

News coverage of environmental issues in Print Media: A Study of two dailies published from Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

Over the years, the environment has changed and becomes a major concern for people. Due to human intervention, it has a negative effect on every living being on earth. Research shows that there is a lack of awareness of these issues and people sometimes involve themselves unintentionally compromise with the environment. The role of the media is rapid and effective in influencing people's mentality and sensitizing them to the importance of protecting planet Earth from all the adverse effects of environmental degradation. The rural environment India faces threats such as deforestation, climate change, landslides, extreme weather conditions, among others, there is a need to implement better mass communication practices by media houses that can inform people about various environmental issues in rural areas. For the rural population, print media, radio and television are still the main source of information. The study focuses on how the newspapers address environmental issues in Himachal Pradesh. In order to find out about the approach of the newspaper to environmental stories, the content analysis of the two Himachal Pradesh dailies was carried out for one week. The analysis is done by classifying news items based on various categories of environmental issues. In this study, two newspapers Divya Himachal and Dainik Jagran have been analyzed. Divya Himachal is the flagship Hindi Daily of Himachal Pradesh and the only 'owned' print media house in the state. On the other hand, the Himachal edition of Dainik Jagran was chosen for the study, as it tops the circulation figures in the recent IRS survey published in January 2019 and its Himachal edition is very popular. In this study, a content analysis was applied to detect the news coverage of environmental issues in the two dailies for one week. The main focus of the content analysis for this study is to analyze the number of stories published on environmental issues, space and their placement in the newspaper. The limitation of the study is the print media coverage of the environmental issues of two newspapers published from Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Environment, Pollution, Climate Change, Dainik Jagran, Himachal Pradesh, Divya Himachal

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1. Introduction

The environment is a fundamental requirement for all the living beings of mother earth and it should be protected from the bad effects created by the human intervention. The environment issues need to be addressed in an effective manner and people should be sensitized to protect the nature. There are many environmental issues which people worry about like public health, waste disposal, over population, water and air pollution, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, ecosystem and the climate change. These are some pressing issues which need to be addressed adequately. People consciously or subconsciously contribute in the degradation of environment; hence they should be sensitized about these issues so that they can avoid doing hazard to the environment. Over the previous few centuries, environmental issues have grown in salience and obtained the status of a global news agenda (Anderson, 1997). The role of the media in informing and educating people about different measures to protect the environment and raising awareness through news articles, columns, editorials, debates and discussions comes here. Media used to provide people with latest information of the society and help them to live a better life. Media is helping people to shape their perception through its diverse content. The media plays a key role in informing people about various aspects of society and sensitizing about the issues for taking stand by the people. Media is not only confined to the four walls of news but, it also entertains, educates, informs and facilitates cultural transformation between generations (Smith, 2011).

One of the most popular and efficient forms of mass communication is the print media. In transforming and educating society, it played an important role. With more in depth news and analysis, print media influences and shapes the perception of readers. Print media has the benefit of creating a longer influence on the minds of the reader, with more in-depth coverage and investigation (Patil, 2011).

Newspapers play an important role in providing information to people in the far-flung areas where the reach of electronic media is not possible. In the rural India, newspapers are still one of the popular media forms among the rural masses.

2. Review of Literature

Print media is regarded to be the first type of mass communication, since Gutenberg (1447) invented typography, which effectively revolutionized printing technology and allowed mass production of books and other printed content (Koundal, 2017). In the Indian context, newspapers are particularly important; bearing in mind that the circulation of print is increasing in Asia, but declining in mature Western markets (Parveen, 2016).

In their research on the effect of education, age, newspapers and television on environmental awareness, issues and behaviors, Ostman and Parker (1987) discovered that the use of newspapers for environmental data was favorably linked to the attention given to environmental content in mass media and environmental concerns.

Lucas (2013) researched the environmental coverage content of two major Indian dailies in English language. The findings indicated that, compared to The Times of India, The Hindu paid more attention to environmental issues. In 31 prominent English-language Indian newspapers, Dutt, Garg and Bhatta (2013) examined environmental coverage and discovered that climate change and global warming were given the highest priority.

3. Objectives

- a) To analyze coverage patterns environment issues in the print media of Himachal Pradesh;
- b) To identify the categories of news related to environment issues and their placing on pages.

4. Research methodology

As mentioned, the main focus of this study is to analyze the coverage of environmental issue in the print media of Himachal Pradesh hence the content analysis is the most suitable research method for this. Kerlinger (1986) defined content analysis as a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

In this study, a content analysis was applied to detect the news coverage of environmental issues in the two dailies for one week (16th February to 22nd February 2019). The main focus of the content analysis for this study is to analyze the number of stories published on environmental issues, space and their placement in the newspaper. The limitation of the study is the print media coverage of the environmental issues of two newspapers published from Himachal Pradesh.

4.1 Unit of Analysis

This study focused on newspaper coverage given to the environmental issues by two dailies published from Himachal Pradesh, the news articles were analyzed on the following categories:

1. Categories of news items
2. Total News Coverage
3. Number of Columns

4. Number of photos

5. Statistical Analysis of Data and Interpretation

The statistical analysis was conducted to analyze the coverage of environmental issues in both the newspapers. The entire data was fed into master tables. Small tables were derived from them for the analysis. Simple calculations method was used for analysis of the coverage of the environment issues.

5.1: Total Coverage of Environment Issues

Table 1 shows that the total coverage by Dainik Jagran and Divya Himachal on environmental issues. Dainik Jagran has published 28 stories of environmental issues during one week; accordingly the frequency of stories is 4 stories per day. Divya Himachal has published total 21 stories of environmental issues during one week; accordingly the frequency of stories is 3 stories per day.

Table 1: Total Coverage of Environmental issues in Dainik Jagran, Dharmashala Edition and Divya Himachal

Period of Study	Dainik Jagran	Divya Himachal
	Total Stories published environment issues	Total Stories published environment issues
7 days, February 16 to 22, 2019	28	21

5.2: Placement of Stories

Table 2 shows the placement of environmental stories in both the newspapers. In Dainik Jagran, 21.42 % stories were placed on front page and rests were placed on other pages. Divya Himachal has published 14.28% stories on front page and rests were placed on other pages.

Table 2: Placement of Stories in Dainik Jagaran and Divya Himachal

Newspaper	Total Stories	Front Page	Other pages	%age (Front Page)	%age (Other pages)
Dainik Jagran	28	06	22	21.42	78.57
Divya Himachal	21	03	18	14.28	85.71

5.3: Format of Stories

Table 3 shows the format of stories appeared in both newspapers. The news format stand at equal position with 85.71% each, 4.75% feature, 10.71% editorial in Dainik Jagran and 9.52 in Divya Himachal and 1 photo published in Dainik Jagran (3.5%).

Table 3: Format of Stories

Newspaper	Total Stories	News	Feature	Editorial	Photo
Dainik Jagran	28	24	0	3	1
% age		85.71	0	10.71	3.5
Divya Himachal	21	18	1	2	0
%age		85.71	4.75	9.52	0

5.4: Categories of News

Table 4 shows the category-wise stories published in both newspapers. It can be observed that weather stories find maximum space in both the newspapers followed by air pollution stories. In both newspapers climate change is at equal position. Dainik Jagran covered water resources and garbage pollution related stories but Divya Himachal did not cover any stories on this subject, however Divya Himachal covered more wildlife stories than Dainik Jagran.

Table 4: Categories of news

Newspaper	Total Stories	Categories					
		Air Pollution	Climate Change	Weather	Water Resource	Garbage Pollution	Wildlife
Dainik Jagran	28	5	1	16	3	2	1
% age		17.85	3.57	57.14	10.71	7.14	3.57
Divya Himachal	21	3	1	15	0	0	2
%age		14.28	4.76	71.42	0	0	9.52

5.5: Number of columns

It is found that out of total 28 stories on environment issues published in Dainik Jagran, 13 stories were placed in 4 columns (being the highest) followed by 2, 3 1 and 5 columns. Out of 21 stories of Divya Himachal, 6 were placed in 4 columns followed by 2 (being the highest) , 1, 3 and 5 columns.

Newspapers	Number of columns				
	5	4	3	2	1

Dainik Jagran	1	13	4	7	3
Divya Himachal	1	6	3	7	4

Conclusion

This study reveals that the Dainik Jagran has published total 28 stories related to environmental issues and Divya Himachal has published total 21 stories during the period included in the study. Dainik Jagran is a bit ahead of Divya Himachal in terms of the frequency of stories published each day. Regarding publishing environment stories on Front Page, Dainik Jagran was again ahead of Divya Himachal in this category.

The findings further reveal that the both the newspapers used the news format the most for publishing environment stories followed by editorial and features. It is found in the study that weather stories found maximum space in both the newspapers followed by air pollution stories, climate change, water resources and wildlife stories.

Regarding giving space to the environment issues, Dainik Jagran had placed most of the stories in 4 columns whereas Divya Himachal had placed most of the stories 2 columns.

It can be concluded that that both the newspapers have given considerable space for these stories. It shows that print media has been placing a good number of stories on environment and playing an important role in sensitizing the masses.

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Annexure 1

Master Table : Dainik Jagran

Sr.	Date	Page	Other pages	Category	Format	Columns
1	16-Feb, 2019	Front Page	Front Page	Weather	News	4
2		3	Other Pages	Weather	News	2
3		3	Other Pages	Weather	News	2
4		5	Other Pages	Water Resource	News	4
5		12	Other Pages	Air pollution	News	2
6		4	Other Pages	Weather	News	2
7		6	Other Pages	Water Resource	Editorial	1
8	17-Feb, 2019	Front Page	Front Page	Weather	News	3
9		4	Other Pages	Weather	Editorial	1
10	18-Feb, 2019	4	Other Pages	Garbage pollution	News	4
11	19-Feb, 2019	2	Other Pages	Air pollution	News	4
12		2	Other Pages	Air pollution	News	4
13		3	Other Pages	Weather	News	3
14	20-Feb, 2019	Front Page	Front Page	Weather	Photo	4
15		3	Other Pages	Weather	News	4
16		4	Other Pages	Water Resource	News	4
17	21-Feb, 2019	Front Page	Front Page	Weather	News	4
18		2	Other Pages	Weather	News	2
19		3	Other Pages	Weather	News	3
20		5	Other Pages	Garbage pollution	News	4
21		8	Other Pages	Weather	Editorial	2
22	22-Feb, 2019	Front Page	Front Page	Weather	News	4
23		3	Other Pages	Weather	News	5
24		3	Other Pages	Air pollution	News	4
25		5	Other Pages	Wildlife	News	3
26		2	Other Pages	Climate change	News	2
27		10	Other Pages	Air pollution	News	4
28		Front Page	Front Page	Weather	News	1

Annexure 2

Master Table 2 : Divya Himachal, Dharmashala Edition

Days	Date	Page No.	Other Pages	Category	Format	Columns
1	16-Feb, 2019	4	Other pages	Weather	News	2
2		5	Other pages	Wildlife	News	4

3	17-Feb, 2019	4	Other pages	Weather	News	4
4		11	Other pages	Environment Protection	Feature	2
5	18-Feb	4	Other pages	Weather	News	1
6	19-Feb, 2019	3	Other pages	Air pollution	News	3
7		3	Other pages	Wildlife	News	4
8		3	Other pages	Weather	News	3
9		8	Other pages	Air pollution	Editorial	4
10	20-Feb, 2019	4	Other pages	Weather	News	2
11		4	Other pages	Weather	News	1
12		4	Other pages	Weather	News	1
13		8	Other pages	Air pollution	Editorial	2
14	21-Feb, 2019	Front Page	Front Page	Weather	News	5
15	22-Feb, 2019	2	Other pages	Weather	News	2
16		2	Other pages	Weather	News	4
17		2	Other pages	Weather	News	2
18		2	Other pages	Weather	News	2
19		2	Other pages	Weather	News	1
20		Front Page	Other pages	Weather	News	4
21		Front Page	Front Page	Weather	News	3