Content Analysis and Coverage of News on Pandemic COVID-19 in Elected Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

Newspapers have a significant impact on quality of life. Individuals are heavily influenced by the newspaper and it aids in promoting social awareness among them. This study was conducted to examine the content during pandemic COVID-19 in three selected newspapers viz., The Hindu, The Tribune and *Punjab Kesari*. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the selected newspaper over the chosen time period was conducted during 2022. The majority of topics were covered in news format in all the newspapers. Newspaper correspondents were the primary information source in all the newspapers. The Hindu took up the most space and items. In all of the newspapers, the majority of the items and space were covered during PHASE-II.

INTRODUCTION

Content analysis has been the fastest growing technique over the past 20 years and so on. A method called content analysis, which makes use of numerous approaches, allows for both quantitative and qualitative study of information that has been published in newspapers. There are eight different methods used to study the content of media, which are frequently combined. These include clip counting, readership and circulation analysis; add value equivalence, simple content analysis, message analysis, tone analysis, prominence analysis and quality of coverage (Yale & Gilly, 1988). The solid long term policies regarding editorials, content, source of information, feed back mechanism and readership survey need to be formulated in order to rural Papers (Nain & Trikha, 2001). Perceived effectiveness in terms of content, presentation and illustrations may be influenced by need of the stakeholders for its utilization (Nain et al., 2019). The content is governed by perspective readers and their focus (Sondarva et al., 2019; Kobba et al., 2019). Content analysis as a research technique that uses a series of steps to get reliable conclusions from text. Compared to other data generation and analysis methodologies, content analysis has a number of benefits. The study, identification, and description of the focus of attention of people, groups, and communities by print or electronic media are all possible through content analysis of newspapers (Weber, 1990). As a consequence, evaluating and investigating the pandemic-related themes and contents in the newspaper, as well as their timeline of discussion, can help policymakers and stakeholders who evaluate the diversity of information flow and take appropriate action as needed (Zafri, 2021).

Newspapers are crucial for spreading knowledge across society. The general public must be made aware of the pandemic COVID-19 in order for them to receive pertinent information about it. Therefore, content analysis assists in determining whether or not pertinent material has been released, which can be useful for newspaper brands to get beyond their obstacles.

METHODOLOGY

Three newspapers viz., The Hindu, The Tribune and *Punjab Kesari* were selected for the content analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis was done. Quantitative analysis included space covered by "pandemic COVID-19" in the selected

newspapers and total space devoted to "pandemic COVID-19" issues in relation to total space of newspapers. Whereas the qualitative analysis covered source of information about pandemic COVID-19, formats of coverage, context of coverage, level and time of coverage regarding "pandemic COVID-19" issues in selected newspapers. Content analysis of the selected newspapers was conducted for 90 days in three PHASES, each phase having 30 days. These three PHASES were categorized as: PHASE-I: At the beginning of first year of pandemic COVID-19 (22 March -21 April, 2020), PHASE-II: At the time of second year of pandemic Covid-19 (22 March- 21 April, 2021), PHASE-III: At the time of third year of pandemic COVID-19 (22 March- 21 April, 2022). The space allotted to pandemic Covid-19 categories and subcategories was measured column by column in centimeters using a scale. In order to comprehend the data, frequency, percentage, and ranks were utilized as statistical tools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Formats of coverage regarding pandemic COVID-19

Data presented in the Table 1 depicts the formats of coverage regarding pandemic COVID-19 of all the three selected newspapers i.e. The Hindu, The Tribune and *Punjab Kesari*. Total 221 items regarding pandemic COVID-19 were published in The Hindu which, was followed by The Tribune (202 items) and *Punjab Kesari* (180

items). Majority of the items for pandemic COVID-19 were published in the form of news in The Hindu (149 items), The Tribune (147 items) and *Punjab Kesari* (140 items) respectively. In The Hindu newspaper, following ranks were given to the items out of which it covers news (149 items) ranked 1st followed by photographs (30 items) with 2nd rank and articles (20 items with 3rd rank). Other format like letter to editor (8 items) with rank 4th, advertisement (6 items) with 5th rank and features and editorials each (4 items each) with rank 6th respectively. In The Tribune newspaper 1st rank attained by news with 147 items which, was followed by 2nd rank to photographs (21 items), 3rd rank to articles (18 items) and other formats which were letter to editor (8 items) ranked 4th, editorials (4 items) ranked 5th, advertisement (3 items) ranked 6th and features (1 item) ranked 7th respectively. In case of *Punjab Kesari* newspaper, 1st rank achieved by news (140 items), 2nd rank to photographs (15 items), 3rd rank to articles (10 items), letter to editor (6 items) 4th rank, advertisement (4 items) 5th rank, editorials (3 items) 6th rank and features (2 items) with 7th rank respectively.

Information sources taken for reporting pandemic COVID-19

Data in the Table 2 shows that number of items and sources of information used to cover different items by selected newspapers on pandemic COVID-19. Data in Table pinpoints that most of the items related to pandemic were reported by the newspaper

Table 1. Formats of coverage regarding pandemicCOVID-19

S.No.	Formats	The Hindu (No. of items)	Rank	The Tribune (No. of items)	Rank	*Punjab Kesari* (No. of items)	Rank
		Newspapers					
1.	Articles	20	III	18	III	10	III
2.	Features	4	VI	1	VII	2	VII
3.	News	149	I	147	I	140	I
4.	Advertisement	6	V	3	VI	4	V
5.	Editorials	4	VI	4	V	3	VI
6.	Letter to editor	8	IV	8	IV	6	IV
7.	Photographs	30	11	21	II	15	II
	Total	221 (37.01)*		202 (33.83)*		180 (30.15)*	

*Figures in parenthesis are percentage value

Table 2. Information sources taken for reporting pandemic COVID-19

S.No.	Sources	The Hindu (No. of items)	Rank	The Tribune (No. of items)	Rank	*Punjab Kesari* (No. of items)	Rank
		Newspapers					
1.	Newspaper correspondents	135	I	120	I	102	I
2.	National agencies	35	II	31	II	29	II
3.	Freelance journalist	4	VIII	3	VII	1	VII
4.	Letter to editor	16	III	12	III	11	III
5.	Private photographer	11	IV	9	IV	4	VI
6.	Govt. news agencies	6	VI	7	VI	10	IV
7.	Govt. organizations	7	V	8	V	10	IV
8.	Private organizations	5	VII	9	IV	9	V
9.	NGOs	2	IX	3	VII	4	VI
	Total items	221(37.01)*		202(33.83)*		180(30.15)*	

*Figures in parenthesis are percentage value

correspondents, which was followed by national news agencies in all the selected newspapers with 1st and 2nd rank respectively i.e. The Hindu (135 and 35 items), The Tribune (120 and 31 items) and *Punjab Kesari* (102 and 29 items) respectively.

In The Hindu newspaper, letter to editor (16 items) was found at 3rd rank for reporting pandemic COVID-19 which was followed by private photographers (11 items), government organizations (7 items), government news agencies (6 items), private organizations (5 items), freelance journalist (4 items) and NGOs (2 items) with 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th rank respectively. Letter to editor (12 items) were found at 3rd rank in case of The Tribune which was followed by private organization, and government agencies (9 items each) with 4th rank, government organizations (8 items) with 5th rank, government news agencies (7 items) with 6th rank and freelance journalist & NGOs (3 items) with 7th rank respectively.

For *Punjab Kesari*, letter to editor (11 items) were found at 3rd rank, followed by Govt. news agencies and government organizations (10 items) each with 4th rank, private organizations (9 items) with 5th rank, private photographers and NGOs (4 items) with 6th rank each and freelance journalist (1 item) with 7th rank respectively.

Levels of coverage regarding pandemic COVID-19

The data presented in Table 3 reveals that items of pandemic COVID-19 issues showed different context of coverage in the selected newspapers. In case of all the three selected newspapers, maximum coverage was at national level (114, 102, and 70 items) with 1st rank. In case of The Hindu newspaper, international level news with (34 items) and state level news (28 items) with 2nd and 3rd rank respectively. As far as The Hindu, (18 and 12 number of items) had coverage at district and village level and attained 4th and 5th ranks and others i.e. (Photographs, Editorials, Articles, Features, Letter to editors), with 15 number of items achieved 6th rank respectively. For The Tribune district level news (26 items) and international level news (25 items) ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively. In case of The Tribune, further data revealed that state level coverage was placed at 4th rank with (23 items) followed by village (14 items) and others i.e. (Photographs, Editorials, Articles, Features, Letter to editors) with 12 items attained ranks 5th and 6th respectively. In *Punjab Kesari* district (38 items) and village level news (30 items) had maximum coverage with 2nd and 3rd rank respectively. While in *Punjab Kesari* (20 items) at state level with

4th rank, (16 items) at international level assigned 5th rank and others i.e. (photographs, editorials, articles, features, letter to editors) with (6 items) attained 6th rank respectively.

Time of coverage by selected newspapers on pandemic COVID-19

Data in the Table 4 shows that the total number of items and percentage covered by all the selected newspapers in different time spans for three months which was categorized in to three phases i.e. 22 March- 21 April of 2020, 22 March- 21 April of 2021 and 22 March- 21 April of 2022 year respectively. Results highlights that the maximum number of items were covered in PHASE-II i.e. 112 items (50.6%) which was followed by PHASE-I i.e. 86 items (39.0%) and 23 items (10.4%) during PHASE-III in case of The Hindu newspaper.

As far as, The Tribune newspaper covered highest number of items in PHASE-II i.e. 97 items (48%) followed by PHASE-I i.e. 81 items (40.1%) and PHASE-III i.e. 24 items (11.9%) respectively. In case of *Punjab Kesari*, the maximum number of items were covered during PHASE-II i.e. 87 items (48.3%) which was followed by PHASE-I i.e. 77 items (42.8%) and 16 number of items (8.9%) during PHASE-III.

Space covered by selected newspapers on pandemic COVID-19

The total space and percentage of total space devoted to pandemic COVID-19 in selected dailies in selected time spans is presented in Table 5. A perusal of Table indicates that The Hindu newspaper, covered highest space in PHASE-II i.e. 1273 col. cm (48.2%) followed by PHASE-I i.e. 1096 col. cm (41.5%) and PHASE-III i.e. 274 col. cm (10.3%). It was maximum in PHASE-II i.e. 1,175 col. cm (45.2%) followed by PHASE-I i.e. 1,039 col. cm (40.0%) and PHASE-III i.e. 385 col. cm (14.8%) for The Tribune. Also *Punjab Kesari* covered maximum space in PHASE-II i.e. 1094 col. cm (49.8%) followed by PHASE-I i.e. 926 col. cm (42.1%) and PHASE-III i.e.178 col.cm (8.9%).

The absolute space and space covered in terms of percentage was highest by The Hindu, (2643 col. cm) among the selected three newspapers, followed by The Tribune with space of 2599 col. cm and *Punjab Kesari* with space of 2198 col. cm.

In The Hindu newspaper total number of items were 86 and 1096 col.cm (41.4%) space during PHASE-I, 112 number of items

Table 3. Levels of coverage regarding pandemic COVID-19

S.No.	Levels of coverage	Newspapers					
		The Hindu (No. of items)	Rank	The Tribune (No. of items)	Rank	*Punjab Kesari* (No. of items)	Rank
1.	National level	114	I	102	I	70	I
2.	International level	34	II	25	III	16	V
3.	State level	28	III	23	IV	20	IV
4.	District level	18	IV	26	II	38	II
5.	Village level	12	V	14	V	30	III
6.	Others*	15	VI	12	VI	6	VI
	Total	221		202		180	

*Photographs, Editorials, Articles, Features, Letter to editors

Table 4. Time of coverage by selected newspaper on pandemic COVID-19

S.No.	Newspaper	Items	Total items		
			PHASE-I	PHASE-II	PHASE-III
1.	The Hindu	Articles	9	11	0
		Features	2	2	0
		News	58	73	18
		Advertisements	2	4	0
		Editorials	2	2	0
		Letter to editor	3	5	0
		Photographs	10	15	5
		Total	86 (39.0)*	112 (50.6)*	23 (10.4)*
2.	The Tribune	Articles	8	8	2
		Features	1	2	0
		News	59	69	17
		Advertisements	1	2	0
		Editorials	1	3	0
		Letter to editors	2	3	0
		Photographs	9	10	5
		Total	81 (40.1)*	97 (48.01)*	24(11.9)*
3.	*Punjab Kesari*	Articles	4	6	0
		Features	1	1	0
		News	60	65	15
		Advertisements	2	2	0
		Editorials	1	2	0
		Letter to editors	2	4	0
		Photographs	7	7	1
		Total	77 (42.8)*	87 (48.3)*	16 (8.9)*

*Figures in parenthesis are percentage value

Table 5. Total space covered by selected newspapers on pandemic COVID-19 issues

S.No.	Newspaper	Items	Total space (Col.cm)		
			PHASE-I	PHASE-II	PHASE-III
1.	The Hindu	Articles	165	470	0
		Features	45	35	0
		News	677	540	236
		Advertisements	25	48	0
		Editorials	34	38	0
		Letter to editor	80	62	0
		Photographs	70	80	38
		Total	1,096 (41.5)*	1,273 (48.2)*	274 (10.3)*
2.	The Tribune	Articles	170	190	45
		Features	25	35	0
		News	644	695	270
		Advertisements	20	30	0
		Editorials	35	50	0
		Letter to editors	55	65	0
		Photographs	90	110	70
		Total	1,039 (40.0)*	1,175 (45.2)*	385 (14.8)*
3.	*Punjab Kesari*	Articles	140	150	0
		Features	25	25	0
		News	571	690	168
		Advertisements	35	40	0
		Editorials	35	45	0
		Letter to editors	30	79	0
		Photographs	90	65	10
		Total	926 (42.1)*	1,094 (49.8)*	178 (8.9)*

*Figures in parenthesis are percentage value

and 1273 col.cm (48.16%) space during PHASE-II and 23 items with 274 col.cm (10.36%) space in PHASE-III. On the other hand, The Tribune newspaper covered 81 items and 1039 col.cm (40%) space in PHASE-I, during PHASE-II total 97 items and 1175 col.cm (45.2%) space covered and 24 numbers of items with 385 col.cm (14.8%) space was covered during PHASE-III. For *Punjab Kesari,* total 77 items were covered and occupied 926 col.cm (42.1%) space in PHASE-I, during PHASE-II (87 items) and 1094 col.cm (49.8%) space was covered and PHASE-III covered 16 items with 178 col.cm (8.9%) space.

CONCLUSION

The data statistics reveals that maximum numbers of items were covered in the format of news, photographs and articles. Newspaper correspondents, national agencies, and letters to the editor served as the primary information sources for all three publications. All of the newspapers covered the majority of national news. The Hindu covered maximum number of items and space i.e. 221 and 2643 col.cm which was followed by The Tribune newspaper 202 items with 2599 col.cm space and total 180 number of items and 2198 col.cm space in case of *Punjab Kesari*. Majority of the items and space was covered during Phase-II which was followed by Phase-I and Phase-III in all the newspapers. Majority of the readers in the population were reading Hindi newspaper so it is recommended to increase more content like articles, features, editorials etc. in Hindi newspaper.

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