

**SEMESTER-IV**

**PAPER-EC 1 : RURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM**

***UNIT-V***

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## **Introduction**

Environment is becoming a major concern for people. It has negative effect on everyone in some way or other because of the human interventions. It is important to address environment related issues in terms of bringing awareness to people through news, programs, events and debates. Print media covering environmental news does have impact on a large number of people. The two widely read national dailies have more chances of affecting people by their extensive or more coverage on any concerned area. More than books and magazines newspapers are able to reach the readers fast. Issues like pollution, deforestation, mining, and e-waste are some of the obvious problems that people are facing today.

But majority of us lack proper knowledge about how environment degradation is going to affect the people at all. It seems positive from the perspective of growth and employment; and negative from the perspective of degrading natural resources. The powerless are not able to raise their voices against what they feel not right. They are left with no choice and in dilemma. They can only be passive receivers. To a large extent, the amount of knowledge that some people have is only because of the newspapers. Perhaps it depends on how much the print media covered the environment. Taking literacy rates into account, it can be said that the number of readers has increased both in cities as well as in villages. When people are becoming active readers the newspapers do not carry the news that people really need to know. Until the news and articles are focused enough on the environment people will continue to remain ignorant or misinformed till they approach danger.

There are times the newspapers do give extensive coverage on national issues but only at the time of disaster. On the other hand, the question is about the precaution measures that people need to take care before they encounter become victims of adverse situations. Economists say that today the biggest enemy for India is not China or Pakistan but landslide. When landslide is a major problem for us, media is not giving sufficient information to Public. Especially print media is not making much effort to bring awareness.

In the name of economic growth, deforestation, degradation of environment like fertilizer, mining keep increasing. In this condition people must know the negative impact of those activities and help them fight for what they feel wrong. Going through two weeks of national dailies, 'The Times of India and The Hindu,' the researcher is trying to prove the hypothesis that environmental issues are not given more importance in terms giving enough and more coverage. Locally there is some news on environment. Nationally the number of news is much less. This is to say that nationally the coverage is not given. They wait for the gravity of problem. Is the significance of the topic-environment becomes relevant only when there is problems? 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 environments are missing. People can acquire more knowledge on environment if the writers give equal importance to environment too.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the study, media's coverage on environmental issues, using two weeks national dailies as follow;

- v To find out how much print media gives importance to environmental issues other than the time when there is no disaster or problem
- v To analyze various categories of environment related news that has been addressed by the newspapers
- v To study the newspapers' approach in bringing awareness to people when there is frequent natural calamities

## **Methodology**

The methodology that is used to understand the coverage of environmental news is both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected by using both quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Two national dailies are selected based on its popularity. Researcher has chosen two national dailies, The Times of India and The Hindu. In choosing the two national dailies the news is divided into four different categories for the content analysis. The secondary data collected from various books, magazines and internet.

## **Findings**

In **Table 1** below, of the two weeks, the number of news items that 'The Times of India' has covered is 31. Compare to 'The Hindu,' it is less than half. On an average it has covered only two news items per day. On the other hand it has given importance to 6 news items in terms of giving space in front page. It has no articles, interviews, letter to editor, protections laws on environment. Pollution and urban related news are given wider coverage over the two weeks. The Times of India did not give much importance to ads, editorial, regional and rural related news as it has covered one news on certain days. The number of news items compare to The Hindu is much less because it has not been in forefront in covering

environmental matter. It must be a concern that how media addresses the problems of environment.

### **The Times of India**

Table 1

The Times of India's news coverage in wildlife, pollution, events and programs, articles, editorial, ads, interviews, protection laws, awareness, letter to editor, national, regional, urban and rural.

In **Table 2** below, of the two weeks, the number of news items that 'The Hindu' newspaper has covered is 63. Comparing this with the 'The Times of India,' it is leading by 32 news items. On an average it has covered 4 news items per day. It has given maximum coverage on wildlife and regional related news. On certain days it has given wider coverage through different columns. The Hindu did not publish anything in terms of interview and protection laws. Articles were not given much importance as they can give larger picture about environment. Three ads in two weeks are quite good because it has explored even ads while ads on other things dominate the newspaper columns. Overall The Hindu national daily has been fair in covering environmental related matter.

### **The Hindu**

Table 2

The Hindu's news coverage in wildlife, pollution, events and programs, articles, editorial, ads, interviews, protection laws, awareness, letter to editor, national, regional, urban and rural.

In **Table 3** below, we study the level of importance that the two national dailies have given to news items related to national, regional, urban and rural. The number of news coverage that 'The Times of India' has given to these four areas is 31 and The Hindu has given 63 times. It is because The Times of India has given more coverage to only Regional and Urban news and was not fair with regard to other three areas. The coverage that The Times of India has given to national, regional, and rural is much less compared to The Hindu newspaper. The Hindu has given wider coverage to regional and national news. The difference between the two national dailies in covering environmental news suggests that The Times of India has not given sufficient coverage to the environmental related news. By giving importance to other areas it has not been fair in serving the interest of the people.

### Table 3

The number of news covered by the two national dailies in the categories of National, Regional, Urban and Rural

In **Table 4** below, we analyze the fact that how specifically articles, editorials, ads and interviews are given space in the newspapers. The four stand out in terms of people's response and interest in writing about environment. The Times of India has been active in publishing editorials and ads. The Hindu is been more proactive in publishing even articles, editorials and advertisements. Advertisements are more appealing to readers' eyes and it has been fair in printing ads. On the other hand, like the other daily The Hindu has not published anything in terms of interviews.

### Table 4

Number of Interviews, News, Editorial and Ads on Environment

In **Table 5** below, we analyze the two national dailies on three categories. They are protection laws, awareness programs and letters to the editor. The Hindu newspaper has been effective in covering all the categories of news whereas The Times of India has failed in covering these categories news. The Hindu has covered three news items on awareness programs and two news items each in terms of protection laws and letter to editor. Letters to Editor is one of the columns where anyone could write and The Hindu has encouraged people by publishing two letters to editor. The Hindu has been proactive unlike The Times of India. In a way The Hindu is able to challenge The Times of India in these categories news.

### Table 5

Number of Protection Laws, Awareness Programs and Letter to Editor on Environment

### **Recommendations**

- v Newspapers may encourage regular columnists to bring out current issues and problems
- v Highlight environmental issues in editorial
- v Citizen journalists and students can be encouraged to write more on environmental issues.
- v More research articles and scientific predictions should be published
- v Create awareness about protection laws
- v Programs and events should be encouraged by giving wider coverage and the reporters should be able to follow it up further developments and give extra details about the topic.

- v Newspapers need to fairly highlight the compromises that the political parties or politicians make to sanction each project that does not meet all the requirements.
- v 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.
- v More research articles and scientific predictions could be published.
- v Protection laws must be enforced and followed strictly in order to protect nature.
- v Endangered species should be given more protection and new ways and means could be charted out to multiply them.

## **Conclusion**

The two national dailies have mandate to give importance to the issues that affect people more. From the analysis of the findings an attempt is made to draw a conclusion that the two national dailies are not giving sufficient coverage to all the categories of news like protection laws, pollution, editorial, letter to editor, etc. By neglecting certain areas, people especially the readers will lose the chance of gaining maximum information. Dissemination of information should be catered in all the areas so that people are reminded of the need to protect nature. The Times of India does not seem to make much impression among the readers by its lack of fair coverage, whereas The Hindu has been fair in its approach to environmental issues. The Times of India has to be proactive in covering all sorts of environmental news like The Hindu does. 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, print media will be able to generate interest and sense of positive attitude towards environment among people.

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