



# Print Media Coverage On Environmental Issues In Punjab: A Content Analysis Study

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Despite eco-friendly legislation, Punjab is currently dealing with serious environmental issues. Among the many groups with stakeholders in the current environmental crisis—including policymakers, the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the general public—print media plays a special role. Everyone agrees that print media plays an important role in informing millions of readers about issues. Every day, Punjab publishes a plethora of newspapers, including both national and regional. To determine the frequency of five pressing environmental concerns—the water pollution, water logging, air pollution, climate change, and farm fires—this study combined through the content of three newspapers covering the six months of 2021: The Tribune, Hindustan Times, and Times of India. In terms of coverage, the five main environmental issues have received greater attention from the English publication Hindustan Times than from the Tribune and the Times of India, respectively.

**Keywords:** Environment, Print Media, Punjab**Introduction:**

“Environment” refers to everything that is around and has an effect on any living creature. ‘Environment’ is derived from the French word Environment, which means to encircle or surround. The term “environment” encompasses all things, both living and non-living. According to Chu and Karr (2017), the term “environment” refers to the complex interaction of natural and human-induced forces that surround living creatures. This encompasses the factors that together form the physical, chemical, biological, and social environments that support life on Earth (Iyer et al., 2021). On the other hand, according to Fransson and Garling (1999), the term “environment” refers to both the biotic and abiotic components of the natural world, as well as the circumstances and surrounds that support living things.

The term mass media was coined in the early twentieth century to describe a social phenomenon and a significant aspect of the emerging modern world, which was being constructed on the principles of industrialism and popular democracy. Media is known as fourth pillar of the democracy. In addition to serving as the fourth pillar of democracy, the media is also an essential component in the maintenance of democratic norms such as accountability, transparency, and awareness among the populace. The role of the media in the modern period is similar to that of a watchdog, as it is responsible for monitoring the activities of the government and other institutions. This helps to ensure that power is not abused or misused. The conviction that a well-informed populace is necessary for the proper operation of a robust democracy is the intellectual foundation upon which the concept is built.

Punjab is currently facing a wide range of environmental problems that need for prompt attention and all-encompassing remedies. Degradation of the state's formerly rich soil is having a negative impact on ecosystem health and agricultural productivity. Water resources, which are essential to Punjab's agricultural economy, are under danger because of pollution and over use (Batish, 2018). In addition, the widespread practice of burning stubble to clear agricultural fields greatly increases air pollution and puts the public's health at risk (Abdurrahman, Chaki, and Saini, 2020). These environmental problems have effects that go well beyond ecological ones and affect the basic foundation of civilization. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive knowledge of these issues and practical mitigation strategies since Punjab's citizens' livelihoods and health are becoming more and more jeopardised (Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,

2022). Therefore, the region's ecological integrity, which was formerly associated with wealth, is currently at a crucial point. The role of English-language media becomes crucial in spreading information, forming public awareness, and influencing policy debate as Punjab struggles with these environmental complexities.

### **Problem Statement**

Punjab faces serious environmental problems, including stubble burning air and water pollution, but little study has been done on how the media report on these problems. By examining the frequency, environmental subjects in Punjab's main English newspapers, the study seeks to close this gap. The research aims to clarify the efficacy and significance of media coverage in promoting environmental consciousness and inciting action by investigating the role of media in affecting public awareness and policy debate on environmental concerns.

### **Objectives of Research**

1. To explore the extent of coverage given to environmental issues by the selected newspaper.
2. To find out the level of prominence given to environment issues.

### **Research Methodology**

This research draws upon content analysis method in order to explore the environmental issues. Bernard Berelson, an American behavioural scientist, presented a comprehensive overview of content analysis. Berelson (1952) define content analysis as "a research technique for the objectivity, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication".

Content analysis has been offered by a multitude of academics. It is described as a research methodology for the objective, methodical, and quantitative description of manifest content in communication, According to Cole (1988), It is described as a method for methodically and reproducibly measuring information in texts and documents. To put it in a broader context, Holsti (1968) defines it as any method of drawing conclusions by methodically and impartially detecting certain attributes of communications

For the purpose of content analysis, three daily newspapers selected based on their circulation and credibility. The three newspapers for analysis: The Tribune, Hindustan Times and Times of India. The research was conducted between the period of June 1, 2021, to November 30, 2021. The study focused solely on the Punjab editions of the newspapers.

### **Result and Discussion**

**Table 1: The Tribune frequency and percentage**

Issues	Frequency	%
<b>Climate change/Global warming</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18.84 %</b>
<b>Air Pollution</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28.98 %</b>
<b>Water Pollution</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.69%</b>
<b>Farm Fires</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>30.43 %</b>
<b>Water -logging</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13.04 %</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	

### **Data Interpretation and Analysis**

According to Table 1, in the six months, the Tribune has published 69 stories and five issues with the above-mentioned frequencies. It has given coverage to 18.84 of climate change / global warming, 28.98 % of air pollution, 8.69 % water pollution, 30.43 % farm fires, and 13.04 % of water logging.

**Table 2:Hindustan Times frequency and percentage**

Issues	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Climate change/Global warming</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50 %</b>
<b>Air Pollution</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>Water Pollution</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13.84 %</b>
<b>Farm Fires</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11.53 %</b>
<b>Water -logging</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.61%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	

According to Table 2, in the six months, the Hindustan Times published 130 stories and five issues with the above-mentioned frequencies. It has given coverage to 50% of climate change / global warming, 20% of air pollution, 13.84% water pollution, 11.53 % farm fires, and 4.61 % of water logging.

**Table 3:- Times of India frequency and percentage**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Climate change/Global warming</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26.31 %</b>
<b>Air Pollution</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26.31 %</b>
<b>Water Pollution</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10.52 %</b>
<b>Farm Fires</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24.56 %</b>
<b>Water logging</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12.28%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	

**Interpretation and Discussion**

According to Table 3, in the six months, the Times of India published 57 stories and five issues with the above-mentioned frequencies. It has given coverage to 26.31% of climate change / global warming, 26.31% of air pollution, 11.42% water pollution, 24.56% farm fires, and 12.28% of water logging.

**Table 4:-Overall measured frequency of three newspapers**

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Environmental issues-Climate change, Air Pollution, Water pollution, Farm fires, Water logging</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>The Tribune</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24.12%</b>
<b>Hindustan Times</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>45.45%</b>
<b>Times of India</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>33.98 %</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	

**Interpretation and Discussion**

The table shows that a total of 69 environmental issues published in The Tribune .In the Hindustan Times, a total of 130 published news stories whereas in the Times of India, 87 environmental issues. Hindustan Times has published maximum of environmental issues.

**Table No 5: Placement of environmental news stories in The Tribune, HT & TOI**

<b>Placement</b>	<b>The Tribune Frequency and Percentage</b>	<b>Hindustan Times Frequency and Percentage</b>	<b>TOI Frequency and Percentage</b>	<b>Average frequency and percentage</b>
<b>Front-Page</b>	<b>32 (46.37 %)</b>	<b>21 (16.15%)</b>	<b>5 (5.74 %)</b>	<b>58 (20.27 %)</b>
<b>Inner Page</b>	<b>30 (43.47 %)</b>	<b>109 (83.84%)</b>	<b>82 (94.25 %)</b>	<b>221 (77.27 %)</b>
<b>Back Page</b>	<b>7 (10.14 %)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7 (2.44 %)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>286</b>

**Interpretation and Discussion**

The significance of new items is universally acknowledged to be determined by their placements. Environmental issues are predominantly featured on the inside pages (n=221) of 77.27% of the publications, as indicated in the table above. The front-page n=58 i.e. 20.27% follows likewise. In terms of the frequency of environmental stories appearing on the respective front pages and inside pages, the aforementioned table illustrates that the Tribune and Hindustan Times feature the greatest number of environmental stories, respectively. Among the three newspapers examined solely, the Tribune has featured news on its last page

**Conclusion:**

The relationship between the environment and media is significant, as media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards environmental issues. It can raise awareness, influence behaviour, and contribute to the discourse in sustainability. However, media also faces criticism for sensationalism and oversimplification, impacting the public's understanding of complex environmental issues.

The media is expected to perform particular duties that are essential to maintain the integrity of democracy. Based on the normative theories of media (Seibert, Peterson & Schramm, 1984), the Indian media is believed to follow the social responsibility theory. However, the media, despite its crucial role as the fourth estate, has experienced notable shortcomings in meetings and its responsibilities. The lack of comprehensive coverage regarding crucial matters about national welfare and the well-being of citizens has significantly diminished its previously esteemed credibility. The research demonstrates that the media's limited focus on promoting awareness of environmental issues and it is a clear indication of its lack of commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities.

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