

Newspaper Supplements of Metropolitan City Publications: A Case Study of two Indian News Dailies

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This article seeks to explore the narratives on metropolitan cities that appear in the supplements of the English language newspapers of India. The positioning of the city in these newspaper supplements predominantly projects the lifestyles of the rich and the famous, with an overt emphasis on a culture of conspicuous consumption. This is being thrust upon the public day after day. These supplements with their emphasis on gloss, glamour, gossip, and entertainment are predominantly projecting a high-end lifestyle, aiding and abetting the quest for affluence in the minds of the readers. Commercial interests are influencing the way news about the city is selected and written about in these daily supplements, resulting increasingly in the focus on issues considered by some to be of little worth culturally or socially. It is argued that there is a disconnect between the narratives on the city in newspaper supplements and public perceptions of the same.

Keywords: Newspaper supplements, political economy of news, agenda-setting

Following economic liberalization in the eighties, newspapers in India have not only witnessed phenomenal growth but they are covering more subjects and have added more pages to various sections. They have brought in supplements because the main paper cannot carry too many advertisements. Added to this has been the changing readership interest and demand for news on more subjects which the main paper cannot accommodate due to lack of column space, which has resulted in publishing of the supplements. According to Mukund Padmanabhan, City Editor, *Metroplus*, 'In 1990s with the opening up of the economy in India, new lifestyles and work cultures emerged. This was akin to what had happened a decade ago in the West when the yuppie culture emerged. Sunday supplements gathered huge popularity as the weekend was the only leisure time after a week's worth of hard work for these new age businessmen. A similar trend was on in India'.

Symbolic Cultural Representation of the City

Urban sociological studies examine the city through several characteristics such as density of population, occupation, environment, stratification, mobility, social differentiation, size of the community et al. These studies, besides focusing upon the material development of the urban built environment of cities are also highlighting the city through cultural symbols and themes

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that inundate the modern city. The city is looked at in terms of several themes, motifs, floating signifiers and spectacles like events, leisure and cultural activities which have come to play a significant part in urban life. Symbols, images and other forms of verbal and visual representations define the city in a particular way in the newspaper supplements. 'Lifestyle magazines and consumer columns of the daily newspapers open a window to a rarified view of the city, that of boutiques, restaurants and other specialized sites of consumption, making ordinary people more aware of the elites' cultural consumption. The high visibility of spokespersons, stars and stylists for culture industries underlines the up-market quality of culture as a motor of economic growth' (Zukin, 2005, p. 285).

We now turn to the symbolic narratives of the city which are published in these newspaper supplements. Writing about the city, these supplements can ideally provide the readers with a vast array of subjects, ranging from the city's infrastructure, to its development, to a range of social and civic issues, to its places of interest, its cultural vibrancy and last but not the least, the people who make up the city. "The newspaper particularly is tied functionally and symbolically to conceptions of place and describes characteristic inflections of the narrative of city life" (Parisi & Holcomb, 1994). An important attribute of urbanization is that the culture and values of the city become dominant in the entire society. "Culture is the constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience" (Fiske, 2011, p.1). Cities are landscapes of cultural diversity and sub-cultural differentiation, what Robert Park (1925) called a 'mosaic of social worlds'.

This brings on the main question of what narratives of the city do we get to see in the newspaper supplements today. A study of the city-based newspaper supplements that accompany some of the largest circulating English language national dailies of the country, reveal a one-sided image of the city. The article seeks to examine the news content of these supplements. It seeks to explore what image of the city these supplements want to create in the public's mind. It also tries to examine if journalists covering the city supplements face any pressures that force them to select or construct the news content in a particular way.

Methodology

The methodology used for this study involved a qualitative analysis of the news content of the City supplements brought out by two English language newspapers in Delhi—from February, 2012 to April, 2012. Interviews were also conducted with four journalists who have worked for these publications to get insights into the way news content for these supplements is selected and represented for the readers. The serious look of the host newspapers is in sharp contrast to the flippant and garish look of the supplements brought out by the main publications, which has a bearing on the paper's credibility. Advocates of the journalism's agenda-setting role assert a direct causal relationship between journalistic content of the media and subsequent public perceptions of what are the important issues of the day. Studies by the Glasgow Media Group indicate that news productions are inevitably and normally the result of selection, interpretation and are therefore biased. There is a good deal of analysis by the Glasgow Media Group (1980) which lends support to the critical interpretation of how and why news is the way it is.

Allan Bell (1991) emphasizes that journalists and editors produce news stories not articles. These stories have a viewpoint, values and structure that can be analyzed. A good deal of critical content analysis of news interprets evidence of deviations of representation from reality in terms of ideology and manipulation by dominant social classes as is evident in both the newspapers under study -*Delhi Times* and *HT City* supplements. News, as it exists is not an

objective reality and news simply would not exist without the media. This research analysis points out that the reported events are considered important by the public only if they are presented by the media as being important news in the first place. This lends credence to the agenda-setting approach which explains that the media sets the agenda through selective framing of news and constructs a partial account of reality which then becomes the agenda for the public. Over time, the press agenda also becomes the peoples' agenda and public opinion gets formed. In depth interviews were conducted with twenty readers of the city supplements to find out what impact the symbolic cultural narratives of the city projected in these newspaper supplements had upon them. The interviews help to establish how the Press agenda impacts upon public perceptions.

Qualitative Analysis of *HT City* and *Delhi Times*

The quintessence of the city captured by newspaper supplements today is revealed from the following advertisements for *HT City* and *Delhi Times* in the *Hindustan Times* and *Times Group* websites, respectively which clearly showcase the kinds of symbolic cultural narratives of the city that these supplements seek to project. *HT City* and *Delhi Times* have been selected for this study since these two newspaper supplements are the most widely circulated in the country. The Indian Readership Survey (IRS) 2012 reveals that *HT City* has a readership of 37.67 lakhs, placing it as the second most widely read English newspaper in India after *Delhi Times* brought out by *The Times of India*.

The Hindustan Times reader wakes up to a bundle of fun, frolic, entertainment and masala everyday called *HT City* (in Delhi) and *HT Cafe* (in Mumbai). One of the strongest drivers of readership, the daily entertainment supplement enjoys almost universal salience and readership. The buzzy daily supplement has redefined lifestyle and entertainment space in newspapers, packing a punch with daily dose of Bollywood, Hollywood, Fashion, Relationship, City and Campus. (HT Media online)

In 1994, *The Times of India* took a bold step at experimenting with not just news, but something which was more. The resultant was a supplement – *Bombay Times* – which broke the mould when it came to capturing the latest about what's happening in and around the city in a package that captured the essence of the city – its people, culture, fashion, art, theatre, sports, films, and private and public social gatherings. (Times Group Website)

The positioning of the 'city' for these city-based news supplements is apparent from their above description with the emphasis being on gloss, glamour and punch predominantly projecting the lifestyles of the rich and famous and not the common man. Instead of functioning in a manner that ensures equality among the readers, these supplements have only contributed towards driving a division in the class structure of society. *The Hindu* newspaper also brings out a daily newspaper supplement called *Metro Plus*. This supplement also covers the city but its news content stands out in sharp contrast to some of the other supplements. According to Padmanabhan (2009) of *The Hindu*, "the inaugural issues and those that followed laid the foundation for this supplement by engaging their respective cities in their totality, dealing with subjects such as lifestyle, culture, heritage, fashion and food, and lending another dimension to the newspaper's overall coverage. The paper offers informative news on lighter subjects and does not contain any gossip nor Page 3 content."

This research study examined the daily news content of the supplements of *The Times of India* and *Hindustan Times* and the qualitative analysis of the news content of these two supplements shows that the print media have increasingly shifted from the serious and genuine

concerns affecting society to focus largely on the trivial. Donn (2003) has described this as ‘the dumbing down effect’. Dumbing down in the case of news supplement content is reflected in the overdose of subjects pertaining to consumerism, entertainment and lifestyles – promoting materialism and false values. As Donn (2003) states, the dumbing down effect points to a variety of different things such as a decline in creativity and innovation, a degradation of artistic, cultural, and intellectual standards, and the trivialization of cultural, artistic, journalistic and academic creations. Donn (ibid) further describes dumbing down as a process where complex issues are simplified to excess, with it all boiling down to an issue or event being portrayed as either wrong or right and very little in the way of analysis being offered. It also refers to the focus on issues considered by some to be of little worth culturally or socially. As Justice Ray (2006) has pointed out: “The page 3 culture can make people live in a make-believe world and as a result, instead of journalism connecting people, it may result in the people losing touch with reality being connected through the media. Media has created its own world of glamour, gossip, sex and sensation that has played a major role in distracting attention from the real issues of our times. Tabloidization is a shift by the media away from national and international issues of importance to a more entertainment or gossipy style of journalism that focuses on “Lifestyle, celebrity, entertainment and crime/scandal.”

Though the daily news supplements in this study have been examined here for a three-month period, this dumbing-down effect has been a noticeable trend throughout the period of existence of these supplements - from inception till date. The criteria deployed for news selectivity which selectively turns news into a manufactured product and thereby into a manufactured account of reality, will be discussed in the course of this article while discussing a theoretical overview of the daily news process.

The trivialization of news content has a far-reaching impact given the sheer size of the readership of these publications. Among various forms of print media, newspaper dailies are driving reach growth, which has increased by 12.8 per cent, reports exchange4media.com (2009). The growth of reach of newspaper dailies is closely related to the increase in the number of literates: from 2005 to 2008 it has increased from 277,900,000 to 313,400,000. Most of the city supplements, vying for the largest share of readership, share uniformity in terms of news presentation and coverage. In the rat-race to grab a larger share of the market, each publication is trying to out-do the other by offering a plethora of colour supplements. But this has resulted in each newspaper, dishing out the same fare, albeit with a different nomenclature. Thus these newspaper supplements look almost the same with each claiming to be the market leader. The fare offered is seven days of materialistic splash through advertisements, product allurements and entertainment news to lure the public into hedonistic pleasures. This constitutes the major chunk of newspaper supplement content today, none of which provides the reader with much food for thought. The commercial approach of the media has reduced newspapers to trivia and lowered their informational quality. The average city dweller has only a casual interest in news in general and spends only a few minutes every day perusing these dailies. His attention is further distracted from serious news stories by the colourful supplements carrying advertisements of a wide range of household goods and gadgets, designer wear and filmy gossips deliberately interspersed with pictures of scantily clad fashion models. As Veblen (1899) wrote in his book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, “advertisements and news content focuses upon promoting conspicuous consumption that is meant not to satisfy any physical need, but rather to gratify the psychological craving for status or the esteem of others.”

There is an over-representation in the print media of the ‘social top’ or of elites both in terms of coverage and as sources of news. These daily newspaper supplements in the city

today are vying with each other in representing the nouveau riche or upper crust of society in their Page-3 sections. Nayyar (2009) explains ‘celebrity ecology’ to understand the Page 3 culture of India stating the celebrities are transformed by the media into consumer products that are manufactured, packaged and sold to adoring audiences that are always thirsty for spectacles that pique their imagination and dazzle their lives. He looks at the frames for interpreting celebrity page 3 people from newspapers, tabloids, gossip magazines etc. which set the reader thinking about scandals and famous bodies, fashion and spectacles involving hyper-visible and ultra recognizable faces.

The assumptions about the ‘City’ in both *Delhi Times* and *HT City* as showcased by the two supplements comprise fun, frolic, entertainment and *masala*. Examples of the nature of the news content in these supplements are cited below.

Celebrate Valentine’s Day—The E-Way: Electronics seem to be the number one choice as a gift item these days. By choosing swanky and useful electronic gadgets for your Valentine, you can send out a message of love and compatibility - Delhi Times (February 12, 2012)

Holiday Videshi , but Khaana Desi: Daal makhani in Beijing or chicken tikka in Tanzania – for the desi food lover, international holiday destinations have learnt to add the tadka to woo Indians tourists who love their sabzi-roti quite a bit (Delhi Times, March 21, 2012)

Vikram Chatwal flaunts his tattoos for HT City. He has 12 tattoos, including daughter Safira’s name, Sikh expression ‘Waheguru’, the cross, and a scorpion (HT City April 12, 2012)

‘Ranbir’s mother cuts his toenails’ (2 Nov 2011, HT City)

The above examples of news content cited from the newspaper supplements bring us to the moot question of why the leading national dailies have trivialized and dumbed-down supplement news content.

Commercial Pressures

One of the prime causes for the trivialized representations of the city can be attributed to commercialization of the media. An aggressive marketing drive has overtaken the Indian print media making the ‘fifth estate’ subservient to the forces of commercialization. The post-Independence decades of Indian journalism point to the fact that the commodification of news, engendered by market forces has assumed greater propensity since the eighties and today is being carried to the point of aggressive hard sell. The last two decades post-liberalization have seen more changes in the media scene than the earlier decades immediately after Independence. Advertisers have responded more than adequately catering to both the electronic and print media. The leading dailies of the metros carry supplements devoted entirely to advertisements. The Times of India Group accounts for 30 per cent of the measured advertisement spend in the country. (Times Group website). The website states that it is ‘the only media house to give advertisers maximum value for their money and minimum wastage’. The range of publications, each with its own specific target audience, helps advertising managers plan the ideal media mix, optimizing the advertising budget. *The Hindustan Times* financial performance in 2011

reveals a 27 per cent increase in advertising revenues of print segment to 3,699 million rupees from 2,908 million rupees driven by volume growth and improvement in price realization. (HT Website).

Commercialization spawns competition. In such a competitive commercial rat race between newspapers, qualitative journalism and news dissemination are bound to receive secondary attention from the owners of these publications. The political economy approach of the Western media that commercial pressure is exerted upon journalistic freedom finds its echo in the Indian news context and we see its applicability to the newspaper supplements under study here. The political economy also referred to by Chomsky as the propaganda model, operating in the Indian media context, is ratified by Chowdhry (2010) who argues that "... the everyday quotidian features and news that inscribe corporate speech, create a new imaginary of a global Indian and a global Indian middle class." The liberalization driven market economy framework upon which the media operates has resulted in the creation of the news frame of a global Indian identity for India's middle class. "The print media has undergone some revolutionary changes in style of management moving from being a family-owned enterprise to becoming a corporatized industry with its focus on profit margins" (Rodrigues, 2010).

Another factor impacting the Indian print media is the arrival of satellite technology which has resulted in the proliferation of media channels, particularly television. This has had its effect on the print media which has implemented several strategies to keep pace with the competition from television channels. With more supplements in newspapers catering to diverse readership tastes, the print media is catering to niche audiences. The print media management has implemented a number of strategies to cash in on the increasing literacy and purchasing power of the Indian consumer. The print media has continued to grow in India despite the competition from television and net users primarily because of the peoples' urge for more and reliable information. However, there are claims that the distinction between editorial and marketing departments is vanishing, resulting in downgrading and devaluing news, analysis and public affairs information provided by newspapers (Rodrigues, 2006, p.64). The Press Council of India points out that during 2008, advertisements accounted for more than 65 per cent of newspaper revenue for most of the English dailies. This has had an impact on daily news content. "There are tendencies of hyper-commercialization, which tackles the newspaper and its journalism more or less like any other commodity or 'product' and see any higher ground vision as old-fashioned, sanctimonious humbug (Rodrigues, 2006, p. 64). The aggressive strategy of selling more copies has had an impact on the quality and credibility of journalism. Some commentators are critical of the media strategy of 'dumbing down' news content to attract new readers in rural and less-educated segments of the population.' The Page 3 idea, emphasis on sports coverage, the dumbing down of stories which are covered with a lot of violence, crime, rape rather than social stories – all of these are some of the things the newspapers are doing to make them more attractive and to get new readers. It remains one powerful and effective means for advertisers to reach their audience.

A journalist interviewed for this study pointed out: The supplements aim at a target group that is young, aspirational with the idea of having access to good life or aspiring for a good life, a generation that wants to own big brands in their lifestyle. The editors of the city supplement advise their journalists never to aim at a low-end audience but to a high-end audience or those who aspire to be high-end. So even if an article is about perfumes, they will only talk about high-end stuff, expensive, luxury brands. They write content to attract advertisers. For example, an auto-beat page in the news supplement would bring in more advertisements on

cars and bikes. First the advertisement space is marked out and then the left-over space is allocated for news content. For the college crowd the articles focus on subjects like street-fashion that is funky.

Another journalist from a city supplement who was interviewed for this study said that the supplement aimed at the young target readership of 25 -27 years. In order to appeal to this group, the content of the supplement centered on 'entertainment, lifestyle and my city'. The journalist said that stories about stars and celebrities, products and services to buy and enjoy, places to hangout, habits of Delhi-ites form the staple content of these publications, all aimed at appealing to the youth. Journalists admit that advertisements often take up more space in the supplement leaving less column space for news content. Page-3 parties that are frequented by politicians, bureaucrats, film stars and the rich and famous are assiduously followed by the journalists of the publication. To a question on how the supplements were any different from a tabloid – the journalist said that these were entertainment and lifestyle supplements and refrained from calling them tabloids. However, a woman journalist in her interview said that neither *HT City* nor *Delhi Times* were tabloids as the two publications never write news in an irreverential style which is typical of tabloids. Though gossip and sensationalism are the staple diet of tabloids, the journalist admitted that some amount of such content is selected for the supplement since readers want such kinds of news.

The findings that emerge from the interviews with the journalists reinforce the propaganda model view that the media serve the interests of the state and corporate power, framing their reporting and analysis to suit the interests of the established privileged in society. Schudson (2003) Journalists construct their narratives around their own values and beliefs, but these are necessarily informed by contributions of a wide range of information sources, who thus acquire the power to become 'definers' of journalistic reality. According to Gans (1980) news sources also have the power both to supply information that makes news and to exert pressure. According to him, if a handful of factors have to be singled out for the explanation of news, then those governing choice of news sources is of prime significance. These news sources have the power both to supply information that makes news and to exert pressure. The media are structurally biased towards the very powerful and privileged sources and give access to those who enjoy accreditation. The news media representations of the city are by and large capturing and representing only the rich, the elite and the powerful and newspapers have become a class medium.

It is the Page-3 culture that is most visible in majority of the newspaper supplements. There is almost nil coverage of any other aspect of city life. As Castellis (1989) points out that the special form of a city is very much influenced by the politico-economic considerations of corporations, business houses and governments. This has also had its impact upon the way the newspaper publications are run and prove that commercial interests are largely dictating selection of content in these news publications resulting increasingly in the 'dumbing down' of news content. According to Rao (2010), marketing pressures, the tabloidization of news, and management and economic pressures are affecting journalism ethics and issues such as accountability, independence, and conflict of interests. According to P. Sainath (1996) there is very little development news in most of the media today. Most of the focus is on political events, scandals and gossip which do not in any manner contribute to educating the public.

The colour picture supplements with "Page 3" meet the requirement of both the patrons and clients. They can bring in everything - Publicity for products - without even raising an eyebrow. Exaggerated pressures from the television/satellite channels are used as a pretext by

print media for supposed felt need propelled by competition for further trivialization of news columns which, in turn, encourage crass commercialization (Ray, 2006).

Public Perceptions

‘The content of circulating representations is highly controlled and monitored in these newspaper supplements. The content is absorbed by an audience, whose nature, demographics and desires cannot always be predicted.’ (Nayyar, 2009, p. 181). The impact is to be studied in terms of the kind of value system being promoted by the news supplements and absorbed by the audience. The interviews with the audience revealed that the audience takes these supplements lightly and are not enticed by the kind of aspirational lifestyle of luxuries and conspicuous consumption that the supplements are trying to promote. The excerpts of the interviews are presented below:

‘It functions as a mere window to the outrageous lifestyle, the common man is not aware of. However it also reflects upon the capabilities for us to indulge in luxuries at our own affordable comfort.’

‘The supplements are entertaining but do encourage immense consumerism. Also, there seems to be an obsession with good looking stuff. It caters majorly to the upper class. There should be less focus on celeb controversies!’

‘They give a skewed image of lifestyles that are often vulgarly ostentatious and make little sense for anyone even to aspire for them.’

On Page 3 celebrities, some of the audience reactions were:

‘..... news holes are filled with celeb gossip and unverified here-say and twitter chatter.’

‘It caters majorly to the upper class. There should be less focus on celeb controversies!’

‘The intelligent youth sees through the falsity and pretension underlying these Page 3 celebrities and their lifestyles while for the rest the appeal is limited to idle browsing.’

‘Their reportage of celebrity escapades, fashion, page 3 etc may appear to trivialize the news, but it is in that that their inherent appeal lies.’

All the persons interviewed were aware of the conspicuous consumption that the supplements endeavour to promote, that they catered to the upper class, and present lifestyles that are not in any way connected with the common man. They said that the newspaper supplements at best serve the purpose of helping to unwind but were not to be taken seriously.

Public Perception Vs. Journalists’ Projection

The analysis of the news content, interviews with journalists and public reactions clearly reveal a disconnect between the symbolic cultural representations of the city as projected in Newspaper supplements and public perceptions of the same. While gloss, glamour, celebrity gossip, luxury lifestyles and a culture of conspicuous consumption form the staple symbolic cultural narratives on the city in the newspaper supplements, the public are not fooled into believing in these

symbolic representations, as revealed from the interview findings. 74 per cent of the readers' interviewed said the supplements project luxury lifestyles that were not even remotely connected to the common man.

Interviews with the journalists and the analysis of the content of the supplements showed that they are aiming to influence the young, aspirational youth who aspire for a good life, a generation that wants to own big brands in their lifestyle. However, 53 per cent of the readers interviewed said that they did not aspire for luxury lifestyles. As Pungente et al (1989) have pointed out 'Audience members bring their knowledge, experience and values to their interpretation of, and emotional responses to, media messages'. A reader said, 'There seems to be an obsession with good looking stuff. It caters majorly to the upper class.' Another reader stated: 'They give a skewed image of lifestyles that are often vulgarly ostentatious and make little sense for anyone even to aspire for them. If they are meant for youth, they fail to make any dent on that group. The intelligent youth sees through the falsity and pretension underlying these Page 3 celebrities and their lifestyles while for the rest the appeal is limited to idle browsing. A reader commented: "It would do these supplements good, if they incorporated a few intelligent features and columns on health, cinema, arts and entertainment in the city instead of only focusing on Page 3 and Bollywood gossip." Half the readers (47 per cent) enjoyed reading about Page 3 celebrities, while 47 per cent did not. 63 per cent of the readers' found these newspaper supplements to be neither interesting nor stimulating. But they all agreed that the newspaper supplements were entertaining but were not meant to be taken seriously.

Discussion

Cities are often criticized because they represent the basest instincts of human society. Culture is the quest for affluence, a powerful means of controlling cities. As a source of images and memories, it symbolizes 'who belongs' in specific places' (Lin & Mele, 2005). The typical content which emanates daily from these newspaper supplements encompasses a wide range of symbolically coded items ranging from commodities, clothes, entertainment, images, celebrity lifestyles and spectacles – all with accents on luxurious packages beyond the reach of and remotely connected to the common man. Cultural representations are purposefully used by Newspaper supplements to frame cities in a certain way to entice the youth towards a high-end lifestyle - aiding and abetting the quest for affluence in young minds. 'Discourses,' suggests Nayyar (ibid), 'morph into consumer practices, where particular kinds of bodies, objects and practices are established as the norm-safe, stylish and cosmopolitan-so that they appear natural, legitimate and desirable and lead us, consumers, to buy, practice, believe in and adopt them.' There appears to be an intentional trivialization of news content in these supplements as they focus on issues that are of little worth either intellectually or socially. The commercial attitude of the media has reduced news to trivia and lowered their informational quality. 'Today Journalism is in the threshold of a revolution in technique and production of the most modern newspaper and magazine. Vast strides have been made in gathering, style, presentation and interpretation of news.' (Parthasarathi, 1991, p.302). However, the vision of Indian journalism as a crusading vocation is being viewed with skepticism today, since 'the idea of ethics, in journalism is being challenged today by market-driven objectives' (Rajan, 2006, p.1). Newspapers are a major source of information about the outside world, but recent research also suggests that they are particularly effective at reducing the knowledge gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged, between the information-rich and the information-poor thus contributing to a more equitable pattern of citizenship. Such citizen benefits, however, only accrue if the news in question is sufficiently serious, informative and accessible to viewers.

Dumbing down and trivialization of news content about the metropolitan cities has become the trend in today's commercially-driven publications as they largely focus on encouraging immense consumerism by publishing news that is of little worth either in terms of information or education. Durkheim wrote about collective consciousness - a collective soul or conscience that guides the behavior of individuals. According to McQuail (1987) there are certain areas where the mass media have the greatest potential for powerful societal effects by attracting and directing public attention, persuasion in matters of beliefs and opinions, influencing behavior, structuring definitions of reality. If newspapers are to serve their social responsibility role, they must provide content that informs, educates, entertains and enables the development of aesthetic sensibilities in readers. Park (1925) described cities as a mosaic of social worlds. However, the only social world that the newspaper supplements represent is the social world of the rich and the famous. In the words of city writer and Director of the Design Museum London, Sudjic (2008), "A city is a place with its dark corners and suffering. But it is precisely that edge of danger and instability that makes the city such an extraordinarily powerful force. It is in its role as an engine for change that the city is most alive." The examination of these newspaper supplements has shown that these publications have not tried to capture how ordinary people interpret and respond to the actual experience of living in cities. The findings of the research study here point to a disconnect between the commodification of urban culture that the city has come to symbolize for newspaper supplements versus the discriminating readers who are not mesmerized into adopting nor aspiring for such ostentatious lifestyles, that do not in any way epitomize the life of the common man. As for Page-3 celebrities who are flaunted daily in newspaper supplements as being the repositories of style and fashion, for the readers they constitute nothing more than a light read.

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