Profiling Journalists:
The Changing Dynamics of the Indian (News) Media System
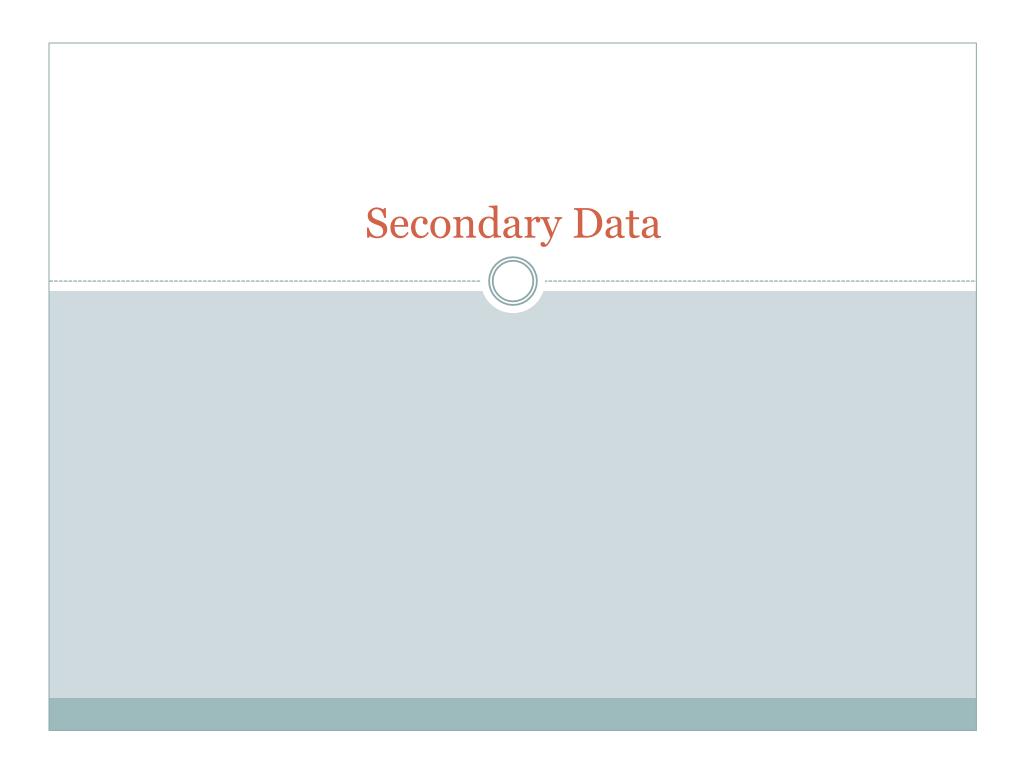
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Purpose

- To present some changes in the profession and practice of journalism in India

    - Using both secondary and primary data

Secondary Data

India' Economic Growth

- Noteworthy economic growth

- Increasing affluence and a growing middle class

- Shifted from being considered a developing country to its current status of emerged potency

India's Adoption of a
Liberal Economic System

- In 1991, India adopted a liberal economy allowing for foreign direct investment including in news media

- This coincided with advances in technology

- Together, these have resulted in a major transformation of its media industry

India's Current Media System

- As Thussu (2013) has said,

  "From mobile telephony to online communication, India has witnessed a revolution in the production, distribution, and consumption of images and ideas.

  Unlike the west, the media are booming in India....," exemplifying the "soft power" of India.
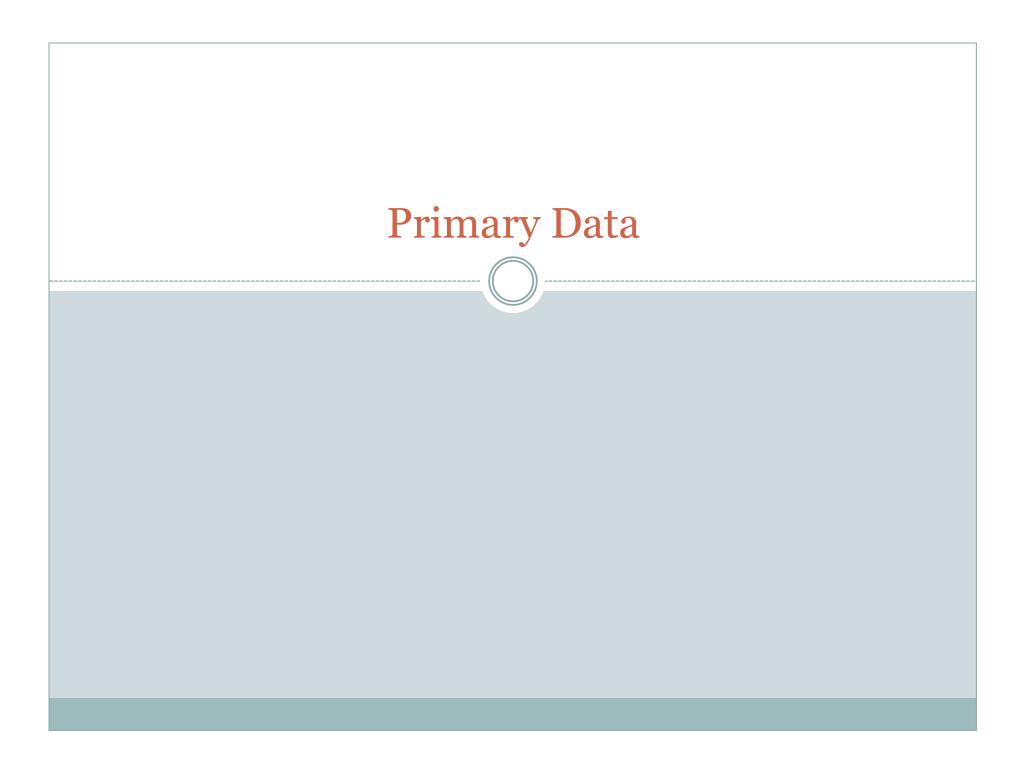
India's **News** Media System

- Liberalization while hailed by many is still a contested space

- In the news media space, concerns center on the effects of liberalization on the ability of news media to perform their functions

India's **News** Media System

- The diversity of India's news media is stunning

- It resides in the cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic heterogeneity of India

Internet and India's News Media System

- India has an internet penetration of only 19 per cent

- Independent online news media are almost non-existent in India

- Most news media have online versions of their product

Primary Data

Method

Cities
- Delhi
- Hyderabad
- Kolkata
- Pune

In-depth interviews
- Transcribed
- Analyzed thematically

Findings: Feminization of the Profession

- The profession has become more welcoming of women, respecting and recognizing their equal status and their merits

- Interviewees remarked about female journalists' work ethic, talent, writing skills, passion, and risk taking: "some heroic reporting that even men would hesitate to do."

- A few even acknowledged that some women were "performing even better than their male counterparts."

Findings: Feminization of the Profession

- Women were not given any special treatment, but they had influenced the dynamics of the newsroom

- In the past, men "never used to ask any woman if she really liked [the] content," they wrote for women, but "nowadays … we ask them … how we can generate better content."

- Still, a gendering of content was evident: "subject [sic] that were not being catered are now being catered by female journalists."

Findings: Corporatization of the Profession

- Considerable media consolidation and commercialization

- "Earlier media was [sic] not seen like a business. These days … people are using them as business opportunities."

- "The topics of journalism that should be paid attention to, for world, for humanity, for nation, for poverty, for progress, those things are focused on less, and business is focused on more."

- Corporatization has also lead to the phenomenon of paid news

Findings: "Politicalization" of the Profession

- Political parties and politicians have made inroads into the profession

- "Political parties are running the channels via their organizations, indirectly, not directly" through "proxy" ownership and "covert" alliances

- Self-censorship is practiced to keep from offending politicians, and journalists had to flip-flop their writing based on the party in power

Findings: Digitalization of the Profession

- Online media are still in the initial stages of development
  - Expected to grow

- Smart phones have provided impetus to internet access, and thus to accessing online news

- Journalists use social media in professional and personal lives to source stories and receive audience feedback

- Traditional news media still more prestigious

Conclusion

- Indian news media represent the dynamic of stability and change.