

Is e-reader sounding paperback's death knell?

Paperbacks may be fighting a losing battle against e-books, with their sales down by 25 per cent, a new finding says. In the first three months of 2012, 11.3 million paperbacks were sold, compared to 14.9 million during the corresponding period last year, thanks to the rise of Amazon's Kindle, Sony's Reader and tablets such as the iPad.

These digital books can hold up to 1,400 novels on a single device making them more convenient and lighter to carry around than a book. A paperback weighs 300 grams on average, as compared to both the Kindle and Sony's Reader's weight at 170 grams. Overall, total book sales are down by around 11 per cent, according to figures from industry analysts Nielsen BookScan, reported the "Daily Mail."

But hardback sales have remained steady with figures of around 1.2 million. Best-selling author G P Taylor said, "I be-



lieve we are seeing the death of the paperback and I would say that by 2020 it will be a little seen commodity." But "hardbacks will always sell. They are the 'vinyl copies' of the book industry," added Taylor.

Publishing trade magazine, "The Bookseller," estimates that one in eight adult fiction books now purchased is in a digital format. It is predicted that downloading novels will soon become as regular as downloading music, but hardbacks are expected to remain popular in physical form because people like to collect and to keep them. With newer, cheaper and more versatile e-readers hitting the market continuously over the past two years, the trend is likely to pick up momentum soon.

The Harry Potter franchise was launched in eBook form last week and sales topped £1 million within days. Fans spent £231-a-minute buying digital versions of the stories by J K Rowling. *ANS*