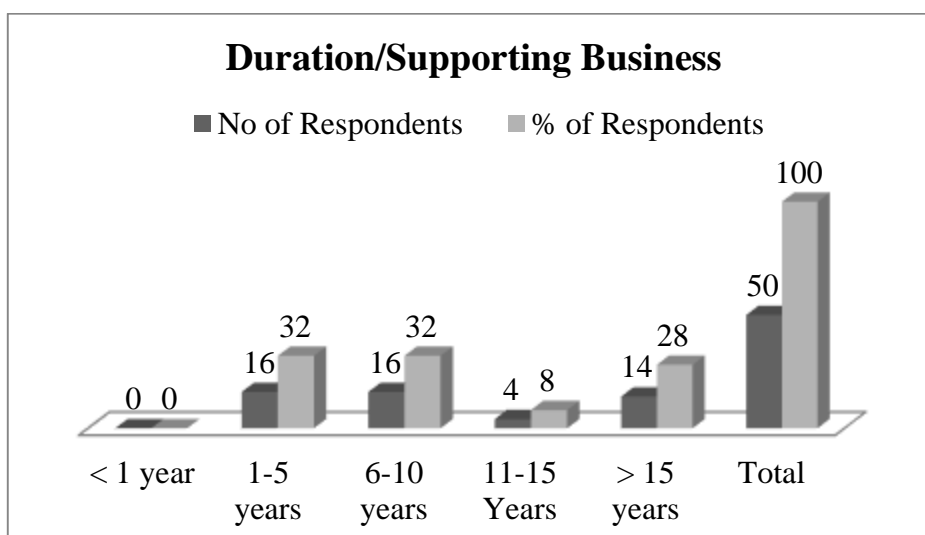
Education	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Below Secondary	8	16
Secondary	6	12
Inter	20	40
U.G	16	32
P.G	0	0
Total	50	100



From the above data it shows that 40% of the respondents studied up to Intermediate, 32% of the respondents are Under Graduates, 16% of the respondents studied up to below secondary and only 12% of the respondents had their Secondary education. There is no distribution agents belong to Post Graduation. The above data shows that the educational qualifications decide the newspaper distribution business. It is a phenomena i.e. as educational qualification increases the no of distribution agents are decreasing and vice- versa.

### 5.3. Duration of Newspaper business carrying

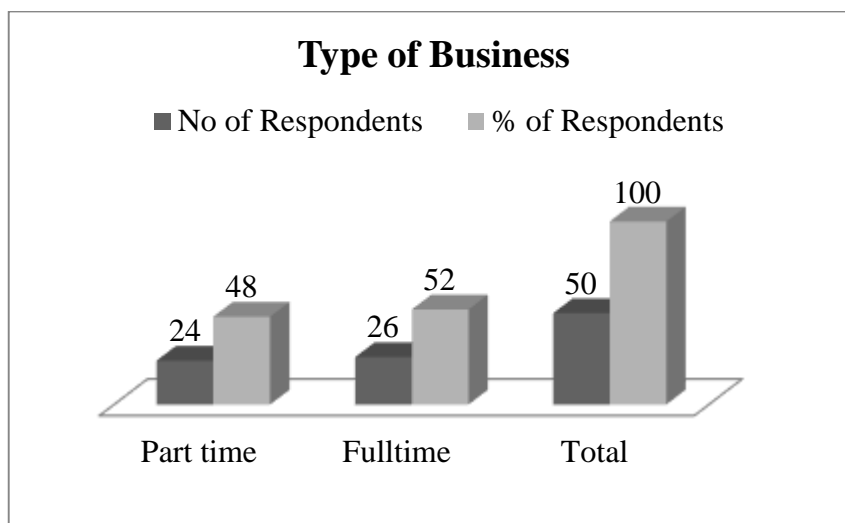
Years	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
< 1 year	0	0
1-5 years	16	32
6-10 years	16	32
11-15	4	8
> 15 years	14	28
Total	50	100



The above table depicts the duration of carrying the newspaper business. 32% respondents are involved in the business during the last five years and 32% of the respondents are doing the business from ten years, 28% are doing the business more than 15 years and less no 4(8%) of the respondents doing the business from the past ten years. It is also clear that majority of the respondents are old timers in Newspaper distribution business.

#### 5.4. Type of Business

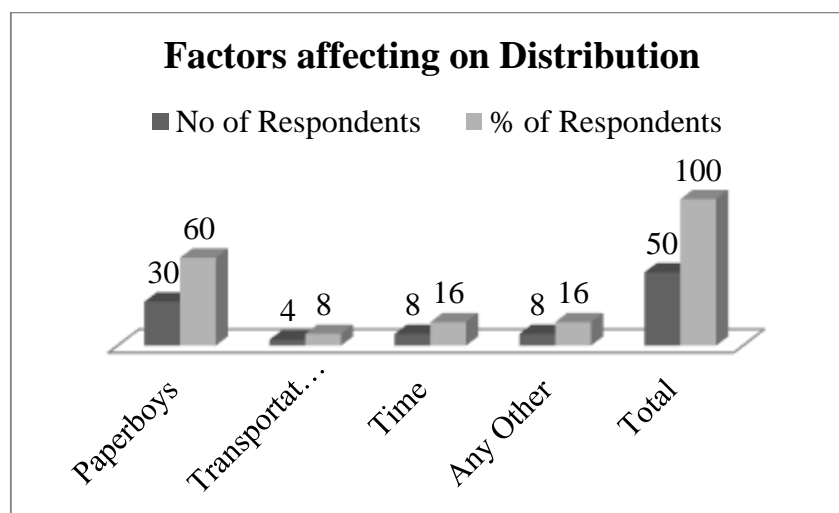
Business	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Part time	24	48
Fulltime	26	52
Total	50	100



The type of business may vary from one agent to another agent. There are two types of newspaper distribution business. One is Full time and another part time. It may depend on the socio economic factor, convenience and time spent by the agent. From the above table there is a slight variation i.e. only 4% between full time and part time business. Majority if the agents are interested in doing the business on full time basis.

#### 5.5. Factors that are affecting distribution

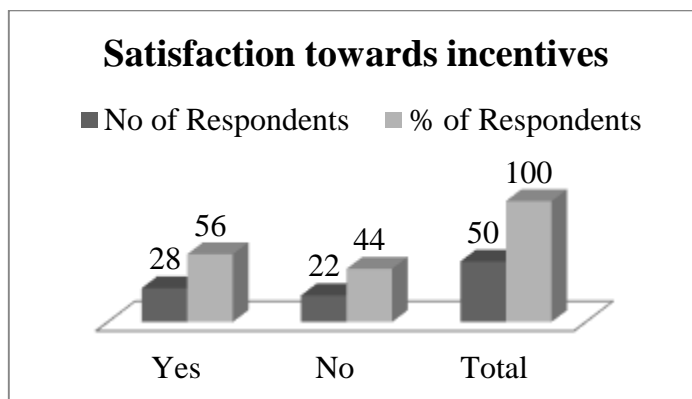
Factors	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Paperboys	30	60
Transportation	4	8
Time	8	16
Any Other	8	16
Total	50	100



There are many factors that are affecting the distribution of newspapers. Primarily demands of paper boys are the major factor because of the irregular attendance of boys and they leave job without any intimation. 60% of the respondents said that they faced lot of challenges with paper boys, 8% of the respondents said that Transportation is also another problem and 16% respondents said that time is also one constraint in distribution process and remaining respondents mentioned other problems like collecting subscription fee, lack of identity etc.

**5.6. Satisfaction towards Incentives given by the newspaper organisation**

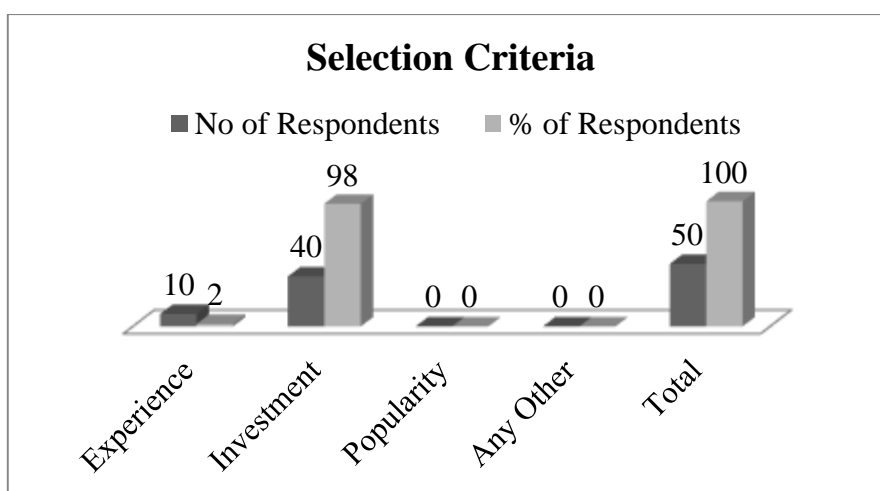
Satisfaction	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	28	56
No	22	44
Total	50	100



Satisfaction is the most important factor in any business or job; it may either in Job or in receiving suitable incentives for the work. From the above data most of the respondents are satisfied towards their incentives. 56% of the respondents are satisfied with the incentives given by the newspaper organisation and 44% of the respondents are not satisfied with the incentives.

**5.7. Selection criteria for Distribution Agents by the Newspaper Organisation**

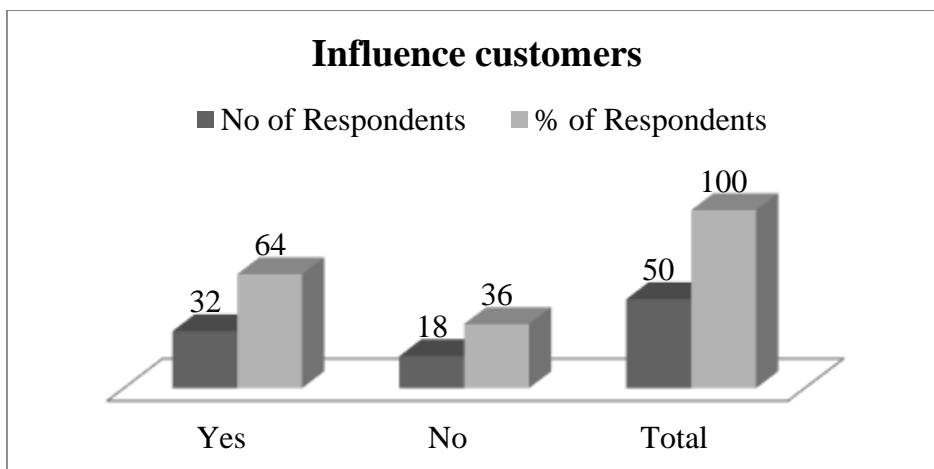
Criteria	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Experience	10	2
Investment	40	98
Popularity	0	0
Any Other	0	0
Total	50	100



The above data illustrates that the selection of distribution agents by the newspapers organisation is on investment basis that is deposit of money by the agents. 98% of respondents are selected depending on investment made to organisation and only 2% of respondents are selected through experience basis. There is no use of popularity and remaining things.

**5.8. Influence the customers**

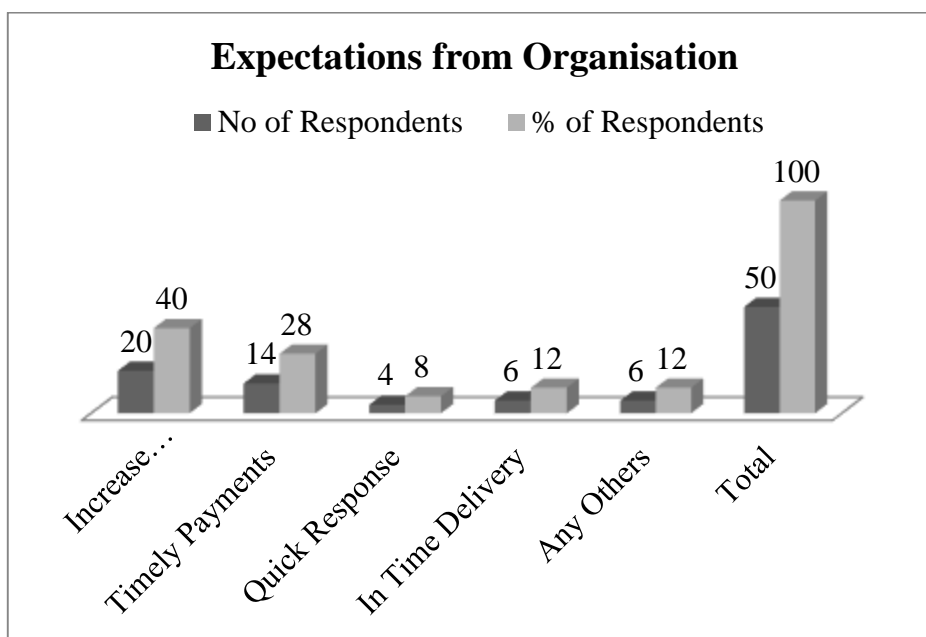
Influence	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
Total	50	100



The above data describes that 64% of the respondents influence the customers for increasing their incentives and subscriptions and 36% of the respondents are not interested to influence the customers.

**5.9. Expectations from organisations**

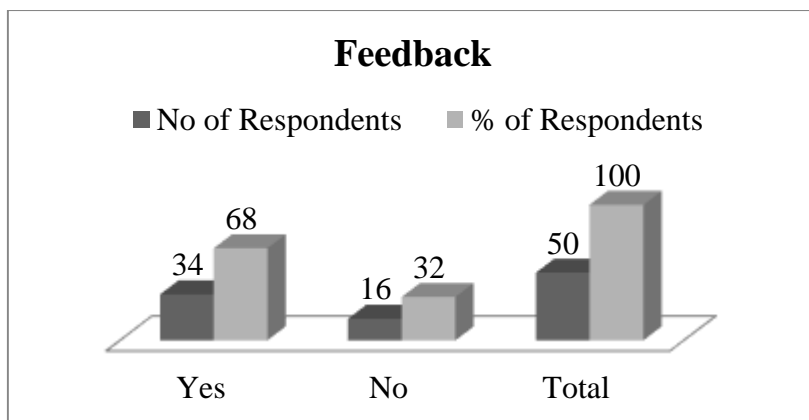
Expectations	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Increase percentages on unsold	20	40
Timely Payments	14	28
Quick Response	4	8
In Time Delivery	6	12
Any Others	6	12
Total	50	100



As an agent they expected some benefits from newspaper organisation. 40% of respondents expected increase in percentages on unsold copies of newspapers, 28% of respondents expected timely payments on unsold, 8% of respondents expected quick response from management in the times of grievances and remaining 12% of the respondents are expected in time delivery of newspapers in drop point and the same percent of respondents expected increase of incentives, identity etc.

**5. 10. Collection of Feedback from the readers**

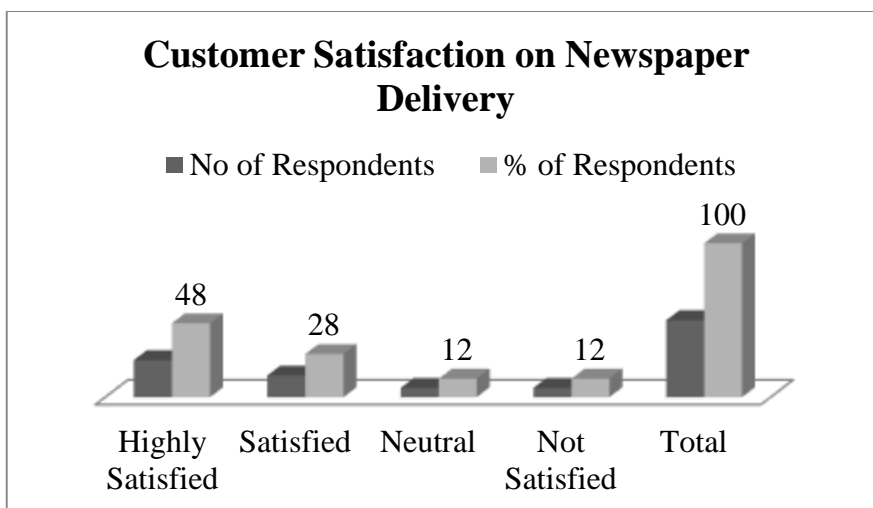
	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	34	68
No	16	32
Total	50	100



From the above data it is clear that 68% of the respondents collected feedback from the readers about their delivery of newspaper, content and coverage of news in newspapers which helps to increase the business, 33% of the respondents have not collected any feedback from the readers about their service.

**5.11. Customers satisfaction and opinion with delivery of newspaper**

	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	24	48
Satisfied	14	28
Neutral	6	12
Not Satisfied	6	12
Total	50	100

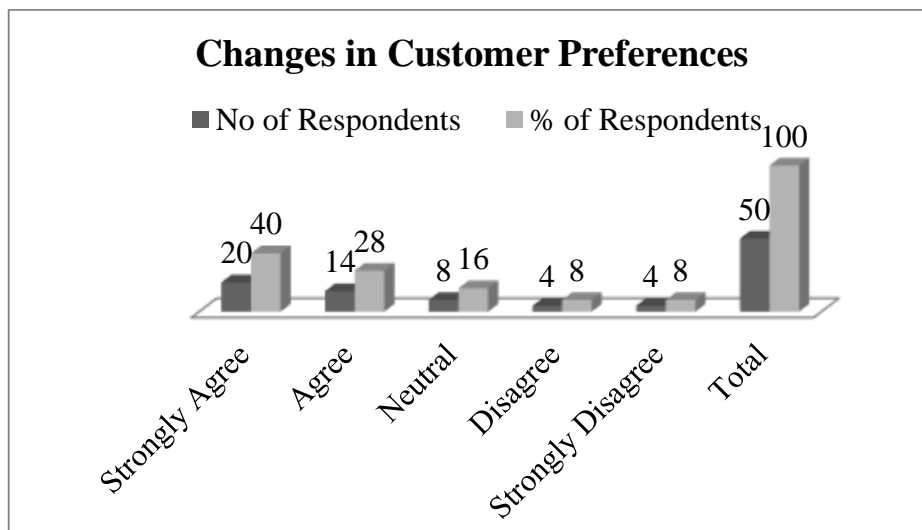


The above data illustrates that 48% of the respondents are highly satisfied with the time of the newspaper delivery, 28% of the respondents are satisfied, 12% of the respondents said that neutral and only 12% of the respondents are not satisfied with the time of newspaper delivery.

**5.12. Changes in customer preferences impact on newspaper**

	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	20	40
Agree	14	28
Neutral	8	16

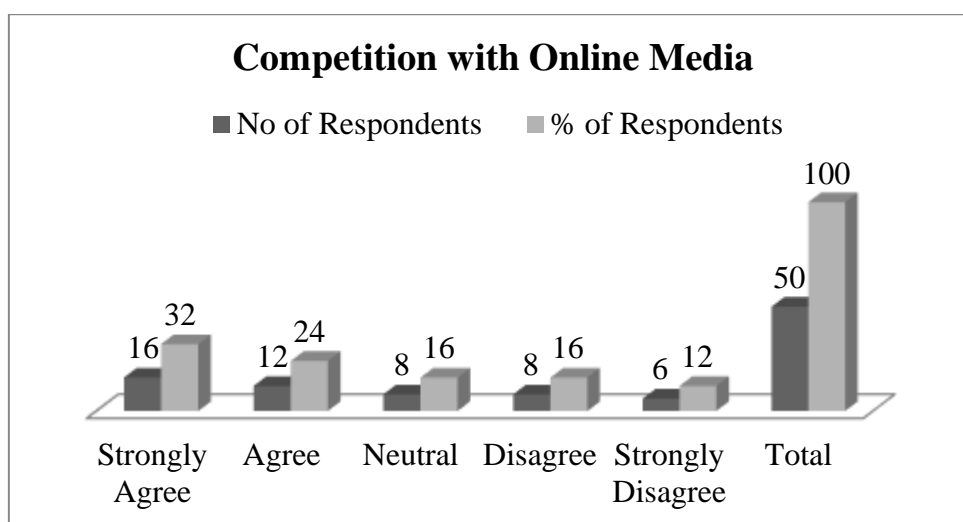
Disagree	4	8
Strongly Disagree	4	8
Total	50	100



For every newspaper organisation reader/customer is one of the valuable assets. The above data describes the customer change them one product to another depending on their preferences which may affect the business. 40% of the respondents are strongly agreed i.e. changes in customer preference affected on newspapers, 28% of the respondents agreed and 8(16%) of the respondents are neutral with the statement. Only 8% of the respondents are strongly disagreed as well as disagreed with the statement.

**5.13. Impact of Online media on Print Newspaper**

	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	16	32
Agree	12	24
Neutral	8	16
Disagree	8	16
Strongly Disagree	6	12
Total	50	100



The above data illustrates the competition with online and other social media impact on print newspaper. 32% of the respondents are strongly agreed that there is a high competition for print newspapers with online newspapers as well as other media, 24% of the respondents agreed and 6% of the respondents are neutral with the statement. Only 16% of the respondents are disagreed and 12% of the respondents are strongly disagreed with the statement i.e. still print newspapers have their own credibility in reader’s mind.



## 6. FINDINGS:

- 92% of the respondents are male i.e. it is clear that only male persons are interested in the newspaper distribution business.
- As educational qualification increases the no of distribution agents are decreasing and vice versa.
- Majority of the respondents were considered distribution of newspaper is a Part time business because of Economical factors.
- 60% of the respondents reveals that the major problem that was faced with distribution boys.
- 40% of the respondents are strongly agreed i.e. changes in customer preference affected on newspapers business.
- 32% of the respondents are strongly agreed that there is a high competition for print newspapers with online newspapers as well as other media.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

The distribution network plays a pertinent role in strengthening the every newspaper organisation. In time delivery of newspapers to the destine readers is not an easy task. It requires proper functioning of distribution boys by the distribution agents. There are many factors that are affecting the newspaper distribution process. The factors are like weather conditions, paper boy's demand, vehicles etc. Needless to say any and every newspaper organisation can grow and survive only if it has proper and effective distribution system, because Newspaper is perishable goods which have a life period of 24 hours. So the bundles of the newspaper should reach in time to dropping facility, which is the accessing place of the agents. This enables the distribution agents to sort out and arrange the papers in area wise for timely delivery of newspapers to the customers.

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