



Coverage of Environmental Communication in Regional Media: A Study based on Haryana's Leading Dailies

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Abstract

Repulsive environmental changes, which are the consequence of environmental degradation, have demolished the energy of our environment and scarred the earth. The mass media play a significant role in forming public opinion, including environmental concerns. This problem is relevant not only due to its extreme aggravation in the system of "nature-society" but also for the need to improve the effectiveness of the state environmental policy. While studies have shown that newspapers are still one of the essential sources of data among the general public when it comes to environmental issues.

This research study explores the role of regional (Haryana) newspapers in addressing and informing regarding environmental issues. The study would also delve into the consciousness it brings to society. Newspapers have always been a powerful tool for the purposeful formation of social orders, mainly through building necessary public relations, including ecological issues. They influence a number of processes, from formal environmental policy to informal views of the public on the current state of the environment. In this regard, the study of coverage of environmental problems in leading dailies will be conducted in order to find out the ratio and frequency of news related to the environment. It would be conducted with a mixed approach, (triangulation method) using

'Content Analysis' (qualitative) and a Survey (quantitative). This study presents the research results on the role of regional media in covering the environmental issues, in the leading Haryana dailies i.e Dainik Bhaskar & Dainik Jagran (According to the Indian Readership Survey, 2019), determining the effectiveness of information support of the government environmental protection policy.

Keywords: Environmental issues, Newspapers, Haryana, Awareness,

1. Introduction

The concerns of the environment and climate change are being extensively discussed in all kinds of media around the world. These debates highlight the threats that global warming poses. The associated issues of resource depletion and how humans are using the environment are also being discussed. However, environmental issues don't seem to be as urgent in the media, particularly in developing countries like India. When compared to well-known stories, they typically take a backseat. Very few seem to have newspapers or even a weekly supplement on environmental issues. The sun's radiation provides energy to the earth. GreenHouse Gases (GHG) are crucial in keeping the earth's temperature at a level that supports life by trapping heat. The Greenhouse Effect is a natural occurrence that is required to sustain life on earth. The world would be roughly 33 °C colder now if not for the greenhouse effect. Due to increased fossil fuel burning and deforestation in recent centuries, humanity has contributed to an increase in atmospheric GHGs. The increase in GHGs over the past century is the main factor contributing to global warming. Through coverage of environmental issues in the newspapers, the public's environmental concerns are influenced to an extent, and they are persuaded to take action. A content analysis of the most widely read and popular Hindi newspapers in Haryana was conducted to look at how environmental issues were covered in the news, keeping in mind how important it is for newspapers to raise awareness in society about the need to prevent environmental degradation. If environmental protection is not implemented, life on Earth will eventually become extinct. This explains why environmental issues have grown so sensitive and significant on a global scale. Everyone must share a shared knowledge of how human activity either slows down or accelerates environmental deterioration.

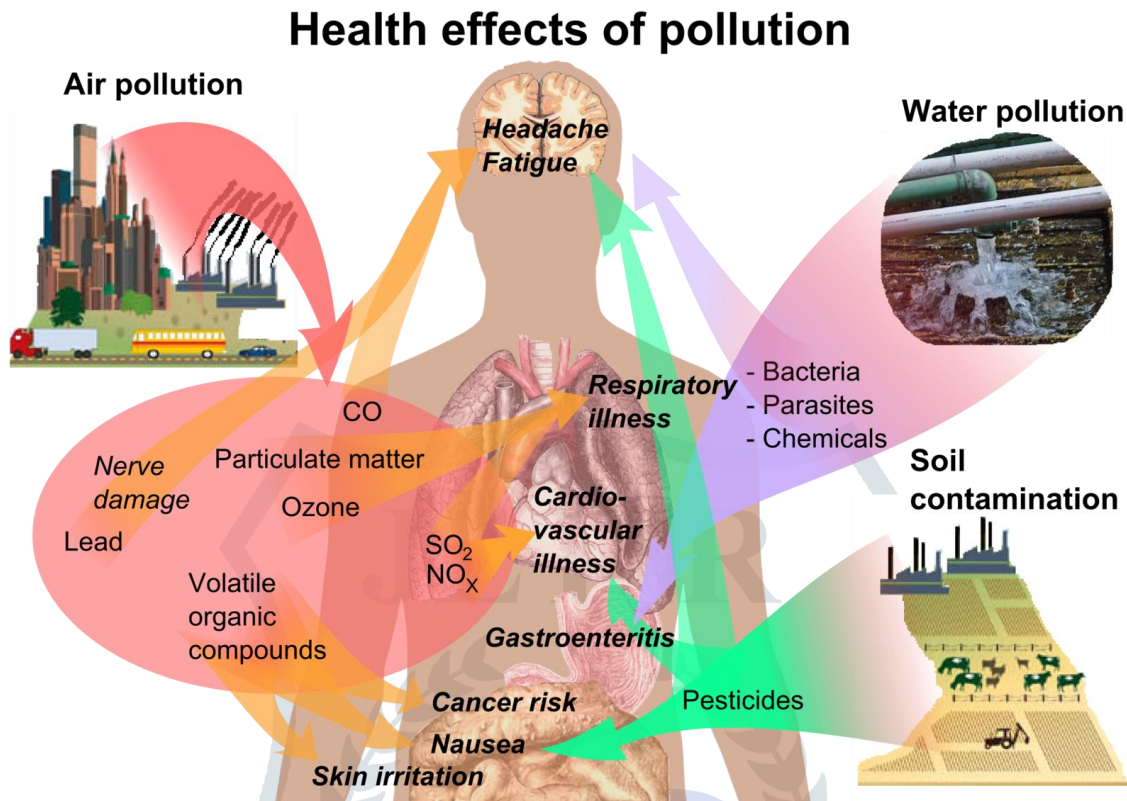


Figure (1) A thorough infographic effectively depicting the level of pollution that harms human health.

(Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository)

The goal of environmental awareness is to increase people's knowledge of the environment, inform them of the effects of human progress, and assist them in understanding sustainable development. With the help of around 3000 satellites, more than 2600 international media outlets are able to reach almost 1.5 billion people worldwide. One may claim that the bulk of world inhabitants gain knowledge about environmental challenges outside of their own environment through international media.

2. Literature Review

The amount of media exposure to environmental issues received tends to have an impact on public knowledge of them (Mazur & Lee, 1993). Additionally, mass media play the role of agenda setters, transferring important issues from the media agenda to the public agenda to raise awareness of a problem (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

The public's understanding of environmental issues is indeed directly affected by news coverage of them, which

can also influence people to take action to alleviate them. The primary notion of agenda setting theory is that as more specific concerns are covered by the media, the greater priority these issues will receive from the general population (McCombs et al., 1997). Every citizen has a basic right to a clean, healthy, and abundant environment in which to live dignifiedly. As a result, the UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 places a high priority on environmental conservation. This agenda represents a major departure from the growth-based economic model of today to one that aims for sustainable and equitable economies and societies around the world, as well as greater public participation in decision-making, in accordance with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992). It strives to replace unsustainable patterns of consumption and production with beneficial sustainable lifestyles. Therefore, the concept that a healthy, functional environment is essential for the human species to flourish forms the basis of this goal (UNEP, 2016).

On October 2, 2016, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, India, the fourth-largest carbon emitter in the world with a population of 1.3 billion, ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. As part of the agreement, India agreed to make sure that by 2030, at least 40% of its electricity would come from non-fossil sources. Following China, which accounts for 28% of global carbon dioxide emissions, the United States, which accounts for 16%, and the European Union, which accounts for 10%, is India (Shrivastava, 2016).

Jal Bachao Abhiyan was launched by Dainik Bhaskar, a renowned Hindi newspaper in India, among its readers in many states, and it has had a significant impact on readers. Additionally, a special drive for the Jal Satyagraha project was held during the summer. The campaign's goal is to raise awareness and encourage people to "Save Water." People are urged by the campaign to sign a commitment promising to reduce their daily water use by 15%. The campaign addresses people through advertisements, full-page editorial articles on water conservation, and videos broadcast in schools. As a consequence, 3.3+ lakh children from 503 schools in 9 states joined the campaign and made the commitment to conserve water. In two states, the construction of new structures must incorporate rainwater collection. This campaign was introduced in all of its phases and had a remarkable reaction.

3. The objectives of the presented study are as follows:

Examining how Indian national dailies address environmental issues is the study's main goal.

- To examine the Environmental news coverage in leading Haryana newspapers (Dainik Jagran & Dainik Bhaskar).
- To examine the significance given to the news piece in terms of; space & placement.
- To identify the content categories that typically receive greater media coverage or attention when it comes to environmental issues.
- To examine how environmental issues are covered and handled in the print media.

4. Research Questions

- How are issues related to Environment are covered in the Print media?
- How often the issues related to Environment are covered in the Print media?
- What are the primary content categories that typically receive greater media coverage or attention when it comes to environmental issues?
- How are environment related issues covered and handled in the print media?

5. Methodology

A **content analysis** was conducted to examine how environmental issues were covered in the daily newspapers from 3rd to 9th June 2022. This month has been chosen as "**World Environment Day**" which is celebrated annually on June 5 in order to increase global awareness about environmental degradation and encourage people to take positive environmental action to protect the environment and the planet Earth. For the purpose of researching media coverage of environmental issues in Haryana, the two most read and widely distributed Hindi newspapers, **Dainik Jagran (Regional)** and **Dainik Bhaskar (National)** were chosen.

International, national, and local Haryana environmental news were chosen to represent the news agenda in order to preserve consistency in environmental news coverage. The sample of data was coded using the following guidelines:

- News includes front page news, Articles, inside pages news, and news with graphics.

- Water scarcity, waste management, plastic pollution, hydropower project environmental consequences, air, noise, and traffic pollution, natural resource management, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan rallies, solar energy, forest fires, and mining are among the news categories covered.

The Study Area - The researcher has thoroughly studied the level of public awareness and knowledge about environmental laws, duties, and rights in general and the role of media in generating environmental awareness in particular. The research is limited to the geographical area of the northern part of Haryana; Hisar and Jhajjar.

6. Findings and discussion (News coverage of environmental issues)

6.1 News coverage of environmental issues in **Dainik Bhaskar** (from 3.07.2022 to 9.07.2022)

DAINIK BHASKAR (HISAR) 3rd July to 9th July 2022

NEWS	Total News	FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE on Environment
FRONT PAGE NEWS	67	2
Articles	79	6
NEWS WITH GRAPHICS	302	10
INSIDE PAGES NEWS	10	0
TOTAL NEWS	458	18

Table no: 1

4.25% of the newspaper contained coverage pertaining to environmental concerns.

DAINIK JAGRAN (HISAR) 3RD to 9th July 2022

NEWS	FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE on Environment	FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE on Environment
FRONT PAGE NEWS	87	1
Article	104	15
NEWS WITH GRAPHICS	462	13
INSIDE PAGES NEWS	46	0
TOTAL NEWS	699	29

Table no: 2

1.92% of the newspaper contained coverage pertaining to environmental concerns.

DAINIK BHASKAR (JHAJJAR) 3RD July to 9th July 2022

NEWS	FREQUENCY	FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE on Environment
FRONT PAGE NEWS	67	1
Article	56	6

NEWS WITH GRAPHICS	289	7
INSIDE PAGES NEWS	8	0
TOTAL NEWS	420	14

Table no: 3

1.78% of the newspaper contained coverage pertaining to environmental concerns.

DAINIK JAGRAN (JHAJJAR) 3RD July to 9th July 2022

NEWS	FREQUENCY	FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE on Environment
FRONT PAGE NEWS	91	2
Articles	122	19
NEWS WITH GRAPHICS	494	27
INSIDE PAGES NEWS	48	1
TOTAL NEWS	755	49

Table no:4

1.70% of the newspaper contained coverage pertaining to the environment concerns.

7. FINDINGS

A total of 3899 stories were collected from the newspapers; **Dainik Jagran (Hisar)**, **Dainik jagran (Jhajjar)**, **Dainik Bhaskar (Hisar)** and the **Dainik Bhaskar (Jhajjar)**, the analysis helped identify the important environmental coverage categories. The study also determined the variations in news coverage in terms of the quantity of articles, the topics covered, and the duration of the articles in these two leading dailies of Haryana with respect to two different districts i.e Hisar & Jhajjar of Haryana.

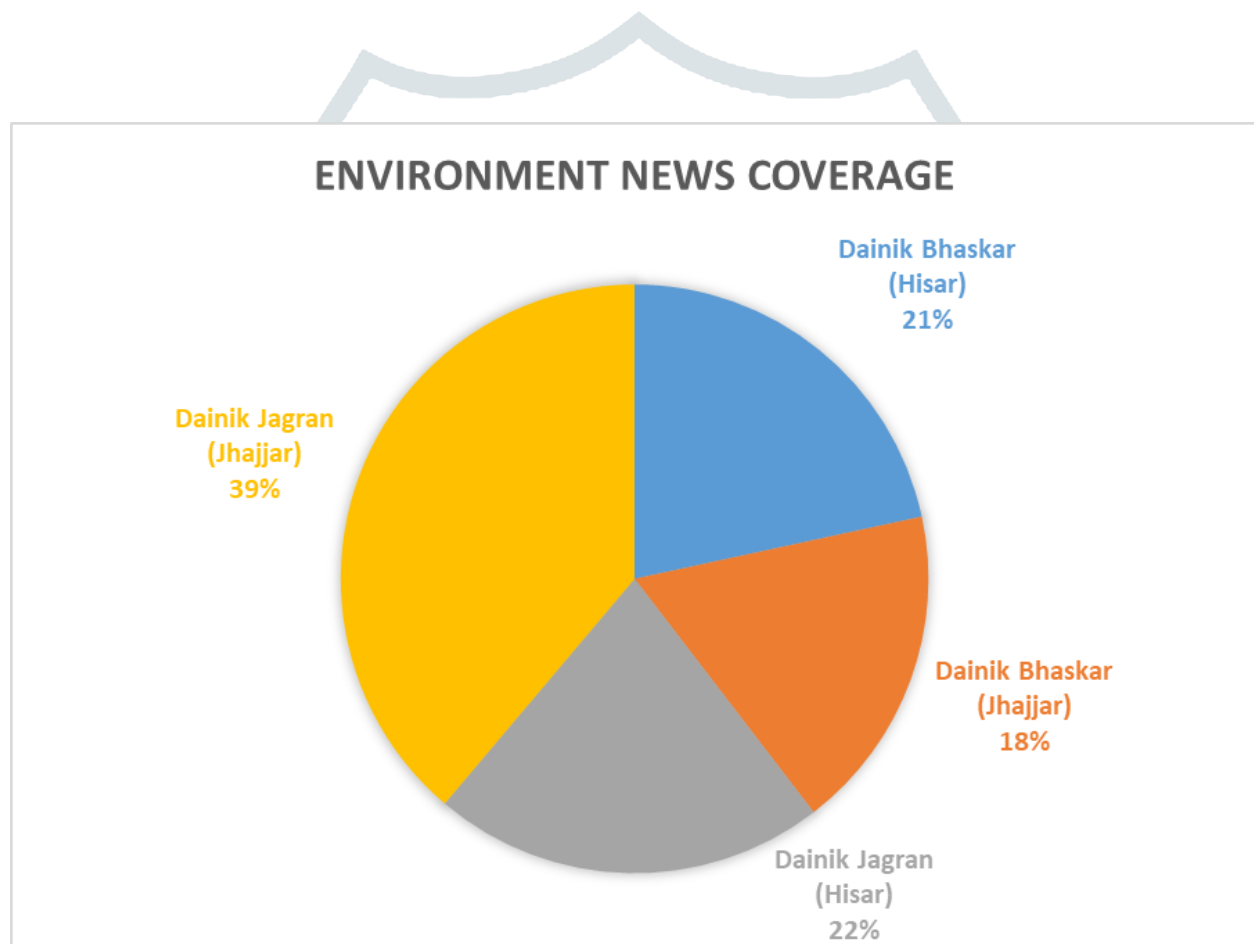


Figure: I

The above figure I, represents the share of environment coverage in the selected newspapers.

- Dainik Jagran of Jhajjar district had a total of 1180 stories from 3rd to 9th July 2022, out of which 49 stories were about environment-related issues/events.
- Dainik Jagran of Hisar district had a total of 1255 stories from 3rd to 9th July 2022, out of which 29 stories were about environment-related issues/events.

- Dainik Bhaskar of Jhajjar district had a total of 729 stories from 3rd to 9th July 2022, out of which 14 stories were about environment-related issues/events.
- Dainik Bhaskar of Hisar district had a total of 735 stories from 3rd to 9th July 2022, out of which 17 stories were about environment-related issues/events.

The above data shows that Dainik Bhaskar covered noise pollution, and global warming the least in both districts. Newspaper coverage of environmental threats like flooding and forest fires was nearly absent over the week. In this content analysis of newspaper articles from July 3 to July 9, 2022, covering environmental issues.

8. Conclusion

In a country like India with 1,44,523 (Statistica, 2021) newspapers and periodicals, the space and time allotted in the media for coverage of Nature and Environmental issues is less than 1.5 %. It is even lesser in the regional media. The analysis discovered that newspapers in Haryana did a decent job of covering environmental issues but it certainly needs an increase. Overall, the leading regional newspapers Dainik Bhaskar and Dainik Jagran, the latter covered the environmental concerns more. In their environmental coverage, Dainik Bhaskar and Dainik Jagran raised 14 and 11 of the 16 environmental issues in Haryana, respectively. However, this conventional media can be quite effective in raising public awareness of concerns relating to biodiversity protection, climate change, and other relevant topics. We also found that stories on the usage of plastic and plantations were cited significantly more often than the role & responsibilities of citizens.

Newspaper Articles-

- 1) *Dainik Jagran, Jhajjar, Haryana Edition (from 3rd to 9th July 2022)*
- 2) *Dainik Jagran, Hisar, Haryana Edition (from 3rd to 9th July 2022)*
- 3) *Dainik Bhaskar, Jhajjar, Haryana Edition (from 3rd to 9th July 2022)*
- 4) *Dainik Bhaskar, Hisar, Haryana Edition (from 3rd to 9th July 2022)*

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