

# Trends of Environmental news in National Dailies

A CMS ENVIS Centre Research Study

## INTRODUCTION

Ecological security is viewed more as a talking - concept rather than as a fundamental issue of societal concern and way of life. The concern was confined to academics and a subject of NGO's concern and part of global politics. In the process, ecology is being perceived as a responsibility of the Government, not so much of people and civic society. Culture and customs, rituals and traditions, which sustained ecological security over the centuries, are themselves under threat, as those virtues were never understood, so that they could be harnessed. In fact, they were looked down and viewed as not in sync with modernity and development endeavors. Today we live in an altogether a different culture. A "mass culture" where lifestyles are sustained by mass media. It is by media criteria and media judgment – all across not just in politics, that such mass culture is evolved and groomed. The agenda of a nation, the life style of people, are set by the mass media. Apparently, media is more market driven and ecological issues are given less importance. Success stories that involved community in bringing out desirable change in environmental concerns are either not covered or given least priorities.

With the perspective that the print media importance plays vital role in endorsing and redirecting the thinking of masses towards behavioral/attitudinal change, a need was felt by CMS ENVIS to conduct a study to understand the coverage of environmental news in leading dailies.

## OBJECTIVES

The study was conducted with the following objectives :

- To understand the frequency of environmental news in the leading dailies
- To understand the average space provided for environmental news monthly.
- To understand the frequency of environmental news covered on the front page.

## METHODOLOGY

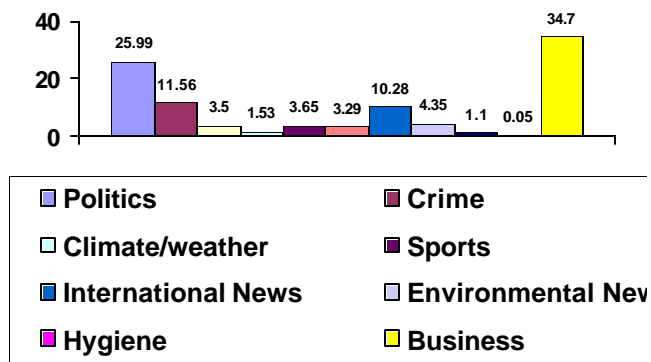
Nine leading newspapers including business were scanned on daily basis for 45 days to collect information/data on different parameters so that the analysis of all the newspapers could be done on similar lines. For scanning and capturing data, an exclusive format was designed for each newspaper. The issues & news items selected were politics, crime, education, climate/weather, sports, entertainment, International news, environmental news, health & hygiene and business, which appears mainly in these newspapers. Information on appearance of the news items on these issues and on which page number it has got the space was collected.

To assess the coverage, all news items of the newspaper were measured column by column in centimeters manually. The advertisements space was not considered. The total space of the newspaper was also calculated in column and cm. This voluminous information was entered in the computer on daily basis. Special software was developed in Microsoft access for easy access and analysis of information. At the end of the study the data was collated and analyzed.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Politics (national and international), business and crime cover 83 percent of total newspaper space in all major dailies surveyed. The business news covers a maximum of 34.7 percent of the total space in the newspaper, which is followed by 25.99 percent of political news. The coverage given to crime related news is 11.58 percent whereas educational news gets only 1.1 percent of space in the newspapers.
- The international news gets maximum reporting in ‘The Hindu’ newspaper i.e. 21 percent followed by politics (19 %). In ‘The Times of India’, 20 percent of the space is devoted to international news whereas politics has 20 percent coverage. ‘The Hindustan Times’ follows with 17 percentage of International News and 18 percent of political news items.
- Almost all the dailies have more than two pages dedicated to Sports, Entertainment and business news.

### OVER ALL



Note: A graphical presentation below depicts the percentage of the news items covered in all the main dailies. On Y axis issues selected viz. politics, crime, education, climate/weather, sports, entertainment, International news, environmental news, Health & Hygiene and business were plotted and percentage of news coverage in the X-axis in the span of 45 days of the study was placed.

**Table 1: Environmental coverage measured (in cms)**

Newspapers	Length of Env. news in cm.	Total space (considered)	Percentage
Hindu	1593	34948	4.56
HT	832	24926	3.34
TOI	1889	25210	6.49
Indian Express	1116	31428	3.55
Navbharat times	308	15374	2.00

Its very evident from table 1 that environmental news gets the least priority as compared to other news. The coverage is limited to only 4.35 percent in the overall comparison. Environment success stories, best practices, initiatives of communities, local movements, campaigns etc. are rarely highlighted in these dailies It was observed that in ‘The Times of India’ maximum environment news has appeared i.e. 7.49% in the study period.

**Table 2: Comparative analysis of coverage of developmental news**

Name of newspaper	Education (%)	Environment (%)	Health & Hygiene (%)
The Hindu	3.02	4.56	0.75
Hindustan Times	6.49	3.34	1.00
Times of India	3.32	7.49	1.30
Indian Express	2.95	3.55	1.24
Navbharat Times	1.20	2.00	1.90

In total less than 3% of the space is given of issues concerning common man like educational and health & hygiene. ‘The Times of India’ gives maximum 7.49 percent coverage to environmental news in comparison to all dailies. In comparison to all developmental news ‘The Hindu’ gives 4.56 percent space to environmental news. ‘The Hindustan Times’ has given space to 6.49% of educational news in comparison to Health & Hygiene related news i.e. 1.00 percent and environment 3.34 percent as shown in table 4.

**COVERAGE ON FRONT PAGE**

- Environmental issues that were reported were wildlife, water, Yamuna, bio-diversity, water management, climate change, water conservation awareness, watershed management, rain water harvesting, air pollution, government initiatives etc.

**Table 3: Topics on the Front Page (in Frequency)**

Newspapers	Issues Covered									
	Politics	Crime	Education	Climate /weather	Sports	Entertainment	International	Environment	Health & Hygiene	Business
Hindu	19	13	1	4	11	3	21	5	0	11
HT	18	11	3	6	10	3	17	3	0	12
TOI	20	9	7	8	9	2	20	6	2	15
Indian Express	19	16	2	3	13	0	15	4	0	7
Navbharat times	14	7	1	4	12	12	8	2	2	11

**Table 4: Environmental news on the front page in different leading dailies (in Percentage)**

Newspapers	Percentage (%)
Hindu	5.68
HT	3.41
TOI	6.82
Indian Express	4.55
Navbharat Times	2.27

From table 3 & 4, it has been inferred that on the front page politics, international and sports and to some extent crime has appeared. In some case, environment also made headlines of few dailies.

#### **ENVIRONMENT COVERAGE IN BUSINESS NEWSPAPERS**

Four business newspapers were scanned for 45 days to collect data on the coverage of environmental news viz. Business Line, Financial Express, Business Standard & Economics Times.

**Table 5: Environment Coverage in Business newspapers**

Newspapers	Page No.	Issues	Frequency of coverage
Business Line	18, 15, 9, 11, 17, 18, 20, 19	Wildlife, GM Food, Eco-Tourism	97
Financial Express	10, 8, 10	One page petrochemical advertisement	37
Economics Times	4, 7, 2, 18	Half page advertisement on alternate fuel technology, waste management	61
Business Standard	6, 2, 6	Waste management, rain water harvesting and climate change	37

It was inferred from table 5 that in business newspapers environmental news having business angle has been getting the coverage. During the study period environmental news never reported on front page. It was observed that the reporting were mainly on page nos. 2, 10, 11, 18.