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Hindi News Podcasts: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

Hindi news podcasts offer a way to explain public issues through spoken language. Listeners can choose when to hear an episode and return to it later. Yet the presence of a podcast does not tell us how well it informs people or whom it reaches. This paper examines the opportunities and challenges of Hindi news podcasts through a critical review of six published sources. These include research on podcast journalism, an international publisher study, an account of Indian news use, an official Hindi programme description and guidance on audio accessibility. The review argues that the main opportunity lies in making reporting easier to follow through clear explanation and relevant voices. The same personal style can create problems when a familiar host's confidence

takes the place of evidence. Other challenges concern language, access, production work, funding and dependence on distribution platforms. The paper proposes that newsrooms treat a podcast as a reporting service with clear editorial responsibility. Source notes, visible corrections and accurate Hindi transcripts can support that service. No original episodes were coded and no listeners or producers were interviewed. The paper offers an interpretation of published evidence rather than a measurement of the Hindi podcast market. It connects the promise of accessible audio news with the practical work needed to make it reliable.

Keywords: Hindi news, podcasts, audio journalism, news explanation, accessibility, editorial responsibility

Introduction

A news headline can tell us that a policy has changed. Understanding what changed, why it matters and whom it affects takes more time. Hindi news podcasts can offer that time through an explanation that people can hear. The issue is worth examining because a spoken conversation can help a listener follow a difficult subject, but it can also carry an unsupported claim with great confidence. The format creates an opportunity. The quality of the journalism decides what happens to it.

Aaj Tak Radio's official description of *Din Bhar* shows one way a newsroom presents this opportunity. It describes a daily Hindi news-analysis podcast that selects four major stories and discusses them with experts. The programme covers subjects including politics, international relations, health and society.¹ This is the producer's description of its purpose, not an independent assessment of its episodes. Still, it gives us a concrete starting point. The promise is to help listeners understand the news beyond the headline.

This paper asks what Hindi news podcasts can contribute and what may limit that contribution. It focuses on explanation, the

relationship between a host and a listener, and the editorial choices behind a programme. Its central argument is that clear spoken Hindi needs to work together with clear reporting. A pleasant voice or an easy conversation cannot do the job of checking a source.

The term news podcast needs some care. A short bulletin, a reporter interview and a long documentary all offer different listening experiences. Newman and Gallo's international report distinguishes programmes made for on-demand listening from broadcast programmes made available later. It also identifies short bulletins, news round-ups and longer analysis as different daily formats.² For this paper, a Hindi news podcast means an episodic programme about news or public affairs, delivered mainly through spoken Hindi and available for people to hear when they choose. A filmed conversation may also appear under the podcast label. The analysis here concerns the audio explanation, including whether it remains understandable without the images.

¹ Aaj Tak Radio. (n.d.). *Din Bhar: Daily evening news analysis on top stories*. <https://podcasts.aajtak.in/news-current-affairs/din-bhar> (Programme description).

² Newman, N., & Gallo, N. (2019). *News podcasts and the opportunities for publishers*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-dzsp-n335> (Sections 2 and 4).

Basis of the review

This is a purposive critical review of six sources. Public-web searches combined Hindi news podcasts, Aaj Tak Radio, podcast journalism, intimacy, news-podcast audiences and audio accessibility. Sources were selected to address specific parts of the question. The official Din Bhar page provides a Hindi example. A Reuters Institute account of its 2026 India launch provides a limited picture of Indian news-podcast use. Newman and Gallo's 2019 report provides historical evidence about publisher choices. Two peer-reviewed studies examine storytelling and intimacy in podcast journalism. The World Wide Web Consortium's guidance provides a basis for discussing access to recorded audio.

The review consulted the official web pages, relevant sections of the international report and selected passages in the two scholarly articles. These included the articles' accounts of their samples, findings and conclusions. The paper does not claim an exhaustive search of academic databases. It compares what the sources

establish and considers how those points apply to Hindi news. Examples proposed within the discussion illustrate editorial choices. They are not findings from a newly analysed set of episodes.

No original listening survey, interview study or content analysis was conducted. The official programme page does not show actual audience understanding. The international studies also cannot measure the Hindi market. These limits guide the argument throughout the paper.

A programme can be available without reaching everyone

News-podcast use appears in Indian audience research, but the population covered by that research matters. Marina Adami's account of the Reuters Institute's 2026 India launch reports news-podcast use of 17 percent in its Indian sample, compared with 11 percent overall. The account explains that the Indian survey mainly covers English-speaking online news users and is not nationally representative.³ The figure therefore cannot stand for all Indian listeners or for the Hindi

³ Adami, M. (2026, July 3). *"Alarm bells are ringing in my brain": Our Digital News Report India launch panel on low trust and shifts in news habits*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/alarm-bells-are-ringing-my-brain-our-digital-news-report-india-launch-panel-low-trust-and> (Opening paragraphs).

podcast audience. It is evidence of use among the respondents covered by the survey.

This distinction changes how we discuss opportunity. A large language community does not automatically become an audience for a particular programme. People need to find the episode, understand how to play it and decide that it is worth their time. A person who speaks Hindi may prefer written updates or video. Another may enjoy audio but have little interest in a lengthy discussion of daily politics. The relevant question is what the podcast helps a particular listener do.

A short bulletin can help someone catch up. A longer episode can explain a subject that needs background. A local reporting series can follow an issue over several weeks. These are possible editorial choices, not a ranking of formats. The length should follow the task. If a programme tries to cover too many stories, the result may become a list of headlines with little explanation. If it extends a simple update without adding information, it asks the listener to spend more time without a clear benefit.

The on-demand form also changes the timing of news. Someone may hear an episode well after its release. Producers should make the recording date clear and

identify information that may change. This matters for developing stories. A listener needs to know whether a statement describes the position at the time of recording or the latest available position.

The opportunity to explain in familiar language

Hindi can make an explanation available to someone who does not comfortably follow English news. But translating words is only part of the work. A script can use Hindi and still be difficult because it assumes prior knowledge or fills each sentence with official terms. A useful explanation begins with the question a listener is likely to have. What happened? What does a particular term mean in this story? What remains uncertain?

Consider a proposed episode about a public scheme. Reading the announcement aloud may repeat the same difficulty that a listener faced in the written document. The host could instead explain whom the scheme covers and where the information comes from. Any example should preserve the announcement's conditions. If eligibility depends on a particular category, the host must say so. This is a suggested approach to explanation, not an episode examined in this review.

Clear language does not require a presenter to sound like a classroom lesson. A reporter

can explain how a decision emerged, what different parties say and which part of the record supports the account. The conversation can remain easy to follow while retaining a necessary technical term. The term needs an explanation when it first appears.

The producer's promise on the Din Bhar page links understandable analysis with access to reporters and experts. The present review reads that promise as an editorial task. A guest's presence helps only if the discussion turns knowledge into an explanation. Asking a basic follow-up question can be useful. The host should not assume that a term is obvious simply because people in the newsroom use it every day.

Hindi itself has many registers and regional forms. A single highly formal style may suit some subjects while making others harder to follow. A newsroom should consider its intended listeners when choosing vocabulary. It can use familiar speech without presenting regional accents as a lack of knowledge. The aim is to help people understand the issue, while keeping the meaning accurate.

What a familiar voice can and cannot do

A podcast host often addresses the listener directly. That style can make a difficult story feel easier to enter. Mia Lindgren's study of 11 shortlisted and award-winning Australian and British journalism podcasts examines how voice, sound and storytelling build a sense of closeness. The analysis identifies personal reporting and reflection on the reporting process within its sample.⁴ These are findings about selected English-language productions. Their relevance here is to the way audio can present journalism, rather than proof that Hindi listeners respond in the same way.

A reporter who explains how a fact was checked gives the listener something to assess. The listener hears more than the final conclusion. A personal account can also make responsibility clearer. Saying that a reporter spoke to a particular source identifies part of the process, provided that conversation actually took place. The opportunity is to make the work behind the news understandable.

Closeness, however, is not the same as a personal relationship. García de Torres and colleagues interviewed 14 journalists

⁴ Lindgren, M. (2023). Intimacy and emotions in podcast journalism: A study of award-winning Australian and British podcasts. *Journalism Practice*, 17(4), 704–719. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1943497> (pp. 716–717).

producing daily news podcasts and documentaries in Spain. Their discussion shows that a natural-sounding programme can involve detailed scripting and editing. They also question how far the idea of intimacy captures a relationship that may seem more mutual than it really is.⁵ This adds an important qualification to the appeal of conversational audio. A programme may sound spontaneous because people have worked carefully to make it sound that way.

That work is not a problem in itself. Editing can remove repetition and help listeners follow an argument. The problem begins when the performance hides information that people need to judge the claim. A host can sound certain while the evidence remains limited. A familiar voice can also move smoothly from reporting to personal opinion without signalling the change. The listener then has to guess which statements come from checked information and which express the presenter's judgment.

A news podcast should make this distinction easy to hear. It can introduce an interpretation as an interpretation and explain what supports it. It can

acknowledge a missing response or an unresolved fact. These habits do not require stiff language. They require care about what each sentence asks the listener to believe.

Local voices and the choice of subjects

Hindi podcasts offer room to develop programmes around subjects that need sustained explanation. Employment, farming, education and local administration are possible areas. Their public value would depend on reporting the issue with relevant evidence. A programme about a village cannot become local journalism merely by mentioning the village in its title.

A reporter needs to hear from people who experience the issue and from those who can explain or answer for the decision involved. Residents may describe a difficulty in using a service. Officials may explain its rules. The episode must examine both accounts rather than use one as a ready-made answer. A local voice supplies knowledge, but the newsroom still has to check claims and seek relevant responses.

Guest selection matters here. A panel of familiar commentators may be easy to

⁵ García de Torres, E., Legorburu, J. M., Parra-Valcarce, D., Edo, C., & Escobar-Artola, L. (2025). Intimacy in podcast journalism: Ethical challenges and opportunities in daily news podcasts and documentaries. *Media and Communication*, 13, Article 8994. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.8994> (pp. 1, 11–12 and 16).

arrange, yet it may add little information about a specific local problem. An interview with someone who has investigated the issue can be more useful. Women, people from smaller towns and workers outside well-known institutions may hold relevant knowledge that an existing contact list misses. These are proposed priorities for wider reporting. The evidence reviewed here does not measure which groups Hindi podcasts currently include.

Audio also raises a practical question about identity. Removing a person's name may not make that person unrecognisable if the programme uses their voice. Editors should consider whether publication could identify a vulnerable source and discuss the recording's intended use. The choice to include a voice must account for the person speaking, as well as the story's appeal.

Access involves more than listening

A Hindi recording can remove one language barrier while leaving other barriers in place. People need a suitable device and a way to obtain the file. They may also need a quieter setting or enough control over a shared phone to hear it. These

are conditions that a study of access should examine. This review does not estimate how many potential listeners face them.

There is also a basic limit to audio. Someone who cannot hear the recording needs another way to receive the information. The World Wide Web Consortium's guidance for prerecorded audio-only material calls for an equivalent alternative, subject to its stated exception for clearly labelled audio that serves as an alternative to text. Its explanation identifies transcripts as a way to make recorded information accessible.⁶ This provides a concrete reason to publish Hindi text alongside an episode.

A transcript should include the substance of what people said and identify the speakers. A brief promotional paragraph cannot replace it. If the publisher uses an automatic transcript, someone should check names, numbers and specialised words before publication. A transcript that changes a date or a person's statement creates a new accuracy problem.

Text can serve listeners too. It gives them a way to return to an exact passage, find a name and inspect source links. A person

⁶ World Wide Web Consortium. (n.d.). *Understanding Success Criterion 1.2.1: Audio-only and video-only (prerecorded)*. <https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Understanding/audio-only-and-video-only-prerecorded> (Success Criterion, Intent, Benefits and Examples sections).

may listen for the general explanation and read to check the detail. Offering both formats respects that choice. It also makes the claim of accessible journalism more concrete than simply saying the programme is in Hindi.

The work behind an easy conversation

Recording equipment is only one part of making a news podcast. Someone must select the subject, check information, prepare questions and edit the result. The producer also needs to listen to the complete recording before release. A short episode can still require considerable editorial work.

The two studies of intimacy help us see why an informal tone should not be confused with an informal process. A script can sound conversational because the writer has removed unnecessary complexity. The host can ask simple questions because the team has already understood which points need clarification. A newsroom that treats audio as an extra task after everyone has finished other work may leave too little time for these decisions.

There is a difference between reusing reporting and merely copying it. A written article can refer to a table that a reader can see. An audio script needs to explain the relevant point in that table. A recording taken from television may depend on a map

or a caption. If the audio version leaves those references unexplained, the listener loses part of the story. Producers should assess the programme by listening without the images.

Sound editing also changes meaning. Removing a pause can improve pace. Removing a qualification can make a guest sound more certain than the full answer was. Background music can help separate sections, but it can also push listeners toward an emotional reading that the reporting does not support. Editors need to review what the complete episode communicates, including the use of sound.

Corrections deserve a plan before the first episode appears. Updating a web page may not reach someone who already downloaded the audio. A publisher can place a correction in the episode description, update the recording where possible and draw attention to a serious error in a later episode. The appropriate response depends on the mistake. The principle is to reach the people who may have heard it.

Paying for the programme and finding listeners

Newman and Gallo's report documents advertising, sponsorship and subscription-related approaches in the markets it studied. It also records differences between markets

and concerns about advertising delivered by the host.⁷ These historical observations show that publishers have several possible funding routes. They do not establish which route would work for a Hindi programme today.

An existing newsroom may use a podcast to explain reporting already paid for through its wider operation. An independent producer may need direct income from the programme. Those starting points involve different costs and expectations. Before launch, a producer needs a realistic account of the time required for reporting and editing. A programme that looks inexpensive because it uses only one microphone may still rely on substantial unpaid work.

Sponsorship needs a clear boundary. A listener should know when a message is paid for. If the host reads both the reporting and the advertisement in the same friendly style, the shift should be stated clearly. The sponsor should not silently determine whom the programme interviews or which relevant question it leaves out. These are editorial principles proposed by this review,

rather than findings about the funding practices of particular Hindi shows.

Finding listeners creates another set of choices. Distribution platforms can help people locate episodes, but the publisher also needs to consider how much of its relationship with the audience depends on those platforms. Newman and Gallo's report records publisher concerns about losing direct audience relationships and data to intermediaries.⁸ A Hindi newsroom can respond by maintaining an accessible programme page with episode records, source notes and a contact route. This recommendation does not assume that a publisher can avoid platforms. It gives the programme somewhere to explain itself beyond a platform listing.

Audience numbers also need careful reading. A download, a completed listen and a returning listener describe different activities. None shows, by itself, whether the person understood the news better. Publishers can use figures to improve delivery while asking more focused questions about clarity and usefulness. A popular episode may attract people because of its host, its topic or the way it is

⁷ Newman, N., & Gallo, N. (2019). *News podcasts and the opportunities for publishers*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-dzsp-n335> (Section 4, Advertising is the Dominant Business Model and New Paid Models Emerging).

⁸ Newman, N., & Gallo, N. (2019). *News podcasts and the opportunities for publishers*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-dzsp-n335> (Key Findings section).

promoted. These possible explanations need evidence before a researcher chooses one.

Discussion and limits

The opportunities and challenges belong together. A conversational voice can make reporting easier to follow, while also making unsupported certainty sound persuasive. A programme can offer convenient access, yet fail to reach people who cannot hear it or find it. An interview can broaden explanation, but a familiar guest list can narrow the range of knowledge. The format does not settle these questions. Editorial choices do.

The sources also approach the subject from different directions. Lindgren examines the construction of storytelling in selected podcasts. García de Torres and colleagues examine journalists' accounts of production and intimacy. Reading them together helps separate the experience a programme tries to create from the process that creates it. Neither study measures the Hindi audience. The official Din Bhar description shows how one producer defines its service, while the Indian survey account shows use within a limited respondent group. These sources support a focused discussion of possible practices and constraints. They cannot establish market size, rank Hindi

programmes or prove effects on public understanding.

The contribution of this review is to connect language access with editorial accountability. It proposes that understandable Hindi audio should be judged by how clearly it explains both the issue and the basis of the explanation. Further research could examine selected episodes, the choices of their producers and the experiences of Hindi listeners. Such work would need to define the programmes and audience being studied, rather than treat all Hindi speakers as one group.

Conclusion

Hindi news podcasts can offer a useful space for explanation. Their value comes from the reporting behind the voice and the care with which that reporting reaches the listener. The evidence reviewed here supports attention to storytelling and the feeling of closeness, while warning against confusing that feeling with a relationship of equal exchange or a guarantee of trust.

For a newsroom, the opportunity becomes practical when it matches the episode to a clear public question, uses relevant sources and explains uncertainty in words people can follow. A checked transcript and a visible correction process extend that service. Funding and distribution matter because the work must continue, but

growth alone cannot measure its journalistic quality. A Hindi news podcast earns its purpose by helping listeners understand what happened and why the explanation deserves their attention.

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