

**Reach and Effect of Communication Strategies Adopted by the Environmental Agencies
with Special Reference to Central India's Bhopal Region**

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Introduction

Bhopal, the capital city of Madhya Pradesh known, as the City of Lakes owing to large number of lentic water bodies in and around its municipal area, is not untouched by the water shortage. The City depends on two major reservoirs i.e. the Bhoj Wetland (Upper Lake) and Kolar Reservoir for its potable needs.

Bhopal is also one of the most important centers of study and research related to conservation and management of water resources. The City has also one of the most ambitious and successful water bodies Bhoj Wetland Project. This mega project costing Rs.247 crore was implemented by the Department of Housing and Environment, Government of Madhya Pradesh to conserve and manage the Bhoj Wetland comprising the Upper and Lower Lakes of Bhopal.

The project was funded by JBIC (Japanese Bank of International Cooperation, Japan). During the implementation of project various environmental agencies like Environmental Planning and Coordination Organization (EPCO), Capital Project Administration, Bhopal Municipal Corporation, Pollution Control Board participated and successfully completed the project. There are so many sensitive issues which were handled very carefully by media. Media also played a very positive role in sensitizing the common people who eventually are the stakeholders.

Environmental Communication refers to the study and practice of how individuals, institutions, societies, and cultures craft, distribute, receive, understand, and use messages about the environment and human interactions with the environment. This includes a wide range of possible interactions, from interpersonal communication to virtual communities, participatory decision making, and environmental media coverage. Environmental communication, as an

academic field, emerged from interdisciplinary work involving communication, environmental studies, environmental science, risk analysis and management, sociology, and political ecology.

During the study, it was also observed that the environmental issues were given less space as compared to other news. Also, environmental issues were given space on the second or third page. Some issues like Idol and Tazia Immersion were taken up very well by the media. Environmental agencies play a major and vital role in opinion diversion of common public in positive sense.

Objective of the Study

An analytical study of environment awareness with special reference to Bhopal City has been taken up with an objective to assess the coverage given by two leading newspapers of Bhopal. The main objectives of the study are:-

- To assess the coverage on environmental issues in local newspapers of Bhopal
- To evaluate the quality of News on Environmental Issues
- To spread awareness among the general Public and media persons towards environmental issues
- To compare the different newspaper coverage on Environmental Issues
- To motivate Media towards the social responsibility and ethics of Journalism

In the present study, an attempt has been made to evaluate the coverage of environmental issues in English as well as in Hindi Newspapers. It was observed that in the changed scenario, Hindi newspapers have also improved their quality and they are also raising the social and environmental issues from time to time. It also came out that Hindi newspapers are more sensitive towards the local environmental problems.

Methodology

An attempt has been made to conduct an analytical study of the leading newspaper of Bhopal City with special reference to creating Environmental Awareness among common public. For the study, four leading newspapers i.e. Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran and Raj Express in Hindi and Hindustan Times in English were selected. These newspapers were observed regularly for one year with special emphasis on the coverage of environmental issues.

So the methodology adopted for the present study is based on the observation and content analysis method.

Roles of different agencies involved in conservation of environment in Madhya Pradesh

- 1. Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board:** It is a well known fact that the industrial units are the most polluting sector for the environment. The industrial processes and their by-products contaminate all the components of the environment including air, land and water. The State Pollution Control Board has been given the responsibility to keep a vigil over the industries and the pollution caused by them. The Board is a statutory body and has been bestowed statutory powers under different environmental laws. These empower the PCB to penalize the polluting industries under the prevalent laws. The PCB also has under its jurisdiction individuals, groups, institutes, commercial dwellings etc. which cause environmental damage.
- 2. Environmental Planning and Coordination Organization:** The State of Madhya Pradesh is perhaps one of the only States in the country to have an organization specially dedicated to environmental conservation. Environmental Planning and Coordination Organization (EPCO) is an autonomous organization under the Department of Urban Development and Environment and is the main advisory body to the Government of MP on environment-related issues. It carries out multifarious activities in the field of environmental conservation. It takes up many projects on environmental-related issues and is the nodal agency in the State for many centrally-funded schemes pertaining to environmental conservation.
- 3. Urban Local Bodies:** The urban local bodies are the local governments of the cities and towns. Among their other duties; one of the prime duties is to maintain the sanitation and create good environment in the city. The works related to solid waste management,

sewage treatment and disposal, water treatment and supply are the important tasks of local urban bodies.

4. **National Green Tribunal:** The National Green Tribunal is a judicial body which has been set up to decide upon the cases related to environment. It has one of its principle benches in Bhopal and ever since its inception, it has been actively and effectively involved in the conservation and up gradation of environmental conditions in the State. It has issued many benchmark judgments in favor of environmental conservation of the State.
5. **Universities:** The universities have the all-important task of imparting knowledge among students. They are the primary place where the citizens of future get their first-hand exposure to environmental education. The universities, apart from imparting education, also create very important database in the form of research carried out by them in the field of environment. This database serves as the baseline for the conservation efforts pertaining to the environment.

Results:

During the study period an assessment is done to evaluate the percentage of environmental-related news in Hindi and English Newspapers. It is observed that there is a big gap between the Hindi and the English Newspapers as regards coverage of environmental issues. While comparing Dainik Bhaskar with Hindustan Times, it is observed that during the study period the ratio is 70:30. (Fig. 01)

Subjectwise Coverage of Environmental Issues in Different Newspapers

Four different newspapers were taken up for the study period for environmental issues. These newspapers were: Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, Raj Express (All Hindi) & The Hindustan Times (English). It is observed that the highest number of stories on environmental issues were covered by Dainik Bhaskar i.e. 28 out of 18 news related to water. Similarly, Dainik Jagran, Raj Express and The Hindustan Times covered 12-12 news on environmental issues each. These news related to water, global warming, seminars and other environmental- related functions. (Fig. 2)

Fig. 1 Coverage of Environmental Issues in Hindi and English Newspapers.

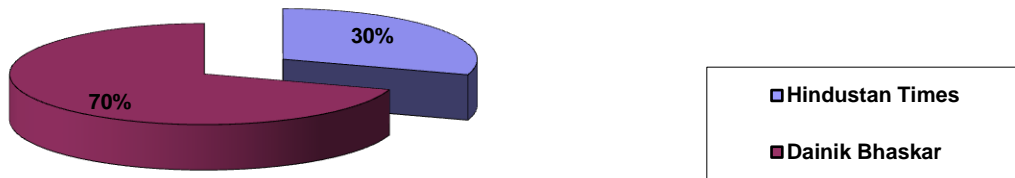
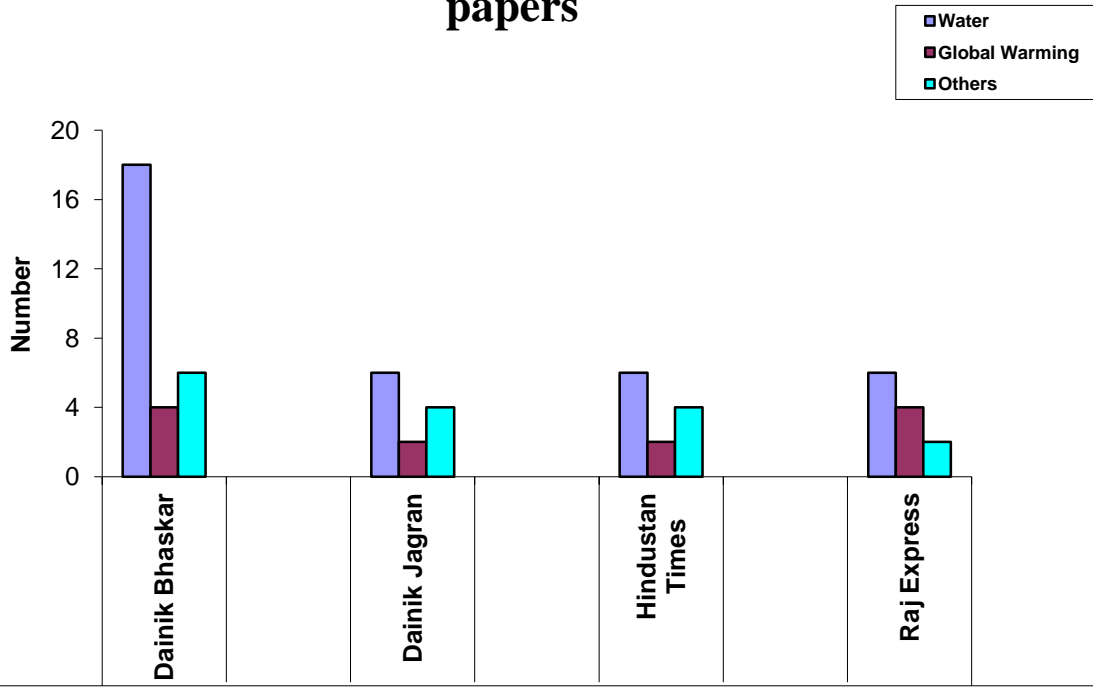


Fig. 2 Subjectwise Coverage of Environmental Issues in Different News papers



Conclusion: During the study Four Daily News papers were observed regularly. These four daily newspapers were Dainik Bhaskar, Raj Express, and Dainik Jagran in Hindi and Hindustan Times in English. These all are published from Bhopal and come under the category of leading newspapers of Bhopal City. It was observed that Hindi newspapers, as compared to English, are more sensitive and aware about the Environmental issues.

Hindi daily newspaper, although is not the first choice of elite class yet it happens to create awareness and motivate common public towards environmental issues.

Dainik Bhaskar starts a campaign for the conservation of water. which was a great success. The daily gives articles and news under the head "ikuh cpkvksa vfHk;ku" Similarly on the occasion of Holi, all the newspapers published articles and news to celebrate dry Holi or floral Holi and thus conserve water.

The main points or conclusions are as follows: -

- ❖ During the study it was also observed that the environmental issues were given less space as compared to other news.
- ❖ The environmental issues were given space on the second or third page, these issues did not get the space on front page.
- ❖ Small stories were published on environmental issues while other news were published as big and highlighted stories.
- ❖ The environmental issues did not make the first lead of the newspapers.

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