



COVERAGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN TWO NATIONAL DAILIES OF INDIA (THE HINDU AND THE TIMES OF INDIA)

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ABSTRACT

The paper "Coverage of environmental issues in two National Dailies of India" focuses on the coverage of news items pertaining to the environment on daily basis. The main aim of the research is to analyze how much importance is given to the environment news by two national dailies. Climate Change, Deforestation, experiencing the different and high temperatures in climate, Air Pollution, Water pollution, Depletion of Ozone layer, imbalance in the atmosphere are some of the major issues which are the serious cause of concern bothering and posing danger to the nature and making surveillance difficult for all the living beings on earth.

Most of these problems are manmade as a result of their insensitivity towards nature. Here comes the role of Media which is fast and effective in influencing the mindset of people and sensitizing them on the importance of safeguarding and protecting planet earth from all the adverse effects causing degradation of environment.

Today unless the issues are sensationalized in media people won't pay attention to it. So how is media doing this job of educating people on environment through its articles, editorials, columns and seasonal news in framing and influencing the public opinion on the importance of environment?

Therefore the researcher choose the two popular national dailies of India i.e. The Hindu and The Times of India to analyze and see what is the amount of space and importance given for the news items relating to the environmental issues. And the content analysis of these two national newspapers is done to study their approach towards the coverage of news on environment.

Keywords: Environment, Pollution, Global warming, Climate Change, National newspapers.

INTRODUCTION:

Environment is a basic need for all the living beings and it has to be protected from all the adverse effects. Unless the people are sensitized to protect the environment the existence of all the living beings becomes difficult. That is why environmental issues have become globally important and it is the responsibility of all the people to contribute for the betterment of the environment.

Environmental degradation has negative impact on everyone in some way or other because of the regular human interventions with the nature. In the name of development human beings are becoming over liberal with the nature and dumping all sorts of waste into nature and polluting it in all the means i.e. Air, Water and Land. Here comes the role of media doing its job of informing and educating people on various measures of safeguarding environment and bringing awareness through news articles, columns, editorials, debates and discussions.

As print media being one of the most effective mediums in reaching large number of people in India, I choose the two popular Indian National dailies i.e. The Hindu and The Times of India published between 1st November 2016 to 30th November 2016.

Issues like deforestation, climate change, and depletion of Ozone layer, land pollution, air pollution and water pollution are some of the serious problems faced by the people today. As a result of which we get to see people suffering from many health problems like skin cancers, eye cataract, breathing related problems etc.

But still many people don't have knowledge about how the environment is polluted and how it is going to affect the lives of people on earth.



To a large extent, the amount of knowledge that some people have is only because of the newspapers. And it is directly linked to the amount of environmental issues published in newspapers. Taking into account the improved literacy ratios it can be said that the number of readers have increased both in urban and rural India. And this environmental stories are having hard time competing with political and economic stories which are occupying the maximum space on newspapers.

Until the news articles are focused enough on the environmental issues people will continue to remain ignorant or misinformed till they approach danger.

Going through one month edition of two popular national dailies ' the researcher is trying to prove the environmental issues are not given more importance in terms of giving enough coverage. Locally there is some news on environment. Nationally the share of environmental news is much less.

Unless there is some natural calamity or major devastation caused by nature to people the media doesn't reports on environment issues and that too for a day or two, later don't get to see a follow-up story or articles on it. This is to say that the ratio of news items reported on environment are very less and mostly a seasonal affair and not given much importance on regular basis.

Is the significance of the topic environment becomes relevant only when there is problem? Editorial column is one of the places through which the print media can feed information but what we find today is columns mostly relating to politics or analysis of controversial matters. Good articles and writings on environment are missing. People can acquire more knowledge on environment if the media gives equal importance to environment too.

OBJECTIVES:

- To find out the number of environmental news items published in two dailies.
- To find out what is the frequency of reporting environmental news even when there is no major disaster or natural calamity.
- To find out the number of feature articles published seasonally in creating awareness among the people.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology that is used to understand the coverage of environmental news is both primary and secondary data. The study is based on the quantification of issues on environment that appeared in two popular national dailies published from 1st November' 2016 to 30th November' 2016. These two English national newspapers are selected as they are the top most circulated dailies in India. The news items on environment are classified as news articles, features articles, columns, editorials, human interest photographs which are occasionally published speaking about the levels of pollutions in air, water, land, etc., All the published newspaper clippings along with their dates and the priority given to these issues i.e. published on Front page or in inside pages were comparatively analysed and studied comparing the amount of importance given by the two dailies.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Items and space allotted:



The number of news items that The Times of India has published on environment related issues for the selected time frame were a total of 43 compared to that The Hindu it was 47 this includes all the news items that were published on front page and in inside pages. The maximum issues reported were news based on the extreme temperatures in metropolitan cities including our nation capital Delhi, the articles were mostly stressed on the current situation and what were the plights of the people due to it were reported. And later no follow-up story was published and at the most few human interest photographs of city choke in fog, air being polluted by heavy traffic on roads, on sound pollution, people health problems due to imbalance in climate, few species which were getting effected with this adverse effects of environment, few Editorials that too based on the current environmental news which was highly debated in public domain or if any violation in law relating to the environment were the news items and features the selected newspapers published.

TOPICS COVERED:

Among all the environmental news items published the top most priority was given to global warming and climate change and if any important meetings relating to the pacts signed between countries to safeguard the environment and its impact on living beings on earth were mostly published on front page and serious columns by experts and environmental activists were published on comments page.

Climate change articles include landslides, glaciers, floods, volcano eruption etc were some of the top environment news items published accompanied with the photographs were published on front page and carried out detailed in inside pages.

The next prioritized environment news items and features article on pollution, seasonal news and precautions that are to be taken by people to protect environment and few awareness creating articles making people cautious of their activities like usage of plastic and dumping them on open land, e-wastage management, articles on emission of Green House Effects (GHG) and how they are degrading the environment, few motivating articles on protecting planet earth were some of the news items relating to environment that were published in inside pages of these newspapers. Agriculture and other food production were also among the other news items that were published on these newspapers.

Effects of global warming on human health were also discussed in some articles and the news were pertaining to cataract, blindness, breathing problems faced by people, various types of cancers, allergies were among the few health problems that were reported in these dailies on occasional basis.

Though the statistical measurements are missing in terms of ratios and percentages generally can be observed that the environment news items is facing though time and hard competition from that of the news of politics and economic related news items which are among the top priority of any these newspapers for that matter any media in general.

S. No	Newspaper	No. of items published	Space Occupied (cm)	Percentage
1	The Times of India	43	546.5 cm X 266.5 cm	2.09%
2	The Hindu	46	566.5cm X 288.5 cm	2.17%



The above mentioned figures include the photographs and editorials and columns on environment issues, and the space covered by these news items is observed as very low in both the dailies.

The maximum number of articles were of 3 and 4 Column stories which were mostly research based studies outcome speaking about the Air Quality, Climate Change, Pollution levels and its adverse effects on all living beings.

The print edition of The Times of India and The Hindu for the month of November'2016 had carried out 4 editorials each, and 5& 6 Columns respectively on current burning issues of environment, pollution and climate change.

Both the newspapers comparatively given very few articles of environmental issues on front page of their printed editions which included Photographs of seasonal news of human interest.

Overall it was observed that the amount of space and importance given to the news articles on environment was very less and seasonal. Most of the items were reported only when there is some serious problem or a disaster and later no follow-up story was reported on the news items. And the priority and placement of these items on front page is very less mostly was under briefs followed in inside pages of the newspapers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A fair amount of interest should be paid in giving coverage to environmental news items on regular basis. Reporters and readers of newspapers should be encouraged to write more on environment. A trend of reporting environment news only when there is a disaster should be changed and a follow-up story of these news items should be carried out. A fair amount of space should be provided for news on creating awareness on environment should be published regularly. Newspapers should create awareness of Environment protection laws to the people through editorials and columns. Endangered species should be given more protection and new ways and means could be charted out to multiply them.

Journalists must be able to go deeper into each issue that affect people, especially the poor and the marginalized and bring justice if they are victimized for unjust reasons.

CONCLUSION:

More than the political news it has to be the news items relating to the issues which are going to affect all the living beings on earth must be given importance. The coverage so far by the two national dailies is to some extent is ok but need to increase the amount space allotted to the environmental news items in terms of news articles, features on pollution and editorials giving a serious and experts take on the environment have to be prioritized by both the newspapers. The Hindu has been fair in its approach in covering environmental news compared to that of The Times of India does not seem to make much impression among the readers by its lack of fair coverage of environment news and features articles in inside pages. By covering various types of news on environment it makes people to keep in touch with nature. Like The Hindu daily The Times of India too should be able to cover the news other than when there are natural calamities because nature is constantly changing due to various reasons. Therefore it is concluded that by giving extensive coverage on environment by the



Indian print media will be able to generate interest and sense of positive attitude towards environment among people by making them sensitised to the environment issues by publishing photographs and news articles on regular basis along with seasonal news.

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